

"DOUBLY FOREIGN": BRITISH CONSULS IN THE ANTEBELLUM SOUTH,
1830 - 1860

By

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DEDICATED TO ANDERS

You are my heart

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ABSTRACT

“DOUBLE FOREIGN:” BRITISH CONSULS AND SLAVERY IN THE ANTEBELLUM SOUTH, 1830 - 1860

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Upon ending their slavery in the British West Indies in 1833, Great Britain became known as the “Great Emancipator.” Britain immediately began an official foreign policy campaign to end the slave trade and slavery wherever it existed. In the United States slavery continued to be deeply rooted in the culture of the Antebellum South, causing Britain to give the region a great deal of attention based upon British ethical, moral, and ideological concerns over slavery and the trade. Between 1833 and 1860, activities associated with southern slavery created unique moral and ethical challenges for the Foreign Office and British consuls sent to represent the official Foreign Policies against slavery and the trade in several port cities including Norfolk, Charleston, Savannah, Mobile, and New Orleans. Because no such list of who these men were exists, the researcher created Appendix A which includes a comprehensive list of the British

consuls sent to the South from 1830 to 1860 and which may be helpful for future researchers.

On one hand, the Foreign Office not only had to placate but also to seek trade alliances with the South for the all-important King Cotton for British factories; on the other hand, the Foreign Office continually attempted to promote Britain's abolitionist principles and ideology. This dissertation shows that the British Consuls, who were the foot soldiers on the ground in the South, were ethically and morally challenged because of what they encountered on a daily basis. Furthermore, the consuls were honor-bound to remain loyal to the British government, its laws, and foreign policy issues. On the other hand, the consuls were in essence exiled persons far away from home surrounded by slavery and slavery economics. However, the details of the private lifestyles they led, the businesses they operated, and the ideologies they espoused during their tenure in office often remained unknown to the Foreign Office because of the great distance between the London home office and the consuls' duty stations. By examining how these individuals, who lived on the empire's periphery, interacted with the slaveholding communities in which they found themselves living and working within reveals how far they were ethically and morally tested. Investigating British consuls sent to the South from 1830 to 1860 is vitally important to understanding the difficulties and challenges of Britain's foreign policy position as the "Great Emancipator" in the Atlantic World.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<i>F.O.</i>	Foreign Office Records
<i>F.O.S.T.</i>	Foreign Office Slave Trade Records
<i>S.C.C.C.</i>	Superior Court, Chatham County Courthouse

CHAPTER 1

A RESEARCHER'S JOURNEY: HISTORIOGRAPHY AND ARGUMENT

For those of us who still think of history as a kind of moral philosophy teaching by example, it is precisely the multiple character of truth – the varied angles of vision that are also the subject of imaginative literature – that one must seek to capture.¹

David Brion Davis

In the decades before and after British Emancipation, nineteenth-century London policymakers promoted an aggressive foreign policy campaign to eliminate the Atlantic slave trade. In an effort to help end the trade, successive prime ministers ordered the Royal Navy to police the ocean waters in pursuit of slave ships bound for the Americas. The British Navy was, of course, never able to capture all the slave ships. Navy personnel were gallant and brave, but the ocean was simply too large to police alone. In London, abolitionists informed Parliament that British subjects continued to be involved in both the Atlantic slave trade and slavery in the Americas. To help end the attempted circumventing of British cultural beliefs, Parliament passed a series of laws directed at British subjects who owned slaves or were involved in the trade after British Emancipation. Enforcement of these laws came to be a part of the duties of the Foreign Office. The Foreign Secretary instructed British consuls to publish and

¹ David Brion Davis, "Slavery, Emancipation, Progress," *Historically Speaking*, vol. 8 no. 6 (July/August, 2007): 13.

make known these laws to all British subjects in their districts. This dissertation examines those laws and their enforcement or non-enforcement by those who were duty bound to oversee them: the British consuls in the American South. This study analyzes the problem of maintaining a British identity in a slave society. Specifically, this dissertation investigates the consuls and their actions in the decades following British emancipation to the American Civil War, the years 1833 to 1860.

Using Davis's belief that by examining the past lives of historical actors, the historian may imaginatively create the multi-layered and "varied angles" of what past actors were in fact doing, and the truth of what happened may be revealed.² After examining the complexities of the consuls' identities and attempting to discern why they perhaps behaved in the manner that they did, the historian can then better present the past actors as representative moral examples of what should have happened or what should not have happened. In effect, the consuls can be judged by their actions or inactions in these slave societies, but according to whose standards? Should the consuls be judged according to American or British legal standards? Should they be judged according to their collective or individual backgrounds? Should they be judged on how effective they performed their duties or did not perform their duties? Should they be judged according to abolitionists' or slaveholders' moral standards? Or, should they be judged at all?

² Davis, 13.

By inspecting the difficult subject of self-created constructs of identity and challenges to identity, historians may better understand the British moral dilemma of maintaining an outward showing of cultural abolitionist character. This research studies the difficulties in maintaining a British identity when stationed or living so far away from home and the processes of identity transformation experienced by some members of the Foreign Service. When challenged by their assignments to the American South, some members changed their moral character. Specifically, this dissertation seeks to answer whether or not members of the British Foreign Office stationed in Savannah, Charleston, Mobile, Norfolk, and New Orleans (the main cotton exporting ports in the U.S.) adhered to Britain's rules and regulations against slave ownership, involvement in the slave trade either domestic or foreign, and slavery economics. Furthermore, these men represented Britain and her laws in foreign ports. At some point, for those men who remained stationed in far distant countries for many years, their British identity inevitably changed to varying degrees to a transatlantic identity.

1.1 *Theories and Methods*

The idea that Britons could maintain multiple identities is not something new. Historian Linda Colley believes that after the 1707 Act of Union, it became increasingly common for people living in Great Britain to have a multi-layered identity. She asserts that Britons thought of themselves as British and at the

same time as Scottish, English, and/or Welsh.³ Could not the same thing exist in the American South? Could the consuls think of themselves as both British and American? Moreover, could they think of themselves as both British government representatives and friends to the slaveholding classes that surrounded and interacted with them? Also, could the consuls have created a new identity, something in-between – a transatlantic identity, one neither completely British nor completely American - a new cultural identity, a self-created hybrid of two worlds?

A point of beginning is *what did it mean to be a British Foreign Officer in the American South?* The South during the nineteenth century offered an environment rich in possible conflicts to British identity. The problem of slavery is by far the most obvious and is the best yardstick this researcher has found in measuring just how “British” the consuls behaved in the American South. Historian Laura White began an inquiry of what the British consuls thought about their assignments in the American South in the 1850s in two articles she published in the 1930s. By examining the official correspondence of several British consuls, she concluded that:

The most difficult adjustment required of the consuls was doubtless that of living in the midst of a social system of which they disapproved without any betrayal of their sentiments, which would force them to a swift departure.⁴

³ Linda Colley, *Britons* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 1-8.

⁴ Laura White, “The South in the 1850’s As Seen by British Consuls,” *The Journal of Southern History* 1, no. 1 (Feb., 1935): 31.

White's articles included not only the consuls' impressions of slavery but also their responses to their assignments. Written in the 1930s, her articles laid the foundation of what British consuls in the American South were reporting to the Foreign Office about their transatlantic posts. However, her theory that all British consuls in the South disapproved of slavery and slavery economics is problematic. The problem with her analysis is that when the consuls wrote their reports, they knew the government would print their official correspondence, so naturally the consuls responded in the expected and appropriate manner to their superiors. Therefore, the only effective way to know what the consuls were actually doing at the empire's periphery, in furtherance of the British foreign policy of abolition, is to dig as deep as possible into the life of the consuls stationed in the American South and determine if their actions support their words.

In addition to the morality of slavery, some other potential conflicts British Foreign Officers faced concerning their British identity included issues of class, family, community belonging, loneliness, and money. So how did British consuls maneuver in the difficult environment in which they found themselves at the empire's periphery while maintaining their job performance as required by the Foreign Office and effectively maintain their native British identity at the same time? Most nineteenth-century British foreign officers dealt with the circumstances in which they found themselves as best they could. Some created a transnational identity not only in order to survive in the South, but also to thrive within it. Most of these men were eager transatlantic travelers who wanted to

take in all that they could. Additionally, from 1833 to 1860 in the South, British officials experienced a unique moment in U.S. history; they witnessed a southern pre-war culture completely dependent upon agriculture and slave labor. In the South, slavery economics permeated friendships, business contacts, and state laws. A natural antagonistic atmosphere of free and enslaved, abolitionists and slaveowners, grew over time to become more tense and suspicious to outsiders, especially to foreign nationals as war neared. Because of their positions, British consuls in the South were exposed to a large number of diverse Southern peoples - the wealthiest elites, the merchant class, the freeborn poor, and the enslaved. Continued contact with Southern peoples and their experiences had lasting and meaningful effects upon the British consuls stationed in the South. Examining the influence of Southern culture upon British foreign officers, and in turn, their influence on their Southern neighbors makes for an important and significant study that can contribute to the new literature of British transatlantic identity. In an important sense, perceptions of a transatlantic identity often suggest the means by which the facets of transatlantic/transnational identity are formed.

1.2 Transatlantic Identity

The issue of transatlantic identity is relatively new and differs from the traditional study of British identity *in* the United Kingdom. The recent book, *The British Atlantic World 1500-1800* (2009) by David Armitage and Michael J. Braddick, examines British identity formation as viewed from the empire's center,

not its periphery. According to Armitage and Braddick, the central themes to British history and the formation of British identity in England are the formation of a nation-state, the formation of Britain's empire, and British migration, economy, religion, race, class, gender, politics, and slavery.⁵ Their book's emphasis on core, not periphery, is reminiscent of Linda Colley's *Britons* (1992), which examines why Englishmen, Scots, and Welsh in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries became Britons.⁶ She concludes that it became a way to create a common identity.

Exploring identity from the center and from the peripheries in the Atlantic World is vitally important for understanding the subtle or sometimes not so subtle differences in national identity. The edited work by Christine Daniels and Michael Kennedy, *Negotiated Empires: Centers and Peripheries in the New World, 1500 – 1820* (2002), is a collection of essays that argue that past historiographies placed too much emphasis on imperial nation-building from the center without examining what went on within the peripheries. For example, Daniels and Kennedy argue that examining the interactions and experiences of people on the empire's frontiers helps to expose the difficulties the empire had in the Atlantic World. One of those problems was sheer geography. A great distance divided the imperial capital from its colonies. That distance created a unique experience

⁵ David Armitage and Michael J. Braddick, *The British Atlantic World* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 7.

⁶ Colley, *Britons*, 7.

for the colonists as they maneuvered and interacted with Native Americans, Africans, and other Euro-Americans.⁷

A historian who has studied British identity *in* England impacted by actions from the empire's periphery is Christopher Leslie Brown in his book *Moral Capital: Foundations of British Abolitionism* (2006). He argues that changing views of empire and anxiety brought on by the American Revolution helped the abolitionists succeed when they did. He also argues that debates over the rights of the American colonies pushed slavery to the forefront in British politics, giving the antislavery movement moral legitimacy. His theory is that the colonies were historically connected only weakly to the imperial metropolis. Brown believes that Britain's loss of her North American colonies shifted British identity, attitudes toward Africa, and definitions of imperial mission, all allowing room for the rise of Evangelicalism and Quaker activism. Thus, the abolitionists played up to Britain's yearning for moral worth in the aftermath of defeat. Abolitionism became a way to express British virtues and patriotism.⁸ While this researcher agrees with Brown, whose study ends in 1789, the research presented here is narrower in focus. This study examines British consuls during the years 1830 to 1860 in the American South and reveals that British cultural identity meant many different things to British subjects and it did not always include abolitionism. The

⁷ Christine Daniels and Michael Kennedy, *Negotiated Empires: Centers and Peripheries in the New World, 1500-1820* (New York: Routledge, 2002).

⁸ Christopher L. Brown, *Moral Capital* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 449.

Foreign Office's public professions of abolitionist policies were different from the private activities of at least some members of the Foreign Service stationed overseas. The government's words and the actions of some of her representatives were not always the same.

Eric Williams was the first to argue that Britons continued to profit from slavery after abolition in his pivotal work, *Capitalism and Slavery* (1944). He argues that the institution of slavery financed the British industrial revolution and once that industry had fully developed and matured, slavery became obsolete and unnecessary. Workers replaced slaves as the principal means of production and the resulting factory profits were reinvested in British industry.⁹ Williams believed that British citizens, banks, and businesses continued to make money from the slave trade.

One historian took Williams' argument and supplemented it with new evidence she found in London. Marika Sherwood's text, *After Abolition: Britain and the Slave Trade Since 1807* (2007), proves that Britons in England continued to make money from the Atlantic Slave Trade and slavery long after British abolition in 1807. Sherwood details how slavery remained an integral part of British commercial, banking, and investment activities long after 1807. She describes how the industrial cities of Liverpool and Manchester continued to benefit from slave-grown produce for its factories. Furthermore, she explains how certain shipbuilders continued supplying or outfitting slave ships in England.

⁹Eric Williams, *Capitalism and Slavery* (Kingston: Ian Randle Publishers, 2005), ix, 7, 105.

Sherwood explains how merchants, insurers, and bankers continued to make money from the slave trade and slavery in the Atlantic World all the while residing in England. These businessmen, banks, investment firms, and factories employed thousands of British citizens. She exposes and names specific nineteenth-century respectable British subjects as greedy, slavery-promoting, moneymaking villains.¹⁰

The prominent American slave trade historian David Eltis in his journal article, "The British Contribution to the Nineteenth-Century Transatlantic Slave Trade" (1979), believes that some British citizens continued to make a living from the Atlantic slave trade throughout the nineteenth-century. He discovered that British citizens continued to own, captain, and work on slaving voyages and contribute to the transatlantic trade through other direct means, such as purchasing slaves from Africa, and indirectly by supplying credit and insurance to slave owners and slave traders.¹¹

This study complements the studies of Williams, Sherwood, and Eltis because it reveals what British consuls were doing *on the American side* of the Atlantic. The consuls were men from the commoner class and in some instances, they were still trying to help their home community in Great Britain where they retained familiar ties. There were two groups of merchant consuls.

¹⁰ Marika Sherwood, *After Abolition: Britain and the Slave Trade Since 1807* (New York: I.B. Taurus, 2007), 26.

¹¹ David Eltis, "The British Contribution to the Nineteenth-Century Transatlantic Slave Trade," *Economic History Review* vol. 32, issue 2 (May, 1979): 211.

There were those like G.P.R. James who followed British laws, including abolition. Then there were those like Edmund Molyneux who believed that what the government did not know about would not hurt. It was easy for individuals like Molyneux. Distance and a habit of keeping silent on private affairs helped. Molyneux traveled across the Atlantic to a place where he could seek wealth. His only main duty was to send commercial reports back to the Foreign Office. For the greedy in a sense, it was like leaving the “wolf in charge of the hen house.” With the two types of individuals that took consular jobs - those who played by the rules and followed British laws even if they were in controversial areas like the American South where slavery and the domestic slave trade were legal - and those that broke British laws and adopted instead Southern rules of slave ownership and slavery economics. The opportunists either disobeyed Britain’s abolition laws completely or selectively chose which acts they would abide by. The greedy were willing to use the opportunities available to them in the American South to become wealthy.

Because no historian has examined the British consuls in the years before the Civil War and their involvement, if any, in slavery, the trade, and slavery economics in the American South, this study is the first of its kind. Initially, like most British historians, the researcher believed Britain to be the Great Emancipator and naively assumed that British officials stationed in the United States would naturally adhere to abolition. It was their duty, their responsibility, and something this researcher mistakenly believed was *required* of them. Then, the researcher came across the consuls’ replies to a series of

parliamentary Slave Trade questionnaires. The consuls' curious replies made one rethink her assumption. Could a British official stationed in the United States be a slave owner, a slave trader, or involved in plantation economics?

In order to understand better what British consuls were doing and why they did what they did, this study has used those monographs that detail the history and evolution of the British Foreign Office. Because there are so few sources for information about the basic workings and history of the British Foreign Service, these texts have become the standard texts used by most historians. Of particular use to this study were D.C.M. Platt's *The Cinderella Service: British Consuls Since 1825* (1971), Ray Jones's *Nineteenth Century Foreign Office* (1971), and John Dickie's *The British Consul, Heir to a Great Tradition* (2007). Charles Ronald Middleton in *The Administration of British Foreign Policy 1782-1846* (1977) details the day-to-day operations and administrative history of the British Foreign Office. To help explain why the consuls acted in the manner that they did, only a brief retelling about the history and inner workings of the service is offered in this study. These works are important because they set the background and history of how British consuls came to be in the American South and why, perhaps, consuls acted in the manner as they did.

The lack of scholarly attention to British consuls in the Antebellum South, unlike other figures in British history, this researcher believes, is because the relevant research materials are widely scattered, on both sides of the Atlantic. Due to time constraints, money, or location, scholars such as those mentioned

here have found it easier to examine the consuls' official correspondences published in the Foreign Office reports. However, the presupposition that *all* British citizens and government officials steadfastly adhered to the official British policy of abolition in the Antebellum South is not only unreasonable but also untrue. So who maintained an abolitionist identity and who did not? By examining the private lives of British consuls such as those mentioned in this study, historians might understand better how some consuls maintained an abolitionist identity, and how difficult it was for others who wavered from time to time, and how for some it was relatively easy to camouflage their activities. Others became unconcerned with the problem of slavery and more preoccupied with what their next assignment would be in the Foreign Service.

Atlantic studies usually consider imperial history from the core, not the periphery. Some works look outward from England to the Atlantic world, and usually only examine British identity *at home*. What the present study offers is not an examination of British identity *in* England, but an examination of British identity at the *periphery* that at times looks back towards England. This is a transatlantic study that questions whether or not the members of the British Foreign Service maintained their Britishness when challenged by environments that were, at times, at odds with what it meant to be British, as defined at home. In other words, sometimes these men did not act in compliance with what was considered the conventional British national identity at home. These men were unique in that they lived their lives in two worlds: one British, the other Southern. They continually lived double lives, with one identity as a dutiful government

employee of the British Empire sent to represent Britain overseas, and the second as a British subject stationed in a slaveholding community. In which community did they really belong? Which community was their home?

It was their government assignment to live in slaveholding communities. How they reacted to that environment is vitally important to understanding the complexities of British identity after Britain abolished slavery in her West Indies. These men stationed in places far from home simply could not contact their superiors or the Foreign Office at will for clarifications, directions, or instructions. Therefore, it is essential to study their identities and what it meant to call themselves British from the empire's periphery. This dissertation attempts to explore the transformation of the British consuls, their ideas, their "Britishness" identity, and their character. Examining who they were and what they did reveals that for some they went through a transatlantic transformation. Examining their local and transatlantic actions reveals that, over time, a kind of transatlantic or at least private change occurred within these men. As to whether or not they were aware of that assimilation process as it happened is unlikely or at least they did not always perceived it.

Relatively few historians have studied British identity *from* the periphery. An exception is Trevor Bernard's *Mastery, Tyranny, and Desire: The Story of Thomas Thistlewood* (2004). Bernard captures the life of one man who lived and

thrived at the empire's periphery.¹² Thistlewood, a minor slave owner, lived his adult life on Jamaica and died the year that Thomas Clarkson published his first abolitionist essay. A gifted writer and historian, Bernard's text is important to understand the harshness and brutality of slavery during the eighteenth-century. Because Bernard's text describes what kind of life a self-made individual could accomplish from the empire's periphery, it is a valuable foundation for understanding Edmund Molyneux.

The definition of transatlantic British identity used here is openly borrowed from the *American Heritage Dictionary* that it was their identity to which these men had "on the other side of the Atlantic." However, it is much more than a pseudo identity; it was their *real* identity, an identity that developed slowly over time with twists and changes as situations arose and their community environments dictated. Furthermore, these men lived in "imagined communities" abroad, isolated from their actual British community and extended families. Benedict Anderson coined this phrase in his work with the same title, *Imagined Communities* (1991). According to Anderson, the nation is an imagined community mentally constructed. That is to say, members of a nation need not live in the same community; they may live anywhere on the globe and remain part of the nation, as long as they perceive themselves as part of that group. According to Anderson, a collective identity, enhanced by the availability of print

¹² Trevor Bernard, *Mastery, Tyranny, and Desire: Thomas Thistlewood and His Slaves in the Anglo-Jamaican World* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 2004).

material, extends beyond the geographic boundaries of a nation, binding people together.¹³ In other words, those identifying with one nation-state will naturally gravitate to each other, because in their minds the image of their common heritage or community remains. Anderson thus offers a new way to define national identity. The present study attempts to utilize Anderson's theory while limiting it to an Atlantic World context, thus offering yet another dimension to what British identity meant in the nineteenth century.

Slavery is used here as the measuring stick to discern whether or not these men followed the official British foreign policy of abolition. By the nineteenth century, Britain became the center of the Atlantic World's antislavery movement. In 1807, Britain's parliament abolished the slave trade and in the following year, the U.S. did the same in accordance with its constitution. It would take abolitionists until 1833 to outlaw British slavery in the West Indies. After 1833, Britain took the lead role in eliminating the international slave trade. Attacking the trade one country at a time using the power of diplomatic treaties and trade initiatives, Britain forced other countries to abolish their trade after the Napoleonic Wars. The enforcement of the treaties was left to the Royal Navy. As a result, the Royal Navy spent much of the nineteenth century patrolling the African coastline and Atlantic Ocean hunting slavers.

For the next sixty years, Britain diplomatically induced one nation after another to end their oceanic slave trade. Regrettably, these efforts were not

¹³ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (New York: Verso, 1991), 6-7.

enough because up to 2.7 million Africans were transported across the Atlantic after 1807.¹⁴ The standard Foreign Office procedure was to withhold diplomatic recognition of a country or ratification of a treaty of trade until the lesser power agreed to cooperate with Britain.¹⁵ Parliament followed two basic approaches for the next sixty years: diplomacy and naval operations. Neither had the full effect most abolitionists desired.

1.3 *What this Study is Not*

This study is not an examination of the organized Abolitionist movement, either British or American. Most historians of British or American abolition movements examine the efforts of the great abolitionists, (such as Thomas Clarkson, William Wilberforce, Thomas Fowell Buxton), the iconic propaganda campaigns, the efforts and roles of women in the movement, or the heroic efforts of the navies, both British and U.S. Nor is this study an examination of what the consuls did during the American Civil War. In 1911, Milledge Bonham Jr. examined that subject in his work *The British Consuls in the Confederacy*. Bonham argued that the consuls' functions were entirely commercial in nature, but that the Civil War necessitated a change in their duties. Some of those changes were that consuls had to inform the British government of blockade-runners, protect British citizens from conscription, and protect British subjects'

¹⁴ Sherwood, *After Abolition*, 18.

¹⁵ Charles Ronald Middleton, *The Administration of British Foreign Policy 1782-1846* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1977), 39-41.

property from being seized. His work examined what British consuls were doing at the time of war, but he limited his study to what sources were available to him in the first decade of the twentieth century. For example, he openly acknowledged that he did not have access to the Foreign Office's unpublished correspondences with consuls.¹⁶

This study is not meant to be a complete understanding of how many British subjects lived abroad before wartime or what British communities were doing before the Civil War. Concerning that research, Ella Lonn wrote *Foreigners in the Confederacy*, originally published in 1940. In it, she criticizes the “lost cause” myth of the Confederacy, the belief that the Confederacy was a nation of purer Americans attempting to live out their ideal agrarian cultural lifestyle when forced into war. She explains that historians’ belief that the South was homogenous was wrong because there were so many people of foreign birth living there at the time of war. For example, she points out that in Mobile one-fourth of the population identified themselves as foreign-born. In Savannah, 21 percent of the population was foreign-born. In New Orleans, nearly 40 percent of the population was foreign-born.¹⁷ While she does not ignore the importance of immigrants to the Confederacy during the war, her interpretation that there were more people identifying with a foreign nation than had previously been thought at

¹⁶ Milledge L. Bonham, Jr., *The British Consuls in the Confederacy* (New York: AMS Press, 1967, reprint, originally published in 1911), 194.

¹⁷ Ella Lonn, *Foreigners in the Confederacy* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, reprint 2002), xii.

the time of war, demonstrates that at least in the main port cities there were vibrant foreign populations living there. Those numbers, she argues, grew over time to the numbers she cites for 1860.

After World War II, more materials became available to historians. This fact encouraged the writing of more monographs on the topic of British-American diplomacy during the Civil War. For example, Eugene Berwanger's 1994 work, *The British Foreign Service and the American Civil War*, offered new interpretations to the difficulties consuls faced during wartime. He argues that some consuls did not support the Confederacy as previously believed. By studying the official correspondence of consuls to their British Foreign Office superiors, he specifically argues that the consul at Charleston, Robert Bunch, was not as pro-Confederate as others believed.¹⁸

This study examines British-American abolition diplomacy through the British Foreign Office to specific consuls in the South and how they responded to it in the years *before* the Civil War. The present study attempts to connect two histories - the history of slavery in the United States and the diplomatic and legal history of British abolition - in a way that those histories have not yet been connected. This researcher writes on the topic of British abolition in the Atlantic world because she wanted to discern if all British consuls were ideologically opposed to slavery in the Americas. Because it would be impossible to examine the entire Atlantic coastline, she limited her research geographically to the main

¹⁸ Eugene Berwanger, *The British Foreign Service and the American Civil War* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1994), x.

cotton exporting ports: Charleston, Mobile, Savannah, New Orleans, and Norfolk. Specifically, she wanted to discover whether any British consul stationed in these ports from 1830 to 1860 participated in slavery, or was involved in slavery economics. She hopes that her findings will help others to understand that the question of abolition and the problem of slavery's economics continued to plague British identity, long after the government's abolition of the trade in 1807 and final emancipation of the slaves in the British West Indies in 1838. The result of her research indicates that the problem of slavery and the question of abolition did continue to trouble British identity in the Atlantic world long after 1833.

1.4 Difficulties of Research

There were many difficulties in doing this type of research. At times, the work was like trying to work with a 1,000-piece jigsaw puzzle where the parts simply did not fit together in any understandable pattern. As the research continued, more and more of the picture of who these men were and what their lives in the Antebellum South were like began to emerge, in time finally revealing an understandable pattern. But not every piece of the puzzle was found, so some speculations based upon what was available have been made. For example, not every consul left records in the Southern states while others left a vast amount of materials. For some, there were only their official and unofficial correspondences with the Foreign Office. In other instances, there may have been papers at Southern courthouses, but those records were lost due to one

reason or another, such as courthouse fires. Some individuals do not appear on U.S. Census records at times when they were supposed to have been at their posts. Some consuls' private records can be found housed at regional libraries, while those of others cannot. Some courthouses are in such disrepair that finding any record is a daunting and confusing task.

An additional difficulty was expense. This type of research is very costly. This was not the type of project where the historian can simply go to the college or university library and find all of the materials one needs. The research involved a lot of out-of-state travel and one overseas trip. In an effort to have as thorough an understanding as possible of what these men's lives really were like, this historian visited several state courthouses, local community libraries, public and private universities, national regional archives, state archives, and the British National Archives at Kew. The researcher examined many loose handwritten letters from the consuls to their superiors in London and the various replies from the Foreign Office in the United States. At the British National Archives (Kew), the letters are bound and categorized into volumes by years and duty stations. See [Image 1](#) (on page 26) for what these bound volumes look like.

There were times when the researcher thought she would find something and instead found a dead end. At other times, she found materials she never expected to find. Other times, she found she spent money more than once for the same materials to be xeroxed. But, in the end, she found a vast amount of material, both private and public, that form a part of this study. In the end, with the exception of two consuls, the researcher could not find a complete life story

of all the consuls that covered the time from their initial appointment through their final departure. Yet when all the individual pieces of information are added collectively, there exists great insight into a collective story of their time in the Antebellum South. Particular attention was given to the records the researcher found on each consul and how they embraced or rejected slavery and the slave trade.

One of the most daunting tasks revealed itself immediately. No book exists, at least none that this researcher has found, that identifies these men, their duty stations, or dates of service. Records exist for the British diplomatic ministers and foreign secretaries, but not for the British consuls. To solve this omission, the researcher had to visit various libraries and go through city directories, several state archives, and finally one trip across the ocean where she examined over 80 volumes of the British Foreign Service records at the British National Archives at Kew, writing down the names of all those she did not find on the American side of the Atlantic. Appendix A is the result of the researcher's efforts to compile a list of consuls sent to the South. The author created this chart to help other researchers of the British Foreign Office. It is only as complete as the researcher could locate records in Britain and the United States. It is limited to the years 1830 to 1860, the subject matter of this dissertation and only covers those British consuls assigned to the U.S. South. (See Appendix A). In the end, the researcher found many more materials that one could not include in this work but that the researcher hopes she can include in future articles and a future manuscript for publication. With what has begun

here, perhaps in the future there exists the possibility of a funded research project that will name British consuls, their dates of service, and their duty stations around the globe. This would be an invaluable tool for any historian of the British Foreign Office.

1.5 Theory and Argument

The consuls working in the South before the war were “doubly foreign.” That is to say, they were caught between two worlds, British and Southern, living, surviving, and perhaps learning to thrive somewhere in-between. With their identity created on one side of the Atlantic and then completed on the other, these persons make for interesting subjects. What results in some cases was a unique incarnation that was more than just two-sided, British and Southern, but rather was multi-sided with the intermixing of British, white and slave communities. British identity in a transatlantic context is more complicated than this researcher first thought because people in the consular positions go in different directions. While one consul might be completely embedded in Southern culture, another might never immerse himself into his surroundings enough to challenge his British identity. Most lived somewhere in-between. They lived in the grey areas of knowing where they came from, but unsure of where they would travel next. Some consuls acted as if they were unsure of where they “fit” into their surroundings, if they could fit in at all. Constructing a generic British identity is difficult, and in some cases impossible, because each individual came from a different background and his life at an assigned port also

differed. So in effect, there were many different shades of British identity which these men and their families exhibited.¹⁹ Sometimes their local community challenged their British identity and sometimes it encouraged it; and still for others, they gathered a deep understanding of what it meant to be British in the South. The only gauge this researcher has been able to find that clearly defines how Southern these men became is their reaction to slavery. For each consul, this researcher implements a so-called “slavery test” to examine how “British” they were during their tenure as consuls.

Complicating matters more, their British class identity and British community ideals at times conflicted with those of the South, but surprisingly, not in economics. Another area for potential conflict was the British abolitionist world and the slaveholding society in which they lived. The slaveholding communities in which they worked and their country of origin were at times at odds with one another. Because some of these men were stationed for lengthy periods in one port, they could not help but be influenced by their surroundings. Moreover, pulsating through these men’s lives was their personal choice to live and thrive on the periphery.

Another theme these men shared was that they each represented what a nineteenth-century British common class man *could* achieve in the Atlantic World. A world where there was neither government oversight or performance

¹⁹ Due to length and time constraints this study is limited to the consuls and does not investigate with detail the wives or families of consuls. For a study of diplomatic wives and their unique coping skills to living overseas, see Katie Hickman’s *Daughters of Britannia*.

investigation nor vetting for job position. It was a world where words were taken literally to convey action and understanding, and a world where the powerful members of a society could receive insulation, protection, and anonymity that is not clearly obtainable today.

Finally, this dissertation is a study about identity transformation and how the South challenged, changed, and influenced these men's identities. This study presents a diverse and complex British consular identity that evolved and changed into a transatlantic identity for some members of the British Foreign Service stationed in the South. Their change of identity, of course, had serious and unintended consequences for the African Americans whom they encountered.

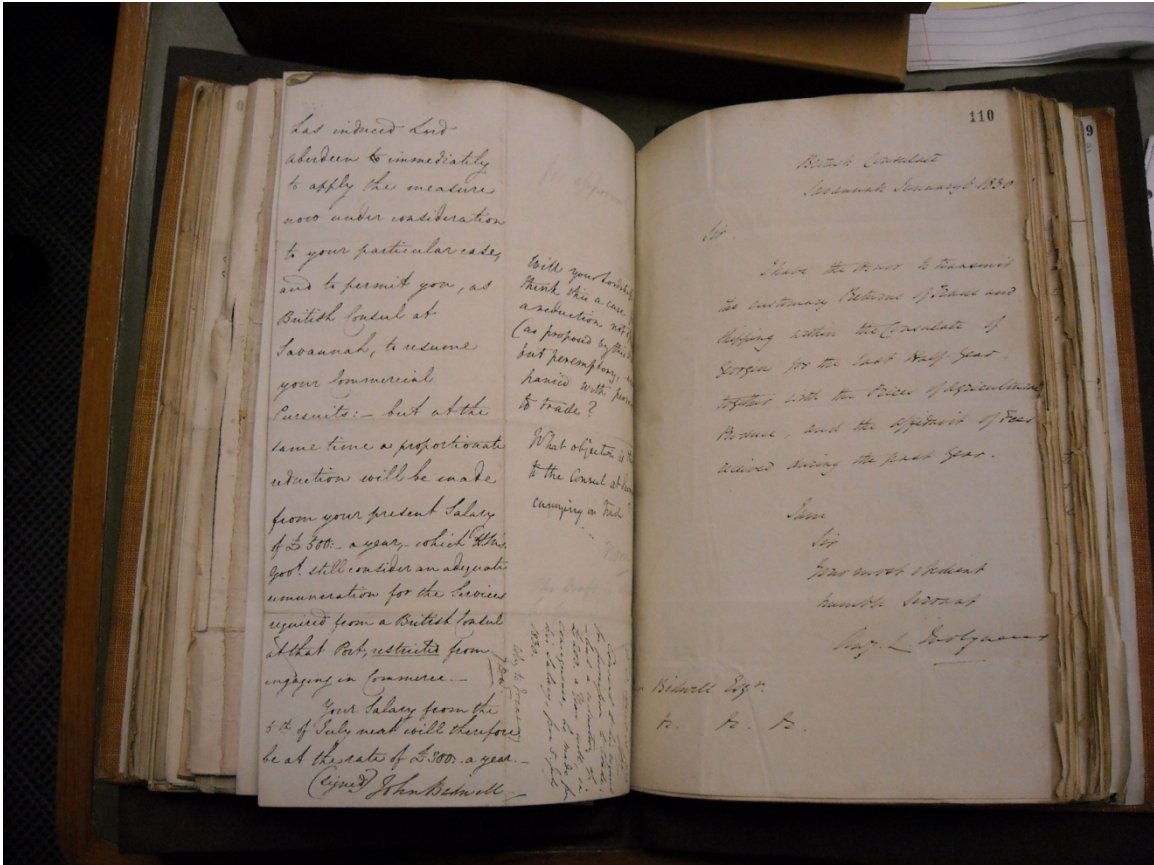


Image 1. Unpublished Manuscript Letters from British Consuls to their Superiors at the Foreign Office. British National Archives (Kew). Photo by author.

CHAPTER 2
THE BRITISH FOREIGN SERVICE: ITS JOURNEY TO
THE AMERICAN SOUTH

You will be struck with a very curious circumstance – namely, that ‘no
climate agrees with an English diplomatist excepting that of Paris,
Florence, or Naples!’²⁰

Lord Malmesbury

The modern British Diplomatic and Consular Service was established only in 1943. An examination of the Foreign Office’s history may perhaps offer some insight into why the nineteenth-century British consuls stationed in the South acted in the manner that they did. The consular office evolved and changed over time. With each administrative change came a change in community identity. Originally established in the fifteenth century to represent a homogenous community, the office changed in the seventeenth century to represent virtually a heterogeneous community, Britain as a whole. New challenges came during the nineteenth century, as Britain’s consuls were caught in the in-between world of enforcement of British laws against slave ownership and the slave trade and living within slaveholding communities, such as the American South.

²⁰ Earl of Malmesbury, *Memoirs of an ex-Minister* (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1885), 238.

Strangely, the consuls were free from British Foreign Office restrictions in all matters personal as long as they performed their official duties, which for most of the nineteenth century were commercial in nature. Several themes defined the nineteenth-century consular service. First were the controversies that led to changes within the Foreign Service, which resulted in George Canning creating reformative legislation. Second, there were the requirements for consular appointments. Third were the burdens, obligations, and duties of office, both official and unofficial. Finally, there were the challenges to each consul's identity.

This chapter begins with a brief examination of the history and procedures of the British Foreign Service. It also examines the personalities of the Foreign Secretaries who served from 1800 to 1860, men whose personal attitudes influenced the effectiveness of Britain's role as the Great Emancipator. In conclusion, the chapter examines consular appointments, duties of office, burdens and rewards.

2.1 Brief History of the British Consular Service

The British consular service began during the reign of King Henry VII. According to historian John Dickie, these early mercantile consuls worked on behalf of their local British communities in foreign locations. Their purpose was to protect the commercial interests of their hometown businesses. Other duties included maintaining friendly relations with foreign port authorities and mediating, if necessary, with local governments and court authorities on behalf of British merchants, ships, and crews that landed at the port. These first consuls

established their offices in the commercially rich sea-going ports along the Mediterranean and Baltic seas. The following generations of consuls continued to grow on an *ad hoc* basis as Britain's empire, trade, and navy expanded. The powerful monarch Elizabeth I established consular posts beyond Western Europe into Russia. As Britain's foreign trade expanded, so too did the importance of her commercial consuls to foreign governments. Before long, foreign countries began recognizing British consuls.²¹

The British mercantile communities selected these early merchant consuls.²² Dickie believes that there were two ways consuls could represent a merchant community. One way was the local community consul. If someone were an established woolen merchant from community "X" and wanted to represent his hometown and other woolen merchants like himself from "X" in other ports, he would petition the "X" merchant community. They would meet and decide. Often the person selected was a person of authority who held a position of some significant local status where his peers recognized him. The new consul then relocated to a foreign destination for a specific time and promoted his merchant group's commercial trade. It was implied that the consul's job was to represent his hometown's merchant community zealously. A second way to become a consul was if someone was part of an overseas British charter company business endeavor. The charter company members would

²¹ John Dickie, *The British Consul, Heir to a Great Tradition* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 5-7.

²² *Ibid.*, 8. The monarchy did not select the early consuls.

meet and vote. They chose individuals who were usually the best commercial traders or, at minimum, came from the most successful commercial trading firms.²³

From the beginning, the consuls could set shipping tonnage fees and regulate tonnage rates. The fees were important because they provided the consuls with income to provide for their families. Additionally, the consuls had to work within the foreign communities in which they lived and with the local foreign governments to ensure that local governments provided necessary services to protect British ships and crews. Living overseas created the first challenge to their local community identity. Some of the many challenges they faced and had to deal with were differences in languages, cultures, traditions, geography, climate, and travel. These early consuls represented their private interests, not national interests. These men never expected to be national liaisons that promoted all British trade; they were advocates only for their hometown or merchant community's trade in foreign ports. Nor did they have any obligations or duties to gather information that might be helpful for England as a whole or any of its government agencies or policies.²⁴ Their whole purpose in living abroad was to promote the economic interests of their hometown community.

²³ Ibid., 6-8. Dickie does not clearly state the two ways someone could become a consul. It is inferred from his examples.

²⁴ Dickie, *The British Consul*, 8.

Everything changed when Oliver Cromwell came to power in the mid-seventeenth century.²⁵ Cromwell inadvertently made the consular agent doubly foreign when he changed the rules of commercial engagement, forcing the consul to act as a virtual representative of all English communities. Now the consular service became an agency working for the state's commercial interest, not just local community interests. According to Dickie, Cromwell believed that the consular service should promote and protect English interests and people as a whole wherever they were in the world.²⁶ Consuls now represented both their hometown interests and national interests. Of course, there was no guarantee that the two were parallel.

This new requirement to represent virtually all of England as whole must have caused inner turmoil and community conflict for many consuls. Sometimes consuls had to choose where their loyalties lay. For some, the choice between what was familiar and what was not had to have been great. These men had to choose between loyalty to their original community (family, economy, and geography), on the one hand, and to Cromwell's national foreign policy on the other. It was as if a consul standing alone on a wooden pier suddenly had to choose between two identities - one familiar, the other foreign. As the consul turned and looked backward over one shoulder, he saw things familiar to him. He saw his family, friends, hometown, and local businesses as well as economic

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid., 9.

friendships and ties. Over his other shoulder; however, he saw a massive, ever-growing country and government in addition to the many diverse communities making up the kingdom. He was now asked to represent them, too.

Cromwell in effect forced the consuls to choose not only who their community was or what community they belonged to, but also their identity, local or national. No longer would the consul have only one identity. Harder still was the potential problem that some of those people, businesses, and communities may have been economic rivals to his hometown, but now he had to represent everyone equally in a prudent and judicial manner. Deciding what to do next with this new governmental requirement must have been exceedingly hard for a person whose primary loyalties remained with his original community.

An additional burden was that one no longer might be an important member of his first community, even if he were or became a significant representative of the growing national political or economic community. Or, he might find himself lost in an ever-growing bureaucracy, having lost the fame, recognition, or local identity of being known and respected for his deeds in his original community. It was as if our consul was pulled not just in two but in many directions and between several different groups, local and national. He had to make sacrifices between the familiar and the foreign. In order to remain as a British consul, his fidelity had to change. This change also affected the Foreign Service.

From the mid-seventeenth century on, consular duty became doubly foreign. No longer did the national government expect these men to represent

only their home or merchant communities in foreign lands. Now the British government forced them to represent virtually any British community overseas. The problem was that, for most, they still identified first with their home communities.

According to Dickie, not surprisingly, loyalty to the national government became the most important qualification for consular service. London expected consuls to be loyal servants to the state and crown. No longer did commercial trade experience simply define the consular job qualifications. No longer did the consuls need to be experts in trade or commercial relations (even as the government expected consuls to seek the best commercial prices for British goods). Nor did it stop London from requesting that consuls continue to seek from local port governments the best relations that benefited England as a whole.²⁷ National interests now took priority over that of any particular charter company or local merchant groups' interests. In the seventeenth-century, for example, in addition to the role of commercial informant and advocate, the consuls were also required to gather information about any military threats to England.

As Dickie points out, the British Foreign Office's administration, policy, and number of consulates varied depending upon the policymakers in charge as well as the resources and monies available. Sometimes areas were so important to England that many consulates were created. The United States became one

²⁷ Dickie, *The British Consul*, 9-10.

of those regions. In 1790, the British established their first American consulate in Boston and by 1800 there were three additional consulates in the U.S. Because of Britain's large eighteenth-century war debts, the number of consuls stationed overseas worldwide declined. The consular office "limped along" without much direction into the nineteenth-century.²⁸ Nevertheless by 1860, representing the importance of changes in British administration and increasing demand for trade products, the government raised the number of consuls in the U.S. to fourteen.²⁹ By the time of the Civil War, a majority of British consulates resided in the American South.

Charleston, Mobile, New Orleans, and Savannah were important to Britain from 1803 to 1860 because these southern port cities exported the largest quantities of cotton in the world.³⁰ The earliest port to export cotton to England, Charleston had been exporting raw cotton since 1748.³¹ Liverpool had been importing American cotton since 1770.³² As the industrial revolution and textile factories expanded, so too did Liverpool's importation of American cotton. For

²⁸ Ibid., 10-11.

²⁹ Eugene Berwanger, *The British Foreign Service and the American Civil War* (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky), 1994, 1.

³⁰ D.A. Farnie, *The English Cotton Industry and the World Market 1815-1896* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979), 137. From 1824 to 1860, New Orleans led the southern ports exporting the largest quantities of raw cotton.

³¹ James A. Mann, *The Cotton Trade of Great Britain* (New York: Augustus M. Kelly Publishers, reprint, 1970), 21.

³² Ibid., 44.

example, in 1820 Liverpool imported about 273,000 bales of cotton, a figure that grew to over a million bales by 1850. In 1820, Britain imported about 572,000 bales of cotton from worldwide sources, which increased to about 1,750,000 bales by 1850.³³ Liverpool was clearly a principal city for England's commercial transactions with the American South. Charleston, Mobile, Savannah, and New Orleans all had British cotton merchants and factors.³⁴ At least one British consul was also a cotton merchant. Edmund Molyneux, British consul for Savannah, owned Molyneux and Witherby, a cotton merchant company located at 70 Bay Street in Savannah. In 1839, Molyneux and Witherby became the largest raw cotton importer into Liverpool, shipping 53,122 bales.³⁵ This averaged a little over 5 percent of the total cotton imports into Liverpool. For comparison, just nine years earlier, Molyneux, W.E. and Company had imported just 5,425 bales of cotton into Liverpool. This is less than 1 percent of that year's total cotton imports.³⁶ Nevertheless, by 1850, the company has disappeared. In 1841 for reasons unknown, the company went bankrupt and the Molyneux

³³ J.R. Harris ed., *Liverpool and Merseyside, Essays in the economic and social history of the port and its hinterland* (New York: Augustus M. Kelly Publishers, 1969), 183. From 1820 to 1850, over 80 percent of England's raw cotton supplies came through Liverpool.

³⁴ A factor differed from a merchant. A factor graded and then bargained for the best price of cotton straight off the pier or wagon from the plantation. A factor then bought the produce commodities based upon orders from several different merchant houses. Lastly, the factor would arrange for delivery of the produce to the merchants' warehouses.

³⁵ Harris, *Liverpool and Merseyside*, 190.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 206.

family's estate in Liverpool was sold to cover the company debts. These ports remained vitally important to Britain until the Civil War. When the U.S. Navy successfully blockaded the 3,500 miles of southern coastline in the 1860s, the four main cotton ports of Charleston, Mobile, New Orleans, and Savannah became less important to Britain and new regions such as Egypt and India became vitally important sources of raw cotton.

2.2 The Foreign Service Office Personnel Hierarchy and Procedures for Dispatch Review

By the nineteenth century, the British Foreign Service had evolved into a bureaucratic fiefdom. At the top was the Foreign Secretary, appointed by and dependent on the Prime Minister. Below him was a permanent under-secretary of state. Between 1827 and 1873, there were three under-secretaries of state: John Backhouse who served from 1827 to 1842; Henry U. Addington who served from 1842 to 1854; and Edmund Hammond (Lord Hammond) who served from 1854 to 1873. Below the under-secretary were the Diplomatic and Consular Corps, composed of separate and unequal divisions. Finally, there were the people who made the Foreign Office bureaucratic machine work: the Foreign Office clerks and secretaries who oversaw the day-to-day operations in London.

At the top of the clerical hierarchy was the Chief Clerk. This was a career position not affected by changes in parliamentary elections. Only two Chief Clerks served between 1824 and 1866. The Chief Clerk worked directly with the Foreign Secretary. Arguably, these men knew almost everything the Foreign Secretaries did. Thomas Bidwell served from 1824 to 1841 and Francis Beilby

Lenox from 1841 to 1866. Both men would be important for answering and forwarding the day-to-day information packets from consuls to the Foreign Secretary. They read and forwarded all official and unofficial consular reports, notes, and letters unless a piece was marked “confidential.” If that happened, the Foreign Secretary read it first and usually asked the Chief Clerk to forward or rewrite his response. Their loyalty, dedication, and efficiency helped the Foreign Secretary digest and assimilate a vast amount of paperwork. The volume of office paperwork continued to increase. However, what private influence, if any, the chief clerks had, on the Foreign Secretary is unknown. The Chief Clerk was important, but he did not work alone.

Numerous other senior and junior clerks and departmental clerks worked in the Foreign Office. According to historian Ray Jones, because so many of these clerks were not necessarily the best skilled for their position, it led to a major change in 1855, when the Civil Service Commissioners (a government committee) requested that the Foreign Office create rules for clerks wanting to work at the Foreign Office. In addition to the traditional qualification of being nominated by the Foreign Secretary, a new candidate had to be young, have good penmanship, be able to read and write correctly in English or French, and to be able to understand the documents sent to him.³⁷

³⁷ Ray Jones, *The Nineteenth-Century Foreign Office, an administrative history* (London: London School of Economics and Political Science, 1971), 42. After 1855, clerks had to be at least 19 years old and submit to a year’s probation. After 1855, merit determined promotion, if any given. See Jones, 27. The laxity in clerical hires did not escape the attention of nineteenth-century English fiction writers. For example, Anthony Trollope in *Three Clerks* informed

During normal working hours when dispatches arrived at the Foreign Office, the clerical staff quickly sent the dispatch on to the correct department identified on the outside of the document. The clerical staff at that department registered the incoming dispatch in the appropriate departmental diary before the under-secretary read it. As a matter of protocol, clerks delivered all arriving foreign and domestic Foreign Office correspondences unopened to the under-secretary. Senior clerks prepared draft answers to the dispatch before the under-secretary “vetted” the letter and ensured it was properly answered. Only the most important dispatches were forwarded to the Foreign Secretary for another check before a final copy was prepared for his signature. Copies of all correspondences were kept and registered in the departmental diary. Only the most important were sent on for the prime minister’s cabinet to read. Working efficiently, this process took only two or three days. Furthermore, the Foreign Office had its own library and the librarians who properly filed the dispatches and copied replies.³⁸

readers that one clerk, who took the Civil Service exam passed to the amazement of his friends. The clerk told his friends that he “knew nothing, and pretended to know nothing” and had “told the chief clerk that he was utterly ignorant of all such matters (referring to the mathematics on the exam), that his only acquirements were a tolerably correct knowledge of English, French, and German, with a smattering of Latin and Greek, and such an intimacy with the ordinary rules of arithmetic and with the first books of Euclid, as had been able to pick up while acting as a tutor, rather than a scholar, in a small German university.” See Anthony Trollope, *Three Clerks* (Middlesex: The Echo Library, 2010), 20. Readers will recognize a similar critique by Charles Dickens of the government clerks that worked in the “Circumlocution Office” in *Little Dorrit*.

³⁸ Jones, *The Nineteenth-Century Foreign Office*, 20.

If, on the other hand, dispatches arrived after hours, one of the clerks who lived at the headquarters of the Foreign Office docketed the item, and forwarded it in a locked box to the corresponding under-secretary of state at his home. After that person had read the dispatch, it was forwarded to the Foreign Secretary's home. The Secretary would write his comments on a scratch sheet of paper or sometimes on the document itself or in some other way signify that he had read it. The dispatch was then returned to the under-secretary who had sent it.³⁹

2.3 Foreign Secretaries: Background and Characteristics of Office Holders

The men who served as Foreign Secretary gained their positions by the patronage system. When they fell out of grace, the political leaders at the time replaced them. Altogether, there were seven different Foreign Secretaries between 1830 and 1866. Some of them served more than once. Henry John Temple (3rd Viscount Palmerston) dominated much of the nineteenth century British Foreign Office either directly (when in power) or indirectly (when he was not in power). He served from 1830 to 1834, 1835 to 1841, and 1846 to 1851. After 1851, he was elevated to the position of Prime Minister, serving in that capacity from 1855 to 1858 and again from 1859 to 1865. By all accounts, Palmerston took his position seriously. As Foreign Secretary, he refused to delegate his work to his under-secretary and instead used him as a copyist.

³⁹ Ibid. This is perhaps what happened to the document mentioned in Chapter 5 regarding Mrs. Davidson that contains handwritten comments by the Foreign Secretary and his private secretary.

Therefore, he had two secretaries. He had one secretary that copied all the official incoming and outgoing correspondences while his other secretary dealt with Palmerston's private and confidential correspondence. According to historian Ray Jones, Palmerston believed that it was his job as head of the department to be "liable any day and every day to defend [himself] in Parliament; in order to do this, [he] must be minutely acquainted with all the details of the business of [his] offices and the only way of being constantly armed with such information is to control and direct these details [himself]."⁴⁰ Clearly, Palmerston took his position very seriously. After he left office, Palmerston informed his successor, Lord Granville, that the duties of office required on average between seven or eight hours each day dealing with the normal business of running the British Foreign Office. However, Palmerston was quick to point out that unexpected or parliamentary demands often supplemented the normal hours of operation.⁴¹ By many accounts, Palmerston deeply enjoyed serving as the Foreign Secretary. Later Foreign Secretaries commented on Palmerston's work habits. In 1864, Lord Malmesbury believed that Palmerston worked ten hours a day as the Foreign Secretary.⁴² Sometimes, Palmerston's dedication annoyed those who visited him at his office. Diplomat Van de Weyer remembered waiting

⁴⁰ Jones, *The Nineteenth-Century Foreign Office*, 14.

⁴¹ Lord Edmond Fitzmaurice, *The Life of Granville George Leveson Gower, Second Earl Granville* (New York: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1905), 46.

⁴² Earl of Malmesbury, *Memoirs of an ex-Minister* (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1885), 585.

a long time for Palmerston in the Foreign Secretary's anteroom. Weyer commented that he "had read through the eight volumes of "Clarissa Harlowe" while waiting for Palmerston.⁴³ Palmerston cast a long shadow over the Foreign Office and was the epitome of the "hard act to follow" as Foreign Secretary. He served as Foreign Secretary for almost fifteen years. Inadvertently, Palmerston set the bar for what a Foreign Secretary should do.

James Harris (3rd Earl of Malmesbury) served briefly in 1852 and again from 1858 to 1859. He differed from Palmerston in work habits and in other areas as well. Specifically, Palmerston and Malmesbury had very different views regarding the problem of slavery. Malmesbury appeared sympathetic to slaveowners. In 1852, Malmesbury as Foreign Secretary commented that Palmerston's "zeal to destroy slavery" in the Atlantic world by forcing Brazilian ships to submit to a right of search in her own waters was an unjust action.⁴⁴ Malmesbury's autobiography reveals his sympathy for the "heroic resistance" of the South during the Civil War.⁴⁵ He cemented his prejudice when he condemned the "negro sympathizers" who petitioned parliament for the removal of the British Jamaican governor who Malmesbury believed was only doing his job in putting down an island uprising in 1865.⁴⁶ Malmesbury fumed that, "[N]o

⁴³ Ibid., 427.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 274.

⁴⁵ Malmesbury, *Memoirs of an Ex-Minister*, 607.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 611.

man has been so unjustly maligned or deserves greater reward; but humbug is the rule of the day."⁴⁷ An individual minister's personal biases, prejudices, and beliefs certainly must have affected, officially or unofficially, the Foreign Office's attitude toward slavery and the slave trade as well as questions of government enforcement.

Another Foreign Office Secretary, Arthur Wellesley (1st Duke of Wellington), served briefly from 1834 to 1835. Generally, Wellington had reservations on British emancipation and wrote a dissenting opinion to the 1833 British Emancipation Act. Arthur Wellesley's votes in the House of Lords reveal that he usually sided with property holders. Furthermore, he believed the £20 million promised to slaveholders would not be sufficient compensation. Finally, the Duke did not believe that the British West Indian slaves were prepared for freedom in 1833 and asked parliament to wait a few more years, "until the [slaves] had been instructed how to bear the change the Legislature was now going to make."⁴⁸

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ The parliamentary debates from the year 1803 to the present time: forming a continuation of the work entitled "The parliamentary history of England from the earliest period to the year 1803." Published under the superintendence of T.C. Hansard. London, 1812-. The *Debates* began publication in 1804. The first series comprised 41 volumes covering 1803-20; these were followed by New Series, 25 volumes, 1820-1830, and then 3d Series, 365 volumes, 1830-91. The 4th Series, 1802-1908, consisted of 199 volumes published by various contractors under the title *The Parliamentary debates (authorized edition)*. The 5th Series, 1909 to date, entitled *The Parliamentary debates (official report)*, is published by the Stationery Office. United Kingdom. *Hansard Parliamentary Debates*, 3d ser., vol. 18 (1833), col. 1227. See also, Michele Anders Kinney, *The Consequences*

Other Foreign Secretaries were not as well known as the Iron Duke and Palmerston. Indeed, some worried about coming up short in comparison when measured against Lord Palmerston's service as Foreign Secretary. The only individual to serve for more than one year during Palmerston's lengthy career at the Foreign Office was George Hamilton Gordon (4th Earl of Aberdeen). Gordon served from 1841 to 1846 and regrettably not much can be found detailing his attitude or work habits as Foreign Secretary. George Leveson Gower (2nd Earl of Granville) served for one year, 1851-52. A bit is known of Granville's opinion of Palmerston's 15-year reign. Granville admired Palmerston's abilities as Foreign Secretary but then questioned his own abilities to follow Palmerston's example as an exemplary Secretary.⁴⁹ James Harris (3rd Earl of Malmesbury) surmised his staff expectations of him: "All the staff were kindly disposed, but I can see that they expected me to give them much trouble and to ask their advice. They were all surprised to see how I knew the routine work, and all the *verbiage* of the profession...."⁵⁰ When Malmesbury assumed the office for the first time in

of Slave Emancipation in the British West Indies, 1833 – 1858 (Master Thesis, University of Alabama at Huntsville, 2005), 89-95.

⁴⁹ Fitzmaurice, *The Life of Granville George Leveson Gower*, 52.

⁵⁰ Malmesbury, *Memoirs of an Ex-Minister*, 239. Malmesbury explained that diplomats had to know the difference between an *officious* and an *official* conversation with foreign ministers. An *officious* conversation was the free exchange of opinions between ministers without fear of their words being construed as binding. *Official* conversations were binding. Malmesbury wrote that he always prefaced a conversation that he never wanted to be bound by informing the other minister what type of conversation they could have. Malmesbury, 226.

1852, he received advice from Lord Palmerston. Palmerston advised the young minister to “keep well with France” and to remember the power and prestige of Britain abroad, “and it will be your first duty to see that it does not wane.”⁵¹ As to making appointments overseas, Palmerston warned Malmesbury, “You will be struck with a very curious circumstance – namely, that ‘no climate agrees with an English diplomatist excepting that of Paris, Florence, or Naples!’”⁵² By 1858, Malmesbury noticed a change in the way Europeans conducted diplomacy. The French, he said, called it “Opportunism.”⁵³ After Palmerston left the Foreign Office permanently, Lord John Russell served as Foreign Secretary from 1852 to 1853 and again from 1859 to 1865. George Villiers (4th Earl of Clarendon) served two terms 1853 to 1858 and again from 1865 to 1866.

What all this anecdotal evidence suggests is that the British Foreign Office operated as effectively and efficiently as the person in charge. The Foreign Secretary’s personal or professional opinion, position, and work habits set the tone for the office and staff. Lord Malmesbury explained British nineteenth-century politics when he stated that ministers and others in power viewed their offices as their birthrights, “and upon those who deprive them of it as brigands who have robbed them of their property.”⁵⁴ Members of the British

⁵¹ Ibid., 238.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Malmesbury, *Memoirs of an Ex-Minister*, 446.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 423.

aristocracy filled the leadership positions during the nineteenth century and in doing so, set the tone, policy, pattern, and practice for Foreign Office lay employees. While lesser clerks or staff employees ran the day-to-day operations, the Foreign Secretary addressed foreign policy issues. Some of those issues included domestic and legal concerns overseas.

2.4 Requirements for Appointment and Duties of a Consular Office

The patronage system continued to characterize the Foreign Office until after World War II. After Cromwell made the consular position a state appointment, the British patronage system allowed men who would otherwise be unsuitable for duty to serve. Its failure was that it elevated men based solely on their ties to those with enough power to place them in a government position. That meant that not necessarily the best-qualified candidate received the post. The problem lies in the fact that these men, regardless of their qualifications, were placed in immediate positions of trust.

Under the patronage system, anyone with a close enough contact to the sovereign or the Foreign Secretary could secure an appointment for a family member or friend. Most nineteenth-century consuls did not have any prior overseas or diplomatic experience and were unsuitable for the job. Most of these men lacked any real knowledge of the culture and traditions of the area to which they were assigned. This void could cause problems in living and doing business in a region. The consuls simply showed up at their assigned ports with little understanding of what they would find. Since there were no qualifications for

foreign language proficiency, consuls were not required to speak the local language. Language barriers could cause discourse problems. For example, consuls who did not speak the local language would be unable to work directly with local merchants. Consuls would have to work with interpreters who were familiar with the local business practices. If a country required some sort of socializing and even haggling as a part of their community business practices, new consuls were at a disadvantage. Even where the local language was English, communities would often have their own customs and use idioms and vernacular speech that meant specific things to people in the area but which were lost on the newly-arrived consul.

As a result, these British consuls often failed. Because they did not understand the local language, or how the local governments operated, they were unable to help protect and promote British overseas shipping and merchant interests. An 1809 Foreign Office memorandum places this problem in perspective. It criticized the patronage system because it had sent

[c]onsuls abroad like lost sheep in the Wilderness, without any sort of instructions or any information respecting their duty, in consequence of which they have been obliged to follow the steps of the Predecessors, and are generally considered by merchants as doing more injury than service to the Trade which they are intended to protect.⁵⁵

⁵⁵ Dickie, *The British Consul*, 11. See also, Charles Ronald Middleton, *The Administration of British Foreign Policy, 1782 – 1846* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1977), 245.

The Foreign Office must have known of such mistakes when sending these consuls out to foreign countries. Given the government's inadequate preparation of its consuls, it is amazing that any performed their job effectively.

The Foreign Office expected its nineteenth-century consuls to perform many duties. Officially, the government ordered each consul to

give his best advice and assistance, when called upon, to His Majesty's Trading Subjects, quieting their differences, promoting peace, harmony and goodwill amongst them, and conciliating as much as possible the Subjects of the two Countries upon all points of difference which may fall under his cognizance. In the event of any attempts being made to injure British Subjects, either in their Persons or Property, he will uphold their rightful Interests, and the Privileges secured to them by Treaty, by due representation in the proper official quarter. He will at the same time be careful to conduct himself with mildness and moderation in all his transactions with the Publick Authorities, and he will not upon any account urge claims on behalf of His Majesty's Subjects to which they are not justly and fairly entitled.⁵⁶

Additionally, the Foreign Office stressed the need for consuls to follow the laws, British and foreign. For example, it asked each consul to

bear in mind that it is his principal duty to protect and promote the lawful Trade and trading Interests of Great Britain by every fair and proper means, taking care to conform to the Laws and Regulations in question; and while he is supporting the lawful trade of Great Britain, he will take special notice of all prohibitions with respect to the export or import of specified articles, as well on the part of the State in which he resides, as of the government of Great Britain, so that he may caution all British subjects against carrying on an illicit commerce to the detriment of the Revenue, and in violation of the Laws and Regulations of either County; and he will not fail to give this Department immediate notice of any attempt to contravene those Laws and Regulations.⁵⁷

⁵⁶ Ibid., 30.

⁵⁷ Dickie, *The British Consul*, 30.

Moreover, the consuls, at a bare minimum, were required to write annual commercial reports describing the volume and nature of foreign trade in their assigned region. These reports, based upon their own observations and judgments, had to include information not just about the main port but also any other ports within their region. Lastly, the consuls had to report any advantages or disadvantages to British trade they perceived.⁵⁸ Beyond the required yearly reports, a standardized system of reporting information to the Foreign Office was never created. Nor does it appear that the Foreign Office ever expected there to be one. Both the Foreign Office and the consuls sent letters and replies back and forth to each other on what appears to be on an “as needed” basis.

The list of consular unofficial duties varied according to their assignment. According to Middleton, for example, consuls stationed on the French and Dutch coasts were expected to correspond with the Secretary of the Treasury in an effort to help prevent smuggling across the English Channel. The consul at Calais received an extra £200 each year to forward dispatches across the continent. Several consuls even acted as insurance agents for Lloyds. The government utilized several consuls in France to gather intelligence on the French navy and army. British consuls at Nice and Brest reported on French naval activities.⁵⁹ However, the Foreign Office barred most consuls from assuming higher political duties. The only exceptions are the Chargé d’Affaires

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Middleton, *The Administration of British Foreign Policy*, 252-3.

consuls in Peru, Chile, and Brazil. These individuals became the chief diplomats of the British crown and therefore more resembled British ministers than consuls.⁶⁰ Beyond the rare escorting of visiting foreign diplomats or consuls at their assigned ports, the British consuls in the American South did not have any formal diplomatic functions for the years covered in this study.

Once it had chosen and commissioned, the Foreign Office did not directly supervise its consuls. The United States government generally recognized the British consul as the commercial agent for Great Britain. Middleton believes that after George Canning's reformatory Consular Act in 1825 the service became a more respectable vocation. However, the consular department never enjoyed the full political influence or status of the Foreign Office as the diplomatic service did. Inadvertently after Canning's reformatory act in 1825, British school peers and other influential persons began to seek consular posts for their friends and families. The service gradually developed into a more respectable position as more candidates sought employment with the Foreign Service. By 1841, Lord Aberdeen could inform Viscount Peel that "his list of consular candidates was numerous beyond all precedent."⁶¹ As the years passed, competition among consular candidates increased for prime European and American posts.

Competition had the unexpected consequence of increasing diversity within the consular service, thereby creating a new breed of consuls. As Platt

⁶⁰ Ibid. 253.

⁶¹ Ibid., 250.

points out, there were the “dandies” such as Beau Brummell and Thomas Raikes; the explorers, David Livingston, Richard Burton; the archaeologists, Henry Rawlinson and Charles Newton; the retired military officers, and the men of letters, such as Charles Lever, James Hannay, and G.P.R. James.⁶² Middleton asserts that “[b]reeding and gentility counted more than education and ability, at least on initial appointments if not ultimate advancement” for the diplomatic core.⁶³ However, as for the consular service, consuls were not chosen based upon their education, job interviewing skills, written exam scores, cultural sensitivity, or foreign language abilities. Class status and whom one knew determined a person’s suitability to serve.

Throughout the nineteenth century, consular appointments continued to be a vital part of the private and privilege patronage of the Foreign Secretary. Even though the Crown could refuse to sign a consular commission appointment, the Queen routinely approved whomever the Foreign Secretary recommended. This researcher could not find any attempt by the Queen to block a nomination. The Foreign Secretary held the real power of consular appointment. The Foreign Secretary determined who received which commission. Even though some consular clerks or vice-consuls could move up to a consular appointment, they had to receive the Foreign Secretary’s permission to remain at the post. As Platt points out, most candidates secured their positions by virtue of a list kept by the

⁶² D.C.M. Platt, *The Cinderella Service* (Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books, 1971), 21.

⁶³ Middleton, *The Administration of British Foreign Policy*, 259.

Secretary of State. These names came from not only the Secretary of State but also from any other aristocrat or politician whose name carried great weight at the Foreign Office. Nominee support also came from those hoping to share in the rewards, such as business partners, family members, and friends. Coveted appointments ensured that favors were distributed, promises made, enemies placated, and vanities satisfied.⁶⁴

As mentioned previously, there were no special qualifications for consular service. Edmund Hammond, Under-Secretary of the Foreign Office, commented in 1858 that

I believe that there is nothing which a consul is required to perform, which a man of sense, temper, and judgment might not learn to do efficiently, after an experience of six months in his office.... I think the manner in which our consuls are selected is better calculated to produce good public servants for our purposes than any more exclusive system.⁶⁵

Those who served were never expected to be experts in fields such as census taking, vital statistics, commercial transactions, marketing, accounting practices, labor issues, diplomacy, international legal issues, product promotion, or world markets. In an effort to educate the consuls, the government in 1855 began instituting a mandatory three-month preliminary training period at the Foreign Office headquarters prior to initial overseas assignments. This mainly clerical

⁶⁴ Platt, *The Cinderella Service*, 21-22. Examples of odd consular patronage include the son of a wet nurse to Queen Victoria and the son of a tailor that a Duke had refused to pay and instead promised to make the son a consul.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 26. Consuls were expected to learn within six months of a first appointment what to do.

training ensured that consuls were trained to copy, register, and seal dispatches. This training was not conducted satisfactorily as the chief clerk commented later when reprimanding a lone consul for the individual's inability to handle proper documentation details. Sometimes the Foreign Secretary waived the three-month requirement and sent consuls directly overseas.⁶⁶

The Foreign Service never depended upon consular effectiveness or efficiency. Nor did the Foreign Office provide any government oversight or a superior looking over a consul's shoulder judging or assessing the work performed. There was never a professional development plan written or implemented, nor an end-of-year evaluation or self-evaluation ever developed. The consular service represented an earlier era. An era when once assigned to a government position, it was extremely difficult from which to be fired. Dutiful work was expected, but rarely regulated by superiors.

Consuls were secure in their positions so long as they performed their duties well enough that they did not gain negative attention from their superiors. Reappointments were based on personal requests, party patronage, need, and likeability. Some men were career men who moved from consulship to consulship every three to five years while others remained at the same posting for most of their careers. It was a system where, before 1855, promotion was never based on merit. Those rare few who were fired either embarrassed the Foreign Office or complained too much about low wages. For example, in 1841,

⁶⁶ Ibid., 26-27.

Lord Palmerston sought the removal of the British consul at Leipzig because he found out that the consul, Mr. Hart, owned a gambling house in London.⁶⁷ In America, Mobile's vice-consul, Charles Tulin, saw his first complaint to Lord Lyons in 1859 of a low salary result in a salary increase. His second complaint in 1860 resulted in his dismissal.⁶⁸

2.5 *The Class System on the Periphery and at Home*

Another problem these men faced, living on the empire's periphery, was how best to fit into the local or indigenous class system. Class is but one of a number of intersecting and constantly shifting parts of identity formation. Identities are not static. They are multiply constituted, constantly changing, and should be understood as such when evaluating and analyzing communities. Each community would have its own identity. Because communities themselves can be entities that both accommodate and antagonize between the indigenous and non-native populations, class can be used as a measurement tool to demonstrate and amplify differences. In its simplest form, it is the "insiders" versus the "outsiders."

British nineteenth-century notions of class defined job placement and advancement. Only certain members of British society could be diplomats or consuls. The British diplomatic and consular corps were composed of two different class systems. Members of the aristocracy joined the diplomatic

⁶⁷ Middleton, *The Administration of British Foreign Policy*, 250-1.

⁶⁸ Berwanger, *The British Foreign Service*, 174, note 12.

service, whereas members of the merchant class or retired military officers joined the consular service. At the upper level, British ambassadors, ministers, and envoys originated from the aristocracy and were stationed in foreign capitals to act as government agents and transmit official correspondences to the consuls. A class based hierarchical system permeated the Foreign Office, which limited opportunities for consuls. Transferring from the consular corps to the diplomatic corps was not an avenue of advancement that consuls could expect.⁶⁹ The general lack of promotion opportunity was the worst feature of the service. It appeared that the British Foreign Secretaries were decidedly prejudiced against promoting members of the merchant class into the diplomatic core. The consuls lacked the proper lineage or patronage within parliament and maintaining aristocratic family placement within British society meant more than government efficiency. For example, George Canning always objected to the promotion of any consul to the diplomatic service. He called such promotions “unjust to the lower ranks of the diplomatic service.”⁷⁰ Just what he means by “unjust” is unclear; however, it is clear that he was prejudiced against the consular service, demonstrating that British identity based itself on class placement.

As members of the merchant class, consuls automatically became part of the nineteenth-century English middle class. The middle class can be defined as

⁶⁹ However, according to Eugene Berwanger in *The British Foreign Service and the American Civil War* at least one time a consul was promoted to the diplomatic corp., at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Berwanger, *The British Foreign Service*, 1.

⁷⁰ Middleton, *The Administration of British Foreign Policy*, 247.

those that used their minds and not their hands for work - men such as bankers, lawyers, and clerks. For example, according to Liza Picard in *Victorian London: A Tale of a City*, anyone earning between £100 and £1,000 a year would qualify as middle class. By examining the British 1861 Census tables, Picard reveals a certain class structure, which she breaks down based upon wealth.⁷¹ Consuls in the United States port cities earned from about £500 per year, with £170 for reimbursements which placed them within the upper middle class. They were also free to seek additional employment. In effect, these men, if they made over £1,000 annually, using Picard's tables, could be considered to have crept into the basement of the upper class, if British class structures are judged upon wealth and not birthright. But the nineteenth-century British social class hierarchy system in place at the time ensured that these men remained members of the British non-noble class.

However, in the United States, the opportunity existed for these men to be a part of the upper classes. In 1833, members of Savannah's upper merchant class usually had an annual income worth ten thousand pounds sterling or forty-

⁷¹ Liza Picard, *Victorian London: The Tale of a City, 1840-1870* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2005), 95. According to Picard, the extreme upper class was reserved for those making over £5,000 yearly and only composed about 7,500 British subjects. Those making between £1,000 and £5,000 was only 42,000. The middle class making between £300 and £1,000 was a larger number of about 150,000 subjects and the next largest number was those subjects making between £100 and £300 yearly composing about 850,500 subjects. The largest group defined as middle class making their living by using their minds and not their hands was 1,003,000 subjects making less than £100. The remaining working population of about 7,857,000 subjects was members of the working class all making less than £100 per year.

five thousand dollars. Coastal Georgia planters had higher annual incomes. A.L. Molyneux, the consul in Savannah, believed the southern planters were worth between one hundred fifty thousand dollars or twenty to thirty thousand pounds.⁷² The planters, however, lived an extravagant lifestyle that as Molyneux explained to the Board of Trade, created excesses that reduced them to a state of “beggary and poverty.”⁷³ Molyneux appeared resentful of the Georgia planter class.

A financial burden of class status and Foreign Service was the hiring of private staffs. Consuls were expected to maintain a household staff. Using Picard, based upon the consuls’ income-level class status, each consul was expected to hire a cook, housemaid, nurse maid, and a male servant.⁷⁴ If they could afford it, most southern consuls hired local townspeople to become their staff. However, the more wealthy consuls looked beyond the locals to staff their needs. Edmund Molyneux, the consul at Savannah, illustrates this tendency. According to the 1860 United States census, he employed a multi-national staff including a governess from Paris, a coachman from Liverpool and two female

⁷² A.L. Molyneux to the Board of Trade, 19 July 1833, Great Britain. Consulate, Savannah Papers, 1816-1875, Duke Special Collections Library, Duke University, North Carolina.

⁷³ A.L. Molyneux to the Board of Trade, 19 July 1833, Great Britain. Consulate, Savannah Papers, 1816-1875, Duke Special Collections Library, Duke University, North Carolina.

⁷⁴ Picard, *Victorian London*, 129.

servants, one from Liverpool and the other from Hanover.⁷⁵ His diverse staff reflects who he was and his personality.

Class dissatisfaction also manifests itself in terms of how the Foreign Office ignored the consular service. It appeared that the consular service remained the unacknowledged branch of the Foreign Office until 1943 when the diplomatic and consular departments finally became merged. Therefore, despite Britain's rapid growth in commercial and industrial activities in the nineteenth-century, the Foreign Office paid very little attention to the consuls and their private lives. The Foreign Office neglected them because the consular service mainly gathered information and reported to government departments, such as the Treasury and the Board of Trade, than fulfilling diplomatic pursuits. One historian calls those who served in the consular service the "social outcasts in the network of officialdom supervised by the Foreign Office."⁷⁶ The Foreign Office subjected consuls to a hierarchy "where social distinctions and snobberies were really important. The consul was ill-regarded by his social superiors, and it was from among his social superiors that his official superiors were drawn."⁷⁷

Very often, surely, consuls must have felt insecure and had low self-esteem. These feelings continually permeated the professional lives of the

⁷⁵ Georgia Historical Society, *The 1860 Census of Chatham County, Georgia* (Southern Historical Press, 1979), 262. His servants listed on the census were Mrs. Deveisserole - governess, William Beddows – coachman, Ann Beddows – servant, and Julia Peffer – servant. No other servants were listed.

⁷⁶ Middleton, *The Administration of British Foreign Policy*, 244.

⁷⁷ *Ibid*, 244.

consuls in whatever work they performed for the Foreign Office. It mattered little to the Foreign Office what they did within the foreign community where they lived because all they were asked to do was gather information and report back to the government on issues involving mainly commercial and trade relations. These consuls supposedly were the eyes and ears of the Foreign Service but, in reality, they were little more than secretaries of only occasional value. So in their minds, consuls needed to “prove themselves” in some way with their family and friends, and in the communities in which they lived.

Being a consul marked one as a middle class person in Britain. But in some foreign ports among locals, being a consul brought perceptions of a higher status. British communities included family and friends at home in England and locally among the British merchant class in their assigned ports. The consuls often found themselves adrift in foreign communities and isolated from their family and friends. They had to seek perceived socially equal members of the local middle class to fulfill their need for camaraderie and belonging. They had to lean on these individuals to introduce them into the correct social circles at their assigned ports. They needed help to navigate their way through a locality's social customs, traditions, and language. Being ignored by their superiors may have led some consuls to seek recognition in their foreign communities by whatever means available. If the basic need for attention was being ignored, then the consuls would naturally seek out other sources to fulfill their needs. Perhaps they could turn their position as consul into a means of improving their

status within a foreign port. This may be why some British subjects spent their entire careers serving Britain's Empire overseas.

Another option for fulfillment and social advancement would be economic and business ventures. Because they were not receiving the recognition they felt due them from the diplomatic corps or the Foreign Office officers, consuls aspired to advance socially and economically within the overseas British or Southern communities in which they lived. Involvement in local community events and economies, such as the cotton trade, gave them the means to fulfill their aspirations within the local British and merchant community, thereby fulfilling their need for British and community recognition.

2.6 Controversies of Office

Several themes run through the history of the Foreign Office. Most importantly, work in the service always involved controversy. One issue that caused a great deal of controversy within the Foreign Office was pay. Salaries varied depending upon the year and taxes collected, which varied with the state of British finances and trade. As a result, the consuls never had a consistent salary scale. From 1822 to 1824, the consuls' salaries became subject to a ten percent reduction in pay. The Lord Commissioners of the Treasury wanted the ten percent pay reduction to last for five years. But after two years and for reasons unknown, the government revoked the reduced pay order.⁷⁸ The

⁷⁸ Jason Buller, Treasury Chambers to James Wallace, His Majesty's Consul in Georgia, 30 June 1824, Great Britain. Consulate, Savannah Papers, 1816-1875, Duke Special Collections Library, Duke University, North Carolina.

average annual pay for consuls in the South averaged about £500 with an additional £170 for expenses. Distributions of the funds came from the Majesty's Paymaster General.⁷⁹

Examined in the context of British and government hierarchy, the British Secretary of State received £5,000 yearly in a consolidated salary beginning in 1831 until 1870.⁸⁰ On the other end of the pay scale, clerks attached to the Consular Department from 1826 to 1868 received the short end of the stick financially. For example beginning in 1826, the clerks whose duty it was to keep track of the consular accounts received only £100 in yearly salary and nearly a half-century later, in 1868 when the office ceased to exist, the pay had only increased to £360 yearly.⁸¹ Meanwhile, the Superintendent of the Consular Department received an annual salary of £500 in 1826 that, for whatever reason, never increased.⁸²

⁷⁹ Earl Russell to W. Tasker Smith, 13 March 1865, Great Britain. Consulate, Savannah Papers, 1816-1875, Duke Special Collections Library, Duke University, North Carolina. Note: this correspondence states that consuls were restricted from trading. See Middleton, 332. According to Middleton, the only U.S. consul prohibited from trading was the New York consul. That consulate was listed in the 1832 Act that prohibited certain consuls from trading.

⁸⁰ J.M. Collinge, *Office-Holders in Modern Britain VIII, Foreign Office Officials, 1782 – 1870* (London: University of London Institute of Historical Research, 1979), 10. A “consolidated salary” was the total amount paid that equaled the yearly salary in addition to office fees and other minor perquisites.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 37. The office ended because it was transferred to the Chief Clerk's Department in 1868.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 48. The position was discontinued in 1851 with the retirement of the clerk who had the position from 1826 to 1851. Thereafter it was performed by a Senior clerk without any additional monies. In 1866, the Commercial and

Interestingly, the Superintendent in charge of the various parliamentary commissions for the Suppression of the Slave Trade also received a lower than expected salary. The Superintendent of the Slave Trade Department received an annual allowance of £200 in 1824 that increased to only £400 by 1845.⁸³ It appears that the government rewarded the Senior Clerks more than it rewarded the Superintendent. From 1822 to 1870, Senior Clerks received annual salaries from £700 to £1,000.⁸⁴ Why the Slave Trade Superintendents were paid smaller salaries than their Senior Clerks is unclear. Perhaps it was because the Superintendents were normally political appointments. The Senior Clerks were responsible for the day-to-day running of the office while the Superintendents became honorary positions. This disparity in assigned duties perhaps explains the difference in yearly salaries.

How to pay the consuls became another issue that troubled the Foreign Office. Before 1825, most consuls depended for income upon their private business endeavors and fees charged for their services, rather than solely on their government salaries and allowances. In 1825, Canning changed that by proposing the Consular Salary Act. It had a two-fold purpose: first, to regulate

Consular Department was formed and an annual salary of £250 was given to the Senior Clerk in charge.

⁸³ Collinge, *Office-Holders in Modern Britain*, 48. The office was discontinued in 1845 when the clerk that had been performing it retired. Thereafter the job was executed without any additional monies by one of the Senior clerks.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 20. Each Senior clerk's total combined pay was capped at £1,000.

what the consuls could charge for their services; and second, to create a paid, professional staff whose only interest was to protect and promote British trade.⁸⁵ The 1825 list of acceptable fees included such things as issuing certificates for a bill of health, a ship's manifest, and notary fees for visas. Interestingly, the 1825 Act included a system of fines to be levied against any consul who charged more for fees than the act provided. Fees could only be charged for services performed and could not be based on the value of the cargo or on the tonnage of the vessel.⁸⁶ The overall effect lowered fees charged and collected in most ports. In order to stimulate more trade and continue to regulate consuls' fees, parliament in 1855 revised the fee list again. The new fee list included additional fees for charges such as issuing certificates for seamen, opening a British subject's will who was not a seaman, and the profitable two-and-a-half percent commission for managing the property of a British non-seaman subject who had died intestate. Furthermore, consuls had to post printed copies of their fees at their assigned port customs houses.⁸⁷

Before the 1825 Act, consuls did not receive an official government pension. Some continued to receive yearly allowances from the Civil List when they retired, but that number was always few because consuls had to turn 70 in

⁸⁵ Middleton, *The Administration of British Foreign Policy*, 248.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 248.

⁸⁷ Dickie, *The British Consul*, 18.

order to draw their pension.⁸⁸ The 1825 Act created a unique and controversial pension plan for the consuls. Under the Act, the consuls acquired the right to a pension based upon their years of service and individual humanitarian acts. The Act, in effect, offered incentives for consuls to perform specific acts of humanitarian service in their assigned port communities with the knowledge that what they did could be directly rewarded in their pension fund. For example, consuls who gave money for the construction of churches, hospitals, or burial grounds for British subjects could also contribute that same amount to their pension fund.⁸⁹ Thus, the consuls had a monetary incentive to provide humanitarian deeds for British subjects.

The management of the Foreign Office pension plan produced another controversy because the Foreign Office administered it equitably but not equally. Consuls had to provide a yearly five-percent contribution of their salary to their pension fund, whereas ambassadors did not have to. Mathematically, there was a difference. If a consul received an annual salary of £500, reduced by five percent yearly for his pension fund, then at the end of 25 years he had contributed £625.⁹⁰ Until then, he had a reduced net salary of £475 a year to live on. Nineteenth-century consuls could expect a lower retirement pension in return

⁸⁸ Middleton, *The Administration of British Foreign Policy*, 247.

⁸⁹ Dickie, *The British Consul*, 18. The 1825 Act listed what humanitarian acts the consuls would be reimbursed for.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 25. Note: Platt's earlier findings indicate that the 1825 Act withheld one-sixteenth for every year of service up to a maximum of forty-sixtieths. See also, Platt, *The Cinderella Service*, 44.

for their years of service than the diplomatic corps. This plan demonstrates the inequities between the two services and their unequal positions within the Foreign Service Department. Not until the twentieth century would consuls receive a pension plan equal or comparable to other members of the diplomatic service.⁹¹

Duty in the consular service exposed the consuls to parliamentary criticism even though the House of Commons had no direct or real influence over the day-to-day consular service. Members of Parliament (MPs) from time to time criticized the consular service: however, they did very little to change it. The 1825 Act did not set up any type of committee or board that systematically reviewed a consul's experience, determine a method for merit promotion, establish a system for transfers to vary a consul's experience, or institute a unified guaranteed pension plan.⁹² According to Middleton, if any MP attempted to create a commission for inquiry into consular affairs, he quickly met stern resistance from the Foreign Office. For example, John Bidwell, Head of the Consular Department, objected to any inquiries from MPs because he was "afraid they would establish an inconvenient precedent for enquiries into the diplomatic service." The Duke of Wellington felt that the Commons had a sufficient regulatory check on the consular department by its ability to vote on yearly supplies for the department. Wellington never believed that the Commons

⁹¹ Ibid., 25. Consuls' retirement pay was on average £250 a year.

⁹² Dickie, *The British Consul*, 19.

should inquire about or interfere with the organization of the Foreign Office or the patronage system that placed the consuls.⁹³

The casual approach of the British government to consular affairs became evident when some consuls were surprised and dismayed to find that they were not on the Crown's Civil List, while others were. The Civil List was a roll of all government employees and their pay schedules. There was no clear method to getting onto the pay list. George Canning revised the Civil List in order to place the consular service on the same basis as the rest of the government's civil service employees. One result was a reduction in some consular salaries and the elimination of others. For example, a consul stationed at Bordeaux received government pay while the consul at Le Havre did not.⁹⁴ This kind of inequity pervaded the consular service. After Canning's reforms, most consuls received government pay while vice-consuls did not. Most consuls supplemented their pay by charging fees levied on British trade in the ports where they operated. Stephen Lushington, Treasury Secretary in 1818, questioned the legality of this fee collection. He did not believe that British consuls had any legal authority to demand fees.⁹⁵ Nevertheless, the practice continued. Without clear direction from the Foreign Office, the consuls set the revenue fees on British goods. This charge created another inequity. The fees

⁹³ Middleton, *The Administration of British Foreign Policy*, 251.

⁹⁴ Dickie, *The British Consul*, 14.

⁹⁵ Middleton, *The Administration of British Foreign Policy*, 246.

levied on British goods and fees charged for other consular services were not standardized, but varied from port to port. It was possible for British merchant captains to “fee shop” along a coast, seeking the best prices and avoiding the high-priced consuls. This practice must have affected the flow of British commerce in Southern ports, perhaps explaining why at times British goods may be found in one port more than in another port.

After 1825, a consul's salary always depended upon the British economy. While Canning made some progress toward a more uniform system of salaries, the government raised consular salaries to a more professional and respectable level and consuls received some remuneration for their government service. In some places; however, the 1825 Act had a reverse effect. In 1830, the pay of the Consular General in Rio de Janeiro fell from £2,500 to £1,800.⁹⁶ While the 1825 Act officially limited the fees the consuls could charge to provide notary services, many consuls found ways to survive the economic downturn by continuing to engage in their own commercial enterprises. Canning's reform failed to have the full effect it intended.⁹⁷ When the Whigs took office in 1832, they began a policy of attempting to curb government expenditures. One of those policies resulted in a salary reduction for consuls. Palmerston overturned Canning's prohibition. As a result, according to Dickie, private trading practices

⁹⁶ Dickie, *The British Consul*, 20.

⁹⁷ Middleton, *The Administration of British Foreign Policy*, 249.

continued to supplement salaries until the end of the century.⁹⁸ Throughout the time covered in this study, the question of salaries and private trading practices continued to plague the consular service.

The practice of allowing the consuls to charge fees for their services and to engage in their own merchant activities was not as fair as it appeared because it depended upon the consul's location. The more active a port, the larger the private income opportunity existed for a consul. Nevertheless, hope remained for the consul who found himself in a less than desirable post. Not all consuls had a keen sense of business, but some opportunity for profit existed for all. Because the patronage system appointed consuls, not all of them had the business acumen or expertise to make money on their own. Others from a higher-class background may have been worried about associating with persons of a lower class, such as local merchants. It was one thing to receive a government appointment, quite another to interact socially with the local merchant or business classes or to engage in private commercial relations with locals of a lower class. Dickie notes that most consuls were "either too slow off the mark to make a deal before the others, or too naïve to see the possibilities of making a profit out of a commodity easily available in the area but much less so at home."⁹⁹

⁹⁸ Dickie, *The British Consul*, 21.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 14.

The position of vice consul and the service that they provided in the port cities often became a controversial subject. The vice-consuls assisted in the day-to-day operations of the consular district. The Foreign Office officially named vice-consuls up to 1843, and only after this time did the requirement become lax.¹⁰⁰ However, they only received a “pro forma confirmation of the Foreign Office.”¹⁰¹ This title meant that the Foreign Office recognized the vice-consuls, but that it offered only a perfunctory review of the appointment. Consuls informed the Foreign Office whom they wanted named as vice-consul. Typically, the Foreign Office had little or no knowledge of the person selected. Once “confirmed” by the Foreign Office, the individual might be at his post for months, or sometimes years, and could only be removed by the Secretary of the Foreign Office. Consuls could exercise their own discretion in finding a suitable person to serve as vice-consul. Consuls in the South often hired men they found locally, whether British citizens or not, whom they believed reliable.

Most often, vice-consuls were British subjects living overseas and usually were members of the local British merchant class community. Many were born in America to British parents. Often, these men were already established businesspersons and involved in local commercial enterprises. They sought the job to further their own wealth and position.¹⁰² If the vice-consul did not receive

¹⁰⁰ Berwanger, *The British Foreign Service*, 3.

¹⁰¹ Middleton, *The Administration of British Foreign Policy*, 245.

¹⁰² Berwanger, *The British Foreign Service*, 3.

government pay directly, the appointing consul's pay was reduced during the months he was away from office. This income was then paid to the vice-consul. A direct benefit was that consuls and their agents were exempt from local government taxation, a fact which allowed them the opportunity to build their fortunes on the empire's periphery if they had sufficient business acuity and local contacts.¹⁰³ In any case, consuls had to report their overseas incomes to the Treasury and pay British income taxes.¹⁰⁴

Another controversial issue was the question of loyalty. As late as 1861 MPs argued whether consuls worked largely on behalf of British commerce. They feared that the consuls showed more loyalty to their private and family business dealings and sought to amass fortunes rather than work for Britain.¹⁰⁵ Regardless of parliament's concerns, British merchants routinely received appointments to consular positions. One historian believes this took place because the "expense of the service and the uncertainty of financial rewards made it an unattractive alternative to others."¹⁰⁶ Another reason for the difficulty to recruit those other than merchants to the service is that the consular department never benefited from reforms made in the other branches of

¹⁰³ Dickie, *The British Consul*, 14.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 26. Dickie points out that while members of the consular service overseas had to pay income taxes, other Britons that worked for overseas companies did not.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 15.

¹⁰⁶ Middleton, *The Administration of British Foreign Policy*, 247.

government service. For example, commission fees collected for consular appointments remained always higher than the fees charged for diplomatic appointments. Moreover, these fees continued to be charged and collected even after diplomatic commission fees were discontinued.¹⁰⁷ As a result, the question of reliability and creditability continued to plague the consular service for most of the nineteenth century.

2.7 Few Rewards with Many Burdens of Office

Only a few rewards or benefits existed for consuls. In England, consuls received the rights, privileges, and immunities of office.¹⁰⁸ Based upon where they were located, consuls had some overseas benefits. For example, some consuls did not have to pay for horse or carriage licenses.¹⁰⁹ However, they were required to adhere to local, state, and national laws where they were stationed.¹¹⁰ So far as can be found, in the United States consuls did not receive diplomatic immunity in cases of criminal acts.

Burdens also accompanied overseas service. The constant problem of a consuls desire for home visits never ceased. The Foreign Office usually

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Earl Russell to William Tasker Smith, 14 March 1865, Great Britain. Consulate, Savannah Papers, 1816-1875, Duke Special Collections Library, Duke University, North Carolina.

¹⁰⁹ Lord Lyons to Edmund Molyneux, 16 January 1861, Great Britain. Consulate, Savannah Papers, 1816-1875, Duke Special Collections Library, Duke University, North Carolina.

¹¹⁰ Berwanger, *The British Foreign Service*, 3.

responded by allowing the individual one month's leave at full pay and the rest of the time (usually three months if stationed in the South) at half-pay with no allowance for travel.¹¹¹ For consuls stationed a great distance from home, this policy must have had financial, emotional, and/or psychological consequences. As a result, with only a month's leave at full pay, the feasibility of travel home depended upon geographic proximity and travel costs. With the high cost of transatlantic travel, clearly this system was created with European, not Atlantic, consuls in mind. Some consuls never returned home or returned home only upon retirement. It took until 1874 for the Foreign Office to revise this system. Sadly, if a consul died abroad, the Foreign Office did not pay travel funds for the widow and her family's return to Britain. She had to do so at her own expense.¹¹²

Children could also be a burden in the consular service. When consuls married and had children, they and their families had to make difficult decisions. British fathers, mothers, and their children lived in port cities around the globe. Depending on where the consul's family lived, the education of young girls and boys could be very expensive. For example, if a consul wanted to educate a son or daughter at a British boarding school, he had to pay for his children's travel, fees, tuition, and tutors, and then find family members at home to watch over them during school holidays. Sometimes consuls living in distant places had to make even more sacrifices. Some chose to educate only their sons in Britain

¹¹¹ Dickie, *The British Consul*, 25. For special circumstances, leave could be extended for six months.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 26.

and keep their daughters at home. Many fathers who did this hired local tutors to educate their daughters. It is unknown what resentment, if any, this caused within the family unit. Sometimes, wives remained in Britain and raised their children there.¹¹³

Other burdens included the conditions of service. Often consuls arrived with little knowledge of their duties and “with his stock of influence at home exhausted on winning the patronage to which he owed his appointment. What, then, were his prospects?”¹¹⁴ Unless he was fortunate to receive a cherished or prime appointment, the consul faced a potential life of extended exile from home. Compared to English cities and ports, consuls often arrived at less than ideal places. Some consuls found the living conditions abroad rugged, harsh, and alien, which exposed some of their racist feelings.

In 1826, Lord Ponsonby arrived as consul to Buenos Aires, Argentina, which he described as a “depraved country, a beastly place, the vilest place he had ever seen, in which he would certainly have hanged himself if he could have discovered a tree tall enough to swing on.”¹¹⁵ Richard Burton, the famous explorer and British consul to Santos, Brazil described it as “a place where the climate was beastly and the people ‘fluffy’, and where the ‘stinks, the vermin, the

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Platt, *The Cinderella Service*, 27-28.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 28.

food, the n----- [sic] are all of a piece.”¹¹⁶ While in Santos, Burton had to live above a liquor shop and wash his own stockings.¹¹⁷ Captain Galway described his closest social rival in Puerto Rico “would be some bankrupt shopkeeper of the city who had emigrated to that Land of Monkeys and opened a store there.”¹¹⁸ One consul on the West Coast of Africa described his furnishings as a “corrugated iron case with a dead consul inside.”¹¹⁹

With such vivid descriptions as these, it is hard to imagine what attraction, if any, these men found in the Foreign Service. Because there were no pre-purchased, government-owned, consulate buildings, the consuls coming to the South had to find their own lodgings. Often what they found were not ideal conditions. There was also the lingering concern about the lack of proper medical care. The food could be primitive, and there were no London theaters, few books, little in the way of comparable socially company. Life overseas for the consul and his immediate family could become very difficult.

Another burden of office was how to provide for the consulate’s overhead expenses while overseas. Early consuls were responsible for meeting the institutional expenses of their consulates without any government assistance. However, after 1837, the Foreign Office began reimbursing consuls for postage

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Platt, *The Cinderella Service*, 39.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 28.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

spent forwarding diplomatic mail and for other limited overhead expenses in their consulate.¹²⁰ Luckily, the consuls had their private funds from fees charged and local business endeavors to tide them over until their reimbursements came from the Foreign Office.¹²¹

Another burden to consular service was the issue of religion. As members of the Anglican denomination, consuls wanted to find local co-religionists. As part of the 1825 George Canning Consular Salary Act, Anglican chaplains could be appointed to overseas ports where consuls resided. For those consuls who requested a priest be sent to their port, the chaplains' salaries came from a combination of government and private funds. Parliament provided the government funds and British merchants provided the private funds. The Bishop of London appointed the chaplains, but British merchants living in the port could nominate someone for the position.¹²² Not all ports had a British community large enough to support the appointment of overseas priests. However, for the communities able to finance the priests' salaries, another connection with home existed.

2.8 Conclusion

The consular service during the first half of the nineteenth century remained the "step-child" of the British Foreign Office. The Foreign Office did not

¹²⁰ Middleton, *The Administration of British Foreign Policy*, 247 and 250.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 250.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 249.

expect much from the consuls in Southern port cities. While they were excellent sources of information about foreign commercial and industrial activities, there was very little glory or glamor in being a British consul other than what each individual made of it. No amount of ingenuity, resourcefulness, or inventiveness was ever rewarded by the Foreign Office. So the historian's assumption that "few men of great ability, therefore, could be found among the consuls, most of whom performed their duties tolerably well but with little imagination and less enthusiasm"¹²³ was probably true for their governmental lives; it certainly was not true for their private lives.

In light of the nineteenth-century British government's casual approach to service, the patronage system, and Foreign Office emphasis on creating British world trade, their loyalties to the British government and personal economic priorities pulled consuls in different directions. Some sought positions for personal gain, others sought their positions out of loyalty to Great Britain, and still others sought positions out of a sense of obligation to their family. No doubt, a combination of reasons motivated office seekers. As they pursued their careers, consuls also felt the tug of moral, legal, and ethical obligations that often conflicted and played out in ways that the Foreign Office most likely never intended. For British consuls stationed in the U.S. South, such was the case with slavery, the slave trade, slavery economics, and abolition. The questions this study will answer are what did the consuls *really* do, not just what they reported to the Foreign Service? What were their personal lives like? What was their *real*

¹²³ Middleton, *The Administration of British Foreign Policy*, 253.

identity? What challenges did they face? Did they retain their British national identity, or, did they assimilate into the local slaveholding community identity, or did they create a new transatlantic identity? How did their private lives measure up to their public ones?

CHAPTER 3
MIGRATING CONSULS: CHALLENGES IN FORMING IDENTITIES IN THE
TRANSATLANTIC WORLD

Shades of Ev'ning close not o'er us. Leave our lovely bark a while.
Morn alas! Will not restore us. Yonder dim and distant Isle. Still my
fancy can discourse. Sunny spots where friends may dwell. Darker
shadows round us hover. Isle of Beauty, Fare thee well.¹²⁴

William Ogilby

In theory, most committed travelers want to take in all they can when they travel and particularly things such as the atmosphere, the experiences, the people, and the events that make a place special. British consuls sent to the South became sponges soaking up what they saw and then recording their impressions in a variety of sources, including a private diary, as well as official, and unofficial correspondence to the British Foreign Office. When examined collectively, these materials explain the processes British consuls went through to form their transatlantic identity. This chapter investigates selected British consuls who were sent to the South between the years 1830 and 1860.

The British consuls sent to the South were more than committed travelers, they were British public servants sent to promote British commercial relations. How they interpreted and responded to what they saw and

¹²⁴ William Ogilby, *Diary of William Ogilby describing his journey to South Carolina, where he acted as the British Consul at Charleston, 1830, S.C.* Historical Society, Charleston, 26 April 1830.

encountered in the unique period of antebellum history makes them noteworthy subjects for inquiry. They lived a conflicted existence, caught between two worlds, British abolition and Southern slavery. In their new communities, they were doubly foreign. These men were doubly foreign in that they were foreign nationals living within a foreign country. Not truly belonging to their new surroundings, they were far distant from their comfortable and known lives prior to their overseas service. These men did not migrate on their own: the Foreign Office told them where to live and work. An evitable clash of cultures, traditions, and ideologies occurred as they dealt with, as best they could, their new foreign surroundings. These consuls lived in imagined British communities abroad. They sought human and cultural connections to their homeland. Because they were foreign nationals, often the places they were sent, the people had the propensity to be standoffish and view these British subjects as outsiders. Most of all, these British nationals were doubly foreign as regards the conflicting issues of slavery and abolition. Therefore, in order to survive and live within the communities to which they were sent, some consuls created a transatlantic identity that was not completely British nor southern, but somewhere in-between.

This chapter is important to both British and U.S. history scholars of slavery and abolition. On one hand, the consuls were legally obligated to promote British abolitionist moral ideals in a slaveholding world in which they found themselves living, marrying, and working. Examining their lives and actions while in those communities reveals their personal feelings about British abolitionist principles. On the other hand, because most of these men did not

ask for their assignments to the South, examining their lives while there offers a distinctive outsiders' perspective on American slavery, its people, and culture before the Civil War. A diary, official and unofficial correspondences support the idea that the British consuls stationed in the South were conflicted ethically and morally between following British abolitionist laws and living within a system in which only a few members of the Foreign Office, those who had gone "native", openly participated. Of special interest is whether these men became members of the slaveholding class in which they lived for most of their lives.

Regardless of their individual moral stance on slavery, most of the consuls that lived within the South from 1830 to 1860 created a transnational or transatlantic identity. The best approach this researcher has found to demonstrate their transnational progression is to examine systematically the process of these men's migration as recorded by them over the course of their careers in the South. An examination of the migration process provides a construct for understanding the formulation of a transatlantic identity.

According to migration scholars, migration involves a three-step process. First is the physical movement of people from one country to another. Second is the settlement phase, which requires the immigrant to adjust to the local community. Third is the consolidation phase, when immigrants become assimilated or incorporated into the local community in some form or manner.¹²⁵ This chapter will deal with each step of the migration processes separately.

¹²⁵ Mary E. Odem and Elaine Lacy, editors, *Latino Immigrants and the Transformation of the U.S. South* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2009), 2.

3.1 *The Physical Migration Phase*

The British Foreign Office established consulates in national capitals, other cities where there was a large delegation of British subjects, or places where a significant volume of commercial activity transpired. The Foreign Office and British subjects living in the region considered the consuls as the *ex officio* head of the local British community.¹²⁶ Most consuls entered the service between the ages of twenty-five and fifty. Their first appointment could be at any level, as vice-consul, consul, or Consul-General with no prior Foreign Office experience required.¹²⁷ With no avenue normally open for promotions, the only way consuls had mobility in their positions was to ask the Foreign Office to reassign them to a new or better-paying post. However, there was never any guarantee that a consul would receive a reassignment. That decision was within the private domain of the Foreign Secretary and he alone decided who went where. Reassignments, if ever made, were not based on seniority or merit. Therefore, once assigned, most consuls remained at their post for life or until the Foreign Secretary decided otherwise. All the historical evidence examined supports the conclusion that Britain's consuls were virtually never prepared for their postings.

The migration process began with the physical migration to a new post assignment. Physically leaving home affected each consul differently. For

¹²⁶ Donald G. Bishop, *The Administration of British Foreign Relations* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 1961), 292.

¹²⁷ D.C.M. Platt, *The Cinderella Service*, 48.

William Ogilby, a newly appointed consul for Charleston, it was a sad and lonely journey. Ogilby described in his diary how his heart felt broken as he prepared for his voyage to Charleston. He did not want to leave home without saying goodbye to his family and home in Ireland. Ogilby's first official Foreign Office request was for a three-month leave to visit with his family. He wanted to see his homeland before setting sail. However, curiosity about his future home waylaid some of his distress. Ogilby was excited to find a helpful young man onboard his ship traveling to Ireland. En route to Kingston, he questioned the man about his U.S. travels and was very happy when the man "gave me a great deal of information about that country."¹²⁸ Unfortunately, what that information was Ogilby did not say. After staying in Newtown for two months, Ogilby traveled to Belfast to begin his final journey to Charleston. As he made his way to Belfast on the mail coach, Ogilby felt "delighted in having no traveling companion to break in on my train of thoughts, which was melancholy enough, God knows, and yet I ought to be thankful for my lot in life – but some how or other I felt myself more solitary in the world than ever I had done before."¹²⁹ Perhaps being surrounded by all the things he was to miss made Ogilby all the more depressed. Even surrounded by friends and family, he felt isolated and alone. Before he departed, he felt the need to fulfill one last family obligation.

¹²⁸ Ogilby, 7 January 1830.

¹²⁹ Ogilby, 21 March 1830.

Ogilby had his last dinner with his Uncle William, perhaps the person after whom he was named. Ogilby was surprised to receive a diamond pin from his uncle and a request that he write his uncle as often as he could. After having breakfast with another uncle, Robert in Birmingham, Ogilby made his way to the Umpire Coach destined for Liverpool. He lamented that “I have now bid adieu to every friend I have in the world.”¹³⁰ Ogilby felt sad at leaving his beloved homeland and countrymen. Two emotions defined his thoughts on his travels to America: sadness and anxiety. He was sad at leaving his known and comfortable surroundings, and anxious for what awaited him.

After thirty-two uneventful days at sea, Ogilby’s packet ship *Napoleon* arrived at New York’s harbor. Excitedly he wrote, “I never in my life enjoyed any thing so much as the sail from [the inter-coastal waters] to New York, for the scenery is most picturesque and lovely.” He complimented the beauty of the “green woods” he saw from the deck of his ship as it arrived before complaining about being detained for “some time” at the quarantine station. It was common at the time to require foreign visitors be sent to a quarantine station before being allowed to travel within the country. Visitors could be quarantined to ensure that they did not have any commutable diseases. However, perhaps because of his position as a foreign representative, Ogilby only had to endure a brief quarantine. He was happy that after a few short hours, he arrived at the City Hotel just in time for dinner in the common hall. U.S. hotels often served meals in a common hall

¹³⁰ Ogilby, 21 April 1830.

where everyone ate together regardless of class or station. Ogilby was happy to be in New York for another reason. Here he was able to meet his older brother Leonard whom he had not seen for 18 years. Ogilby accompanied Leonard home where he stayed the evening visiting with him and his family.¹³¹ Ogilby was not as alone as he lamented in his diary, for at least one family connection lived in America.

The Ogilbys are an example of a family chain migration pattern as one link connects to the next in moving from one country to another, often seeking better job opportunities. Older brother Leonard had arrived in New York in 1812 to become a merchant. Regardless of the frequency of contact, family connections were deeply important to Ogilby. Family connections provided safety in an unknown or unfamiliar community. They also provided financial security and economic protection when unexpected disasters struck. For example, after Ogilby arrived in Charleston, one of his benefactors, his brother-in-law John Ross, died. When John died in 1830, Ogilby invited his sister's son, also named William, to come to Charleston. Ogilby promised his sister Jane that he would

endeavour to get [William] into some Merchants' house, to further his prospect in life by every means in my power and to incur all the expenses of his residence here until should be in a way to

¹³¹ Ogilby 28 May 1830. Ogilby never mentioned how long his servants were quarantined, but instead commented that his bags and those of his servants were quarantined overnight before being sent on to the City Hotel. Variances in quarantine use determined its effectiveness as a method to control incoming diseases.

support himself – this I consider I owe as a debt of gratitude to his father, whose kindness to me I trust I will never forget.¹³²

Ogilby was grateful for the help William's father had extended to him and he wanted to return that bond and help his nephew in repayment of that debt. At the same time, while he does not state it, he probably loved his sister and wanted to help her provide for her family now that her husband had died.

Other consulate chain migratory families were the Mures and Molyneuxs. The consul at New Orleans, William Mure's cousin George Martin, a British merchant, served briefly as acting consul at Mobile when the full-time consul, Robert Grigg, died suddenly in 1848.¹³³ Edmund Molyneux's younger brother A.L. Molyneux served as the consul at Savannah before Edmund. The consular service in some cases was a brotherhood connected not only by their public service but also by family ties.

Another physical anxiety that threatened consuls was the possibility of danger. Sometimes travel to a new consulate was dangerous. When Ogilby arrived for the first time at Charleston's harbor, he could see the lighthouse at the entrance, but the tide was not in so his sail ship had to anchor two miles offshore. That night a dangerous lightning storm began. He wrote,

at 8 o'clock the [lightning] became so vivid that I was able to read a news paper on Deck, and just as the passengers were preparing

¹³² Ogilby, 7 November 1830.

¹³³ This record is in manuscript form in the British National Archives, Kew, classified under Foreign Office Records (hereinafter cited as F.O.), F.O. 5/490: 81.

to go to bed, it came on all of a sudden one of the most dreadful squalls from the N.E. I ever witnessed, the wind came along the sea exactly like the sound of water bursting through a sluice. All hands of course were immediately summoned on deck, and when “long Tour” called out that the ship was dragging her anchor and running on shore with the speed of a race horse, it may be supposed how frightened some of the people on board were – but thank God, the crew with wonderful exertions succeeded in getting up the anchor and beating the vessel out to sea where we were tossed about for the remainder of the night. Never was I before in a situation to apprehend shipwreck, and truly it is an awful state to be placed in. The lightning was so vivid that I could see distinctly to read a newspaper on deck, our situation might have likened to the poor unfortunate Stag they surround with fire works at Franconis’ Circus, for all around us the lightning was shooting in its zig-zag course as thick as hail.¹³⁴

The weather, climate, and other natural disasters made assignments dangerous, which in turn affected their perception of just how distant and remote the consuls were from the security of their homeland. Ogilby wrote that the South was “certainly not a country for anyone to come to whose nerves cannot stand the ‘war of the elements.’”¹³⁵ One of the first “war of elements” came in his first year when a hurricane struck Charleston in August 1830 and as a result two British ships were wrecked along the shoreline. Being the dutiful public servant, Ogilby paid for hotel rooms for the surviving British seamen and then because they had lost all their belongings, he also provided them with clothing.¹³⁶ In a

¹³⁴ Ogilby 17 June 1830.

¹³⁵ Ogilby, 29 July 1830.

¹³⁶ Ogilby, 19 August 1830. Soon afterward, Ogilby purchased a long boat from one of the wrecked ships for 100 dollars at auction and then gave it to the surviving captain. According to the *Lloyd’s Register of British and Foreign Shipping* for the years 1845, 1853, 1857, 1860, 1863, 1865, and 1867 a William Ogilby owned two ships. A brig, *LawOgilby*, built in 1834 that operated out of the

different episode, it was not the weather but a dangerous Southern climate that affected Ogilby and his ability to perform his duties. Ogilby failed to see a British ship off from Charleston's harbor. He recorded that the hot summer weather made him "cowed" as the British called it, or as the Carolinians called it "back out", meaning Ogilby chose to stay indoors due to his poor health instead of seeing a British ship depart the harbor as he was supposed to do.¹³⁷ Sometimes, other horrifying events such as fires devastated entire portions of a city.¹³⁸ Consuls had a duty to report on British property damages to the Foreign Office. Ogilby dutifully reported within just a few days the Charleston fire of 1838 that destroyed one-third of the city. Even though he investigated obediently the damages, he admitted that he had no idea what the total amount of loss the local British population suffered.

port of London often going to Swansea, South America, Ipswich, Valparso, and a second unnamed barque built in 1843 that operated out of the port of London and with destined voyages to Africa and the Mediterranean. I have not been able to find any records of what was traded on these voyages nor how much income he made. However, Ogilby mentioned in an 1843 letter to the Foreign Office that he had been a merchant in Charleston since 1832. F.O. 5/395: 188. Oddly, in an earlier letter in 1836 to the Foreign Office, Ogilby specifically states "I have declined availing myself of the permission which was granted me in 1832 of engaging in mercantile pursuits from the strong conviction I have ever had on my mind that I could not become a merchant without impairing my usefulness as a public servant, and creating amongst the British residents of the place such a feeling of jealousy towards me as would almost entirely defeat the purposes for which I was sent out to this country." F.O. 5/308: 251. Ogilby in the 1836 letter "fudged" the truth when asking for a salary increase. Ogilby did not tell the Foreign Office that he was a merchant.

¹³⁷ Ogilby, 27 August 1830.

¹³⁸ F.O. 5/326: 37-38. Ogilby informed the Foreign Office that one-third of Charleston burned April, 1838.

Sometimes unseen dangers, such as diseases, made consulate assignments hazardous. For example, Ogilby found himself sitting with an ill friend, Mr. Clough, only to find out later that the man had yellow fever.¹³⁹ While on leave for his health, James Baker, the British consul at Mobile, complained to the Foreign Office that he would rather take another consulate at a reduction of pay before being sent back to Mobile. He complained that malaria and other diseases had caused him to be ill. As a result, Baker needed to have an operation in Paris. He pleaded openly with the Foreign Office to transfer him to any northern city.¹⁴⁰ Baker was not the only consul to seek medical attention from the dangers of serving in the South. Ogilby often sought leave from his duties at Charleston to seek medical care in England. In some way, his lungs suffered from his years of service in Charleston. He complained that his lungs caused him a great deal of discomfort. More importantly, he believed that “by breathing my native air for a few months” would cure his lung ailments. In an effort to stress his point, Ogilby would include a doctor’s note that recommended that he return to Europe for health reasons.¹⁴¹ While Ogilby never revealed his doctor’s diagnosis, common diseases that affected the lungs were asthma,

¹³⁹ Ogilby, 9 September 1830. However, Mr. Clough did survive.

¹⁴⁰ F.O. 5/326: 92-96 and 118-120.

¹⁴¹ F.O. 5/326: 1 and 8-9. Ogilby’s health continued to deteriorate such that in 1840 while on leave in Europe, Ogilby had to hire a private physician at £500 to take care of him. See, Thomas Carlyle and Jane Welsh Carlyle, *The Carlyle Letters Online: a Victorian Cultural Reference*, (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2007), <http://carlyleletters.dukejournals.org/>.

bronchitis, and tuberculosis. Another consul, G.P.R. James, suffered from fevers and rheumatism after his assignment to Norfolk.¹⁴² Diseases were common in the hot and damp climates of the southern states.

Other contagious diseases such as malaria created their own dangers for others. For example, W.M. Dyer, the consul in Mobile, found himself dealing with an unusual situation. He had to respond to a complaint made to the Foreign Office by a British subject who passed through Mobile. British citizen Richard Smith complained to Sir George Gray, an MP in Parliament, that he had not received “that assistance and protection which a British subject would naturally look for from one of Her Majesty’s Consuls when ill.”¹⁴³ In responding to the complaint, Dyer related a very disturbing story. According to Dyer’s investigation, Smith appeared unexpectedly in Mobile retelling a harrowing adventure. Smith said that he had traveled onboard a steamboat from Montgomery to Selma when he lost his clothes and others onboard were “butchered.” Smith said that someone onboard the steamboat had communicated with Sir John Franklin “through the medium of table turning” which frightened Smith and the others onboard. Perhaps not surprisingly, Smith told his story to Dyer while at the Charity Hospital in Mobile. Dyer met with the local officials and attempted to find out what part of Smith’s story, if any, was true. Based upon Dyer’s investigation, he discovered that Smith had caught yellow fever in New Orleans during the

¹⁴² F.O. 5/626: 48.

¹⁴³ F.O. 5/504: 238.

summer of 1853. As a normal course of treatment, Smith had been given “large doses of quinine” that Dyer believed “had evidently disturbed his brain.” Smith further complained to Dyer that the mayor had taken his razors and handkerchief away. While taking the razors made sense, the handkerchief’s disappearance did not. In the end, Dyer concluded that Smith’s “troubles were phantoms of his own imagination.” Because Smith did not ask for money, Dyer did not offer any. Believing that Smith could take care of himself, Dyer left the man at the hospital. Because the Charity Hospital did not have the facilities to handle Smith’s mental illness, the staff later released him.¹⁴⁴

3.1.1 *Social Desirability of Consular Positions*

The continued competition for consular posts proved that a social status had become attached to the position. Simply put, class and position mattered. The self-imposed or at least self-defined social construct of class meant distinction and division between the consuls and the others they encountered while at their posts. When theorized collectively, a person’s class or station determined how much interaction they had with each other and for what purpose that interaction developed. Such would be the case when consuls became concerned with whom they interacted with and with whom they were seen with and how often. For the British consuls, class was a means to distinguish between Americans and to make comparisons to classes in Europe.

¹⁴⁴ F.O. 5/504: 237-240. While quinine was often used to treat malaria, large doses of it could cause hallucinations as Dyer suggested.

For example, en route to Charleston for the first time Ogilby complained that he had met “four or five fellow passengers on board but none of them of ‘the hot society’ as my friend Tulloh used to designate people in a general rank of life.” He goes on to describe his situation as “nimporte I am now in the land of liberty and equality and must strive to be satisfied with such as I meet with.” However, he was pleased that “Americans seem to me to know the geography of their country well – from all I have seen of them yet, I should say they are a silent people.”¹⁴⁵ However, Oliver O’Hara, the vice-consul at Key West, had a different opinion. He insisted that the people he met were “half savage.”¹⁴⁶

Having European servants, even if they were wayward, was another tool to distinguish between the Southerners and British. Before he left England, Ogilby hired several European servants to work for him and arranged for them to travel with him. After initially having a difficult time locating them in Liverpool, Ogilby and his servants traveled together but in separate compartments from England to the U.S.¹⁴⁷ While Ogilby did not state how many servants he brought,

¹⁴⁵ Ogilby, 4 June 1830.

¹⁴⁶ F.O. 5/414: 153. One must take O’Hara’s opinion cautiously, since he lived in France for some of his service. In 1845, former consul Crawford informed the Foreign Office that O’Hara had lived for “nearly three years” in Europe. F.O. 5/434: 72. James Baker, the consul at Mobile, originally appointed O’Hara in 1830 as vice-consul for Key West. F.O. 5/475: 70. O’Hara was a naturalized British subject. F.O. 5/262: 61.

¹⁴⁷ Ogilby, 22 April 1830. Ogilby was further upset when the packet ship *Napoleon* was held up for three hours before embarkation waiting on three passengers to arrive. However sad to leave his homeland, Ogilby commented that he was ready to set sail for a new adventure. The researcher cannot find William Ogilby on any U.S. Census records nor his servants.

in 1850, George Matthews the newly appointed consul at Charleston brought one female servant with him.¹⁴⁸

With whom a consul socialized also became important. Ogilby believed that he “could live happy anywhere – high ho! Having bid farewell to my old ones in the old world, I must now look forward to making new ones in the new.”¹⁴⁹ However, Ogilby was particular about who his new friends would be. Upon his landing in Charleston, Ogilby immediately went to an afternoon dinner with two members of Charleston’s elite, Mr. Bee and John C. Calhoun.¹⁵⁰ He later bragged that soon he would meet “all the ‘big wigs’ of the place” including General Hayne, Colonel Drayton, Major Hamilton, Langdon Cheves, and Mr. Petigrew, the Attorney General.¹⁵¹ With the physical migration complete upon arrival next came the settlement phase, which was to prove more difficult.

3.2 *The Settlement Phase*

The various responses made by the consuls during their settlement phase reveal the difficulties they encountered in adjusting to their new surroundings. Consuls in the South were more than dutiful government employees; they were social actors that maintained economic, social, and

¹⁴⁸ F.O. 5/518: 32.

¹⁴⁹ Ogilby, 21 April 1830.

¹⁵⁰ Ogilby, 18 June 1830. Upon arrival, he next introduced himself and visited with a local political, Mr. Pinckney.

¹⁵¹ Ogilby, 24 June 1830.

political relationships with peoples in Britain and their new communities. For the purposes of this study, a community is composed of different social groups, such as businessmen, church members, and government leaders, and it includes concepts such as the healthiness or cleanness of a city, art and entertainment, food and culture. Outsiders define a community based upon their preconceived notions of what they expect to find there and locals define their own communities based upon their experiences growing up and living there for most of their lives. This next section will focus upon what British consuls thought about their new communities.

An examination of the opinions of British consuls stationed in the South reveals not only a candid and sometimes not too pleasant picture of how they perceived their fellow transatlantic relatives, but also how they interpreted life in the antebellum South. Moreover, their words reveal what it meant to be a British citizen and consul in the U.S. South.

3.2.1 The Meaning of Being British in the Slave South

First, being her Majesty's consul meant never denying being British. While reading Boswell's famous biography of Samuel Johnson, Ogilby disliked it when he read that the author, a Scottish writer, apologized for being from Scotland, "I do indeed come from Scotland, but I cannot help it." Ogilby judged that "this is worse than denying one's country in toto, only that it is not telling a falsehood, for a person may have a thousand very justifiable reasons for not wishing the place of their birth to be known, but nothing can excuse a man for

expressing himself as ashamed of his country.”¹⁵² So, according to Ogilby’s standards, it was acceptable to be ashamed of being from a certain *place* or a particular *city*, but one should never deny his *country* of origin. Ogilby was proud to be a British subject.

Another consul wanted to be a proud British subject, but ran into a difficult situation. For Charles Tulin, “Britishness” meant a test of bloodlines, education, and public service. Tulin, consul for Mobile, in 1858 acknowledged to the Foreign Office that his father was Swedish. Nevertheless, that fact had not stopped his father from serving the British government for thirty-two years as the vice-consul at Tunis and Algiers. Having been born and raised in Tunis, the younger Tulin asked to be naturalized a British subject. The British government originally denied his request and told him that instead he could receive “Letters Patent of Denization” by paying an £80 fee. Denization is a legal term that means to confer the privileges of citizenship onto an alien. Tulin claimed that he wanted to style himself “an Englishman by Law as well as by education,” but explained that he could not afford the £80 fee. He asked the Foreign Office to waive the fee based upon his father’s dedicated service and Tulin’s own service to Britain as a vice-consul at Algiers and Oran.¹⁵³ Tulin identified himself as

¹⁵² Ogilby, 9 August 1830. Ogilby continued that “it is true, Boswell attempts to do away with this idea in a subsequent paragraph, but it is something like a Cat or a Cur who when after they have p____ed, or done something even more filthy on a place, think that they will conceal their own nastyness by scraping a little sand over it.”

¹⁵³ F.O. 5/699: 157-158. The researcher did not find any Foreign Office reply to his request.

British even though he was not born in England. This indicates that being British certainly had its advantages or Tulin would not have wanted to be British. However, being an alien by birth did not stop Tulin from serving the country that he loved. Furthermore, maintaining Britishness abroad meant never completely forgiving those that fought against Britain in either the Revolutionary War or the War of 1812. Ogilby commented that while he liked and respected Keating Simons, an elderly Charlestonian, Ogilby never forgive him because “he did rebel against my country.”¹⁵⁴

Being British in the South meant keeping abreast of what the British government was doing in Parliament. Even though newspapers such as the *London Courier* might arrive in Charleston two months later, Ogilby read such publications and followed the debates in the House of Commons.¹⁵⁵ He always maintained a healthy respect for Parliament and for the sovereign. Consul Charles Wake in Charleston kept British subjects there informed of parliamentary acts when copies arrived from the Foreign Office.¹⁵⁶ Francis Waring did the same thing in Norfolk.¹⁵⁷ Arthur Lynn, British consul at Galveston, published in

¹⁵⁴ Ogilby, 24 September 1830.

¹⁵⁵ Ogilby, 10 August 1830. Of interest was the 12 June 1830 *London Courier* debate in the House of Commons on the consular service. Sir James Graham attacked the service of select consuls for not performing their duties properly.

¹⁵⁶ This is in manuscript form in the British National Archives, Kew, classified under Foreign Office Records, Slave Trade (hereinafter cited as F.O.S.T.), F.O.S.T. 646: 147.

¹⁵⁷ F.O.S.T. 646: 202.

the local newspaper parliamentary news that he believed affected British subjects abroad.¹⁵⁸ Ogilby joyfully announced to the British subjects in his district the birth of Queen Victoria's children.¹⁵⁹ Consuls were prideful of their country.

Being British in the South also meant caring about what happened to British subjects in their homeland. In an unexpected and benevolent act to help feed the poor in Ireland and Scotland, William Mure, British consul in New Orleans, coordinated an 1847 charitable relief effort. As a result of his hard work, thousands of pounds of corn were sent to Cork, Ireland, Liverpool, England, and Glasgow, Scotland for distribution to the poor. His efforts to help the poor included not just charitable donations from New Orleans, but also from places as far away as Cincinnati, Ohio, Vigo County, Indiana, and Huntsville, Alabama.¹⁶⁰ Mure's concerted actions demonstrated that not only did the British consul at New Orleans care about the starving in the British Isles, but also that Americans cared. Perhaps some of the Americans still maintained a common Scottish and Irish transatlantic identity toward those still in the original homelands, despite their distant familial links.

Being a British consul in the South meant dutifully and bravely performing his job as expected by the British government. Ogilby stated that he came to Charleston to "stare death... in the face, for I would not for any consideration be

¹⁵⁸ F.O.S.T. 646: 157.

¹⁵⁹ F.O. 5/383: 10.

¹⁶⁰ F.O. 5/476: 9-10, 45-45-46, 77-78, 90-91, 112, 120, 123-124.

'shown up' as Shenley has been – and indeed I do not question by my having acted so will be of advantage to me hereafter."¹⁶¹ Ogilby knew that to embarrass the Foreign Office would mean a quick death to his career. There were certain expectations by the Foreign Office that consuls had to follow. Consuls had to maintain their dispatches or a stern letter of reprimand might arrive from the Senior Foreign Officer clerk, John Bidwell.¹⁶² Maintaining a clean record of service was important to the consuls. After twenty-one years in service, Ogilby was proud that "not one word of censure connected with my name on record in the Foreign Office, or in any other Department of the Government."¹⁶³

Being a British consul in the South meant making new British connections in one's new community and keeping British connections with family members and friends at home. Often consuls upon arrival and during their tenure met with the British subjects who lived within their districts. Ogilby commented that upon his arrival in Charleston "in the mornings I was either occupied with business or in receiving visits from the British residents, and in the evenings I in general took

¹⁶¹ Ogilby, 10 August 1830. The British consul at Haiti, Shenley, did something that the researcher could not find that embarrassed the Foreign Office.

¹⁶² F.O. 5/489, 174. In 1848, John Bidwell chastised the British consul at Charleston, Charles D. Wake, for not writing in a "legible and distinct" enough manner in his dispatches warning him to leave "wider spaces between the lines" and finally to not use "ruled paper." After not receiving a transfer to Tenerife, Wake resigned in 1849. See F.O. 5/503, 192.

¹⁶³ F.O. 5/395: 186. The purpose of the letter was for Ogilby to ask the Foreign Office for a transfer to the consulship of New York.

a walk or drive through the city.”¹⁶⁴ At other times his “heart leaped for joy” when he received mail from home.¹⁶⁵ Maintaining human connections helped to alleviate their isolation and pain from being away from home.

Consuls naturally introduced themselves to the local British communities in which they lived. Some ports, such as cotton-rich Charleston, had a vibrant British community. Charleston boasted thirty-four British mercantile houses.¹⁶⁶ Certain consuls created close friendships with other British subjects living abroad. Edmund Molyneux, the consul at Savannah, made lifelong friendships with fellow British subjects, such as Patrick Gibson, who lived in the area.¹⁶⁷ Consuls sought ways to maintain their British identity abroad among those who understood what it meant to be British and live overseas. For example, the St. Andrews Society was one such British heritage overseas group. Its members were composed of the local British elites that met each year on St. Andrew’s Day. It was customary for the Society to honor a newly arrived British consul.¹⁶⁸ These societies developed to help their members retain a common heritage. Membership was not limited to newly arrived British subjects. Some members

¹⁶⁴ Ogilby, 20 June 1830.

¹⁶⁵ Ogilby, 9 August 1830. Of particular interest to him were the letters he received from Mrs. Perceval and Mr. Hayer. Both kept him informed of news and his friends in Europe.

¹⁶⁶ F.O. 5/503, 215 – 216.

¹⁶⁷ F.O.S.T. 646: 224-225.

¹⁶⁸ Ogilby, 30 November 1830. Ogilby enjoyed the dinner party that included 70 guests held on St. Andrew’s Day, 30 November, 1830.

had resided in America for 50 years or more.¹⁶⁹ Another British identity group was the St. George Society of which Robert Bunch was a member.¹⁷⁰ Consuls also had the opportunity to make new friends among the local British mercantile houses in each port. Each year the consuls had to name these houses to the Foreign Office for their commercial record keeping.

Maintaining a common identity also meant meeting other British consuls in the South¹⁷¹ and the children of former British consuls who remained in the region.¹⁷² Charleston's British consul Ogilby met James G. Moodie, the son of Benjamin Moodie, the previous British consul in Charleston. Being born and raised there, the younger Moodie continued to live in Charleston working as a merchant and sometimes substituted for Ogilby when the consul was on leave.

¹⁶⁹ Ogilby, 14 November 1830. Adam Tunno had lived in Charleston for more than 50 years when he sponsored a dinner party for Ogilby at the St. Andrews Society.

¹⁷⁰ Milledge Louis Bonham, *The British Consuls in the Confederacy* (New York: Columbia University, 1911), 20. The St. George Society was formed during colonial times to help British immigrants and to give them some form of general assistance in settling in America. The Charleston society of which Bunch was a member was founded in 1773.

¹⁷¹ Ogilby, 24 November 1830. Ogilby met with James Baker the British consul for Alabama and Florida. Baker also knew George Salkeld, the consul at New Orleans. But that did not get in the way of Baker asking the Foreign Office to merge the Mobile and New Orleans consulates together. Baker considered the New Orleans consulate "the more important station." F.O. 5/295: 169-170.

¹⁷² Ogilby, 21 November 1830. Present at that meeting was Mr. Tunno, one of the oldest British subjects in Charleston and three more unidentified men. At this meeting he met the former British consul Benjamin Moodie's son, James Gairdner Moodie. James G. Moodie continued to live in Charleston and work as a merchant. According to the 1828 Charleston City Directory, Moodie resided at 73 Queen Street.

A network of common heritage, foreign experience, and work connected the consuls and their families.

3.2.2 *Making Cultural Comparisons*

Maintaining connections to Britishness sometimes included making cultural comparisons between Britain and America. For example, what was the proper number of people to have at an intimate dinner party? Ogilby wrote, “I dined today at Mr. Wetherspoons – a party of eight – quite correct, particularly in a hot climate, not to have a larger – at least so says Lord Sefton, and he certainly must be allowed to know ‘what is what’ in this particular.”¹⁷³ Another British cultural connection Ogilby maintained was taking tea. Almost daily, weather permitting, he would take long walks after dinner and then have evening tea.

Maintaining Britishness also meant keeping separate customs from Southerners when possible. Differences in dining became one of the most disagreeable customs. Ogilby disliked the Charleston custom of dining early. He wrote, “dinner was at ¼ past 4 and the company all went off at 7 o’clock which is always the case on this side of the Atlantic.”¹⁷⁴ Time of dinner was not the only thing Ogilby found peculiar. He believed that Americans ate their morning eggs oddly when compared to the French and English. He observed that when the “English, Americans and French eat eggs – the first eat it out of an egg cup with a spoon the second turn it out into a glass and mix it up with a lot of things, and

¹⁷³ Ogilby, 15 July 1830.

¹⁷⁴ Ogilby, 2 June 1830.

the French lap it up with a piece of bread – to my eye eating an egg in any way is a disgusting thing, but certainly the English manner is the least so of any.”¹⁷⁵ How one ate eggs was not the only cultural irregularity consuls encountered. Ogilby appeared amused by the Charlestonian tradition of “taking wine.” Taking wine meant that after dinner someone was invited over to another’s house for a drink.¹⁷⁶

However, some American foods Ogilby did compliment. He enjoyed eating American deer. “It seems to me that the venison in this Country has a much finer and wilder flavour than in England, but this is not singular, for our Deer are as much domesticated as our sheep and feed on the same pasture, whereas in this Country they rove the forest and feed on a variety of wild herbs.”¹⁷⁷ Apparently, the British sheep and deer were more civilized, more polite to each other, than their Southern counterparts.

Maintaining Britishness also meant making scientific comparisons between British and U.S. medical practices. Ogilby toured a “lunatic asylum” with a Dr. William on 3 June 1830 in New York. He described the asylum as “a fine building, but the plan of it is by no means so good as that of one I have seen at Glasgow – there are usually 100 patients in this establishment which is supported partly by subscriptions and partly by a grant from the state of 20,000

¹⁷⁵ Ogilby 14 June 1830.

¹⁷⁶ Ogilby, 26 June 1830.

¹⁷⁷ Ogilby, 1 November 1830.

dollars a year.”¹⁷⁸ He believed that medical facilities and practices were far better in Great Britain.

It is true that when faced with an injury or illness, consuls preferred the medical advice of British doctors and not U.S. physicians. In 1848, Robert Grigg, the consul in Mobile, sought leave to return to “my Native Land for the sake of obtaining advice and [intelligible] from Medical Gentlemen, whose charges are less [expensive] and skill better known than happens to be the case with Medical Practitioners in the United States.” Upon his return to Mobile, as his ship passed New Orleans, a severe storm hit. It must have been severe because Grigg suffered an injury during the storm. He informed the Foreign Office that he ruptured something that had an abscess on it and that discharged “freely.” He commented that he was in much pain and wanted to go to England for medical attention.¹⁷⁹ Unfortunately for Grigg, he died just twenty days later without ever returning to England.¹⁸⁰

Being British meant making observations of the technological differences between Britain and America. Ogilby lamented that he traveled to Charleston from New York by sail instead of “A Steam boat! my kingdom for a Steam boat!”¹⁸¹ By this time, Ogilby hated being onboard a ship and bets himself that

¹⁷⁸ Ogilby, 3 June 1830.

¹⁷⁹ F.O. 5/490: 76-77.

¹⁸⁰ F.O. 5/490: 80.

¹⁸¹ Ogilby, 7 June 1830.

“by the sweet brow of our old n---- [sic] cook, I would give twenty dollars to be at Charleston, for independent of my wish to feel myself once more steady on ‘my fins’ I am anxious and curious to see the place where I am to pitch my tent and who knows, but leave my bones.”¹⁸² He never explained why he bet on the cook, but Ogilby was both ready to arrive at Charleston and afraid of what might happen there. He goes on to write, “I have not much fear of [dying at Charleston] and yet my brother Consul at New York told me to take my coffin with me.”¹⁸³ Peculiar advice from a fellow consul indeed, but Ogilby quiets himself with the knowledge that “[m]en die in all countries, but, if it is true that ‘our days are numbered,’ why should a person be more afraid to inhabit one place than an other.”¹⁸⁴ At this point in his career as a young man, Ogilby was optimistic that he would live a healthy life.

Being a British consul meant making comparisons with other cultural or regional habits. There were so many southern men in military uniforms that it gained the attention of one consul. Ogilby thought it peculiar that upon meeting South Carolinian society that he had never “met with more field officers since my arrival in Charleston than ever thronged into the Palace of the Thuilleries to pay

¹⁸² Ogilby, 10 June 1830.

¹⁸³ Ogilby, 10 June 1830.

¹⁸⁴ Ogilby, 10 June 1830.

their 'devoirs, au 'petit Coporal.'"¹⁸⁵ One is not sure whether southerners liked or disliked his comparison of them to the French under Napoleon's rule.

Being British meant commenting on Southern attitudes toward their politicians. As a dinner guest at Mr. Wilkins's, Ogilby was not surprised when dinner conversation turned to politics, but was surprised at the way the Americans "cut up all their Publick Characters of note."¹⁸⁶ Politics was a reoccurring theme in Ogilby's diary. He was surprised to see the amount of support for politicians in Charleston.

At the corner of every street I saw groups of people discussing the matter as if the Salvation of the Country depended on it. Truly 'Uncle Sam' gives himself a great deal of bother and loses no little time with the affairs of his nation, and the thing that amuses me is that every one seems to think that the vessel of the state would be sure to 'get a ground' if they did not lend their aid in the Pilotage of her.¹⁸⁷

Being British meant judging the South as wasteful. In 1846, Robert Grigg, the newly appointed consul at Mobile, complained about the wastefulness of cotton planters to the Foreign Office. All the planters seemed to be interested in was the accumulation of wealth at the expense of environmental degradation. He complained that the planter's motto was "clear more land, to make more Cotton to buy more Slaves, to clear more land." This perpetuated the cycle of abuse until the soil was exhausted. At that point, the planters would then sell their land to new immigrants from the Carolinas or Georgia. When the planters

¹⁸⁵ Ogilby, 26 June 1830.

¹⁸⁶ Ogilby, 29 June 1830.

¹⁸⁷ Ogilby, 28 July 1830.

could not sell their land, they sold their slaves and other goods and moved west. Grigg saw a steady stream of Alabamians moving to the western States. To him, this westward migration reflected “the perfect image of the National mind, each individual, with avidity grasps at a greater scope than he has, or will, probably, ever have ability, properly to cultivate and improve.” For example, that year he believed that “several hundred persons have emigrated to Texas from this State, and should they be successful greater numbers will probably follow them.”¹⁸⁸ Grigg correctly summarized how Southerners were moving West and taking their ideology and plantation mentality with them. Grigg maintained his “outsider” or Britishness perspective acting as judge and jury of Southern ideals of how best to accumulate wealth. To Grigg, Southerners limited themselves to cotton production and slavery and not culture or “civilization,” as in England.

Maintaining Britishness meant judging Southern viewpoints on slavery. In 1853, Robert Bunch, the consul at Charleston, complained to the Foreign Office that more “moderately reasonable” people were irrational in South Carolina because slavery was in “the very blood of their veins, upon it depend their wealth, their influence, and even the cultivation of those productions of the earth, the possession of which forms their chief claim to consideration in the world.”¹⁸⁹ In 1854, Bunch noted that he lived surrounded by an environment of “bigotry”

¹⁸⁸ F.O. 5/454: 85.

¹⁸⁹ F.O. 5/570: 186-187.

and “fanaticism” unparalleled “in any other section of the civilized world.”¹⁹⁰ He felt constrained living within a community surrounded and dependent upon slavery. Bunch believed that, in effect, his hands were tied on the issue of slavery. He could not act, nor would the state legislature listen to him. He believed that his “foreign community” would ignore him and resent his involvement in state affairs. Bunch was a foreign national supporting a foreign government’s laws. He was not a member of the upper class, nor would he be if he ever voiced concerns over the issue of slavery.

In 1844, after fourteen years of living among Southerners, Ogilby asked permission to retire due to his poor health and because

it is painfully [clear] to me after having spent so many years of my life in the enjoyment of the most friendly intercourses with the people of this state to see the feeling of hostility and mistrust that is now springing up, and being fostered, for political purposes, in this section of the Union against our Government and Nation.¹⁹¹

Ogilby went on to comment that he felt that he could not “soften or subdue this excitement, though even the most judicious exercise of all the influence I possess in this Community.” Finally, he argued that a new consul should be assigned, one he believed who would be “unshackled by those friendly feelings and social ties which I am very certain your Lordship will not consider it as censurable in me to be bound by.”¹⁹² By 1844, Ogilby had created a transatlantic

¹⁹⁰ F.O. 5/504: 133-135.

¹⁹¹ F.O. 5/413: 221.

¹⁹² F.O. 5/413: 221-223.

identity that existed somewhere between being British and American. Tensions mounted as the nation edged closer to war. Ogilby found it hard to turn against his friends, neighbors, and community where he had lived for fourteen years. Ogilby felt doubly foreign as a man caught between his loyalty to his beloved country and his loyalty to his southern friendships.

Maintaining Britishness meant keeping separate political viewpoints of regional or local politics. In the 1830 South Carolina elections, Ogilby wrote that “my private feelings would lead me to wish Mr. Pringle success, but for public motives I would rather Mr. Pinckney would gain the day.”¹⁹³ He was later surprised when his private favorite won the local elections. In 1856 after the election of a new South Carolina governor, Bunch informed the Foreign Office that R.W. F. Allston was a “man of considerable property and respectable private character”; nevertheless, Bunch found the man to be “vain, pompous and narrow-minded.”¹⁹⁴

Maintaining Britishness meant adhering to Anglicanism. Ogilby disliked the Catholic Church. While in Charleston, he purchased a pew at St. Michel's Church and often wrote his private opinions of the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of the sermon.¹⁹⁵ He was “much disappointed at Mr. Gadsden's

¹⁹³ Ogilby, 6 September 1830.

¹⁹⁴ F.O. 5/649: 122-123.

¹⁹⁵ Ogilby, 19 December 1830. He blamed the Catholic Church for the problems of the Stuarts. He disliked the local French in Charleston. This was not so much because of their faith as the fact they were French. He made several references to Napoleon and the French Revolution and constantly

officiating, for he is a bitter bad reader, and his sermons are not calculated to awake the mind from the lethargy that is too pat to creep over it in the course of the week.”¹⁹⁶ In 1835, a fire destroyed the original St. Michel’s Church, but it was rebuilt again and renamed St. Michael’s. The original St. Michel’s Church, built in the 1680s, was the first Anglican Church south of Virginia. The last phase of migration was the settlement phase. As the consuls emphasized, they experienced problems when assimilating to their new communities.

3.2.3 *Settlement Phase Problems*

What were the problems of assimilation? Did the consuls ever feel that they needed to assimilate? Was assimilation a slow or a rapid process? One assimilation problem was that the conventional nineteenth-century British gentleman was not prepared to change his customs and lower his standards to the Southern way of life. But maintaining a proper household overseas took more than the average consul’s salary. The money had to come from somewhere, whether it was from family assistance or private business affairs. The Foreign Office salary alone was simply not enough, so many consuls relied upon their consular fees and private business endeavors to supplement their official salaries. This was why some consuls became agents for the British Post

worried about the possibility of future revolutions. When France had a brief revolution on 29 July 1830 when 6000 people were killed in Paris, Ogilby worried about its effects in Europe. He was further disappointed when a revolution also broke out in Belgium later that year.

¹⁹⁶ Ogilby, 8 August 1830.

Office, insurance companies, mail steamers, and banks.¹⁹⁷ At least one consul had his military retirement pay to help defray expenses.¹⁹⁸ To help consuls support themselves and their families the Foreign Office allowed consuls to be merchants.¹⁹⁹

Another problem of assimilation in the South was the lack of acceptable art and literature. G.P.R. James - a famous English author, friend of the Duke of Wellington, and consul at Norfolk, Virginia - complained to the Foreign Office that "the only literature is the ledger and the arts only illustrated in the slave market."²⁰⁰ An avid traveler and accomplished novelist, James wrote at least 100 books. While many of his works were romance novels, he also wrote works that were more serious. During the last years of William IV's reign, he served as the British Historiographer Royal. James's most famous work on American slavery was *The Old Dominion* (1856). In this work, James sets a romantic couple struggling to be together against the insurmountable odds of family fights, potential disinheritance, and a violent slave revolt. This fictional romantic text

¹⁹⁷ Platt, 41.

¹⁹⁸ This was C.L. Fitzgerald, consul for Mobile. He received a military half pay allowance of £111 in addition to his regular consul pay of £400. Parliamentary Papers "Accounts and Papers," vol. 31 Session 2 February – 24 August 1843 (1843), 162.

¹⁹⁹ F.O. 5/698: 87-90.

²⁰⁰ Laura White, "The South in the 1850's as Seen by the British Consuls," 31.

revealed a deeper moral issue: James's firsthand interpretation and then condemnation of Virginia slavery.

Another problem in assimilation was the lack of any acceptable theater. For some members of the Foreign Office, Britishness meant always admiring London's theater and criticizing U.S. theaters. Ogilby found the New York Theater lacking when compared to London's stage productions. Upon his arrival in the United States, Ogilby immediately went to see the New York production of *Othello*, starring British actors Junius Brutus Booth and Thomas Abthorpe Cooper.²⁰¹ Ogilby believed that Booth was "a tolerably good actor, but the latter [Cooper] such a bad one that I really could not sit out the Play, and yet this is the man the Americans consider equal to Keane or any of our Performers!!!" From reading his diary, it does not appear that Ogilby realized that he was criticizing his fellow countryman. Perhaps Ogilby viewed the men as "Americanized" and no longer British. Another interpretation is that Ogilby thought that New York stage productions could never compare to London. Regardless, he goes on to say that, "Booth is an extraordinary character and considered to be crazy at times – he has a farm in Pennsylvania which occupies a great portion of his

²⁰¹ *Othello* is an inter-racial love story and Shakespearean tragedy of envy and jealousy. The main characters are Othello, a black Moorish general in the Venetian service, Desdemona his younger white wife, Cassio his chief lieutenant and the villain Iago. When Othello passed over Iago for a promotion, Iago sets up a series of treacherous acts to secure Othello's ruin. Specifically, Iago plays on Othello's fear of being too old for his younger wife to find attractive. Believing Iago's lies that his wife was having an affair, Othello kills his putative rival and afterwards, when he learns the truth in a final act of desperation, he commits suicide.

attention and he merely appears on the stage by fits and starts.”²⁰² Junius Booth was the father of two later famous stage actors, Edwin Thomas Booth who would alternate portraying either Othello or Iago from 1863 to the mid-1880s and John Wilkes Booth, Lincoln’s murderer. Continuing with the theme of his disenchantment with U.S. theater, Ogilby regularly attended Charleston’s theater when plays or groups appeared in town but found overall that the production was lacking even when the headlining actress was from Scotland.²⁰³ Theater in Charleston never completely satisfied his British theater longing, but at least he found the local coffee house in Tradd Street amusing.²⁰⁴ Ogilby had at least one amusement that contented him.

²⁰² Ogilby, 31 May 1830. Oddly, the ship Ogilby sailed from New York to Charleston on was named *Othello*. Here Ogilby was referring to the famous British actor Edmond Kean that played Othello in London. Booth would later die on a Mississippi River steamboat in 1852. Ogilby was not alone; other critics did not like Cooper’s lack of seriousness when portraying Shakespeare’s masterpieces. Even though Ogilby does not mention it, supposedly Cooper had a habit of winking to his friends in the audience and forgetting his lines. Cooper eventually abandoned his British citizenship and became an American citizen. Oddly, he spent his last years not on the stage, but as an Inspector at the New York Custom House. Keane portrayed Othello as a Moor that was more oriental than black. From 1830 to 1840 and only in England, Germany, and Russia was there a black actor that played Othello. He was Ira Aldridge, a New York native. However, he was never allowed to play the role in the United States. Paul Robeson, the son of a former slave, was the first African-American to portray the role in the United States in 1942. See, Tilden G. Edelstien, “*Othello* in America: The Drama of racial Intermarriage” in Werner Sollors, ed. *Interracialism: Black-White Intermarriage in American History, Literature, and Law* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 356-369.

²⁰³ Ogilby, 1 December 1830. He believed Miss Rock from Edinburgh was “about fifth rate.”

²⁰⁴ Ogilby, 18 December 1830. There “we had old Faulkner there and another actor who sung several good songs – it was a very jovial pleasant party.”

Another problem of the settlement phase was a general dislike of Americans. Some consuls simply disliked what they saw in their “distant relatives.” Ogilby commented on his voyage to Charleston in 1830 that “there is not one of my fellow passengers that I can find any pleasure in conversing with, for they are all of a very low cast, and to crown all my misfortunes, my books are stowed away in the hold and are not to be got at.” He found sitting alone at the stern of the ship and thinking about his friends at home and his past more enjoyable than talking to the passengers onboard. However, he pulled himself up from his misery and clung to the belief that even though he had “left many friends in the old world that it would distress me beyond measure to think there were not ‘good men and true’” to be found at his new assignment.²⁰⁵

In 1858, after having lived ten years in South Carolina, Robert Bunch, the consul at Charleston, believed that Americans had a complete “disregard for law, even in the most civilized portions of the Country.”²⁰⁶ Col. Fitzgerald, the consul at Mobile, remarked, “the habits and customs of the people here are [*sic*] anything but what an Englishman can feel pleasant.” He even found the few British captains that came into the harbor were “of a very bad description – they almost always half drunk and have imbibed the liberty and equality principle [*sic*] of Americans.” He believed the British captains suffered from lax manners and notified the Foreign Office that “if the laxity of manner of captains is permitted to

²⁰⁵ Ogilby, 12 June 1830.

²⁰⁶ F.O.S.T. 1059: 107.

continue there is no use whatever of a British consul for in my life I never was treated with more impertinence.” As for the local British merchants, he believed they were all “naturalized” Americans who no longer retained their British identity.²⁰⁷ Fitzgerald had very strong opinions about maintaining British identity wherever one might reside or travel. Britishness meant to him putting one’s best foot forward and exhibiting good manners.

On several occasions, the consuls voiced displeasures about their post assignments to the Foreign Office. Consuls complained of the high cost of living and the climate. As early as 1837, Ogilby began asking for a transfer out of Charleston. He blamed the high cost of living as his reason for transfer. He specifically asked for a transfer to Bahia, Philadelphia, or the Mediterranean.²⁰⁸ Sadly, for Ogilby, none came.

At times the consuls had to answer queries from the Foreign Office about whether they rented or owned a home, whether the consular office was in their home and if not, then why not, whether they employed clerks that worked for them exclusively or not, how they paid the clerks, and what their consular expenses were. The consuls complained that their costs were high and that they were paid too little.²⁰⁹ According to this research, William Mure, the consul at

²⁰⁷ F.O. 5/396: 96-99.

²⁰⁸ F.O. 5/315: 225-227.

²⁰⁹ F.O. 5/503: 80. The British consul at Baltimore, John McTavish’s answers revealed that he had two assistants, one that worked full time and a second that worked part-time. His part-time worker made a better salary as a bookkeeper at the Baltimore Water Company. McTavish’s expenses included;

New Orleans, paid the most. He paid \$1200 a year to rent his house and \$600 a year to rent his office. He hired four clerks and a messenger for \$1850 a year. His yearly expenses totaled \$3650 a year. He paid \$1650 from his merchant business and the other \$2000 from the consulate fees.²¹⁰ These were not his only expenses, according to the 1850 and 1860 U.S. Federal Censuses; Mure supported a household of nine people. But according to the 1860 U.S. Census, Mure listed his real estate value at \$20,000 and personal property at only \$3000.²¹¹

During the settlement phase, consuls retained links to their home communities of origin. Melancholy and low spirits best describe the existence of a bachelor assigned overseas. Many times, Ogilby took solitary walks on Sullivan Island after dinner for he missed hearing from his friends in Europe.²¹² He often wrote to his family and friends at home. On one occasion, he was delighted to discover that his uncle had won the local election in County Derry, Ireland. Ogilby disliked his uncle's opponent. He wrote, "I despise the man for

office rent, his clerks salaries, stationery, fuel for lights, postage, porter or messenger fees, and subscriptions to the Exchange Reading Rooms, newspapers, and the marine telegraph.

²¹⁰ F.O. 5/504: 126.

²¹¹ U.S. Bureau of the Census 1860, *Eighth Census of the United States, 1860*; Washington D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 1860. Census Place: *New Orleans Ward 1, Orleans, Louisiana*; Roll: M653_415; pg. 0; image: 291.

²¹² Ogilby, 8 August 1830.

his conduct on the Catholic question, and he thought he could humbug all the people of Derry."²¹³

Physical separation from home was difficult. For one consul, physical separation from his wife while serving in New Orleans led to his marriage ending. William Mure, the British consul for New Orleans from 1843 to 1861, suffered the public embarrassment of divorce in 1859. Back in 1856, the Mures had married in England. They remained there until 1857 when the consul had to return to his duty station. A pregnant Lucy wanted to remain in England until after the birth of their child. Sadly for the consul, not long after his daughter's birth, his wife began seeing another man in London. The consul found out and filed for divorce on the grounds of adultery. As divorce cases naturally go, his wife responded with her own witnesses that her husband was not a saint himself. She presented evidence that the consul habitually visited a "house of ill-fame" at Great Portland Street in London. Embarrassingly, their divorce made the *New York Times*.²¹⁴ Another consul had a better honeymoon period. Charles D. Wake refused to leave England for his new assignment at Charleston until he married in England. Nor would he arrive in Charleston until after a brief honeymoon period in the northern U.S.²¹⁵

²¹³ Ogilby, 30 October, 1830.

²¹⁴ *New York Times*, 20 July 1859.

²¹⁵ F.O. 5/433: 173-174.

Another problem of assimilation was that these men felt exiled from the Foreign Office in London. The Foreign Office never created a uniform or direct informational interchange of consulate posts. Instead, the Foreign Office created a fragmented service of many aggregate posts all working independent of each other. This amounted to what historian Platt calls “a freehold right” until death or retirement. Not only did the Foreign Secretary not know what consuls were doing *at* their consulates, none of the Departmental clerks knew what went on *in* a consulate. As late as 1914, Sir Henry Austin Lee explained that Foreign Office clerks had “no idea of what takes place in a consulate.”²¹⁶ Without knowing what *should* happen at a consulate, the Foreign Office lacked a yardstick to judge the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of its consuls located overseas. There were no Foreign Office inspections of overseas consulates until 1870.²¹⁷

3.2.4 *Missing their Homeland Affected Their Ability to Settle*

Consuls could request a one-month leave and be paid at full salary rate every year. Unfortunately for them, this leave could not accumulate. Travel time was included in the one-month leave.²¹⁸ As if that were not bad enough, the Foreign Office did not issue travel pay for either the consul nor his family. But a consul would receive his full salary for one-month. If the consul was fortunate to

²¹⁶ Platt, *The Cinderella Service*, 61.

²¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 64.

²¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 29. G.P.R. James complained about this to the Foreign Office when in 1858 he was transferred to Venice and given only two months to relocate.

receive more leave, he was paid at a half-pay rate for his remaining time on leave. Consuls in the South were usually given three-months leave during the malaria season. Nevertheless, travel to England was very expensive. It might cost between £60 to £70 for passage in each direction from America for *each* of the consul's family members.²¹⁹

One consul had to wait many years before he had enough money saved to visit his homeland. In 1834, James Baker had served eighteen years before he was able to return to England for a six-month visit. He complained that “during the whole of that period with the interval of only two months” he had served his country faithfully. He wanted to visit his dying father, and Baker feared it would be the last time he was to see him. Afraid that his desire to see his father was not enough, Baker appealed to the Foreign Office's mercantile and commercial interests. In addition to visiting his father, Baker wanted to visit “my native Country to form mercantile connections and acquaintances, which my long absence has lost me.” The Foreign Office granted permission for his visit home.²²⁰ Even after serving abroad for eighteen years, Baker continued his family ties and considered England his “native” homeland. William Ogilby, the consul at Charleston, asked for and received a nine-month leave in 1838 to go

²¹⁹ Platt, *The Cinderella Service*, 29-30. Platt explains that it was not until 1874 that the Foreign Office allowed consuls to accumulate leave for long periods of absence, usually five years or more from home. In 1874, traveling time was no longer included and the Foreign Office paid an allowance of half-fare for the consul and one-third for his family.

²²⁰ F.O. 5/295: 161 and 151.

home so that he could “recruit my constitution by breathing my native air for a few months.”²²¹ To Ogilby, the air at home was far better than that at Charleston. Home provided security and friendship, as well as a healthier standard of living.

However, those who abused the privilege to visit home found themselves without a job. Upon his arrival in Charleston, Charles Wake made the mistake of asking for leave to go home. It was granted, but when he took advantage of it and remained in England for two years, he was fired. With Wake away from his post for so long, Lord Palmerston was upset and ordered him to return to his post. Instead of going back, Wake pushed it further and asked to exchange posts with a colleague of his, or he would resign. Lord Palmerston accepted his resignation.²²²

3.2.5 *The Issue of Children Affected the Consuls’ Ability to Settle*

Did the consuls’ children who grew up in a foreign land feel detached from their parents’ country? Listening to stories passed down from their parents surely impressed a love for the rich histories of England, Ireland, and Scotland. Certainly, their parents nurtured a love for Great Britain and all that it meant to be British. However, since many were born in the United States, did they feel a stronger attachment to the United States than the more distant England? With whom did they play or socialize? Were their peers confused as to who they *really* were? Did they speak with different accents? Did they dress differently?

²²¹ F.O. 5/326: 1-2, 8-9.

²²² F.O. 5/503, 192 – 197 and 230 – 232.

Were their manners and speech different? Did their social peers question them in an attempt to create some category or stereotype placement for them? Were they viewed as half-American or half-Southern? Was there any human curiosity at all about them? Were they taught to be British?

Consuls who had young sons and daughters often faced difficult decisions. James Baker, the British consul in Mobile from 1830 to 1839, complained in a private letter to the Foreign Office that he did “not want his children to be Yankees.”²²³ By the term “Yankee” he meant “American.” Baker had never been happy about bringing his young children to Mobile. He pleaded with the Foreign Office to reassign him anywhere in Europe so that his family might live in England.²²⁴ This meant that to Baker raising his young children in England was important to him as a father. He wanted his children to share his national identity, education, traditions, and culture. Perhaps he wanted his children raised in England so that they could go to libraries and museums. To him, England was remarkable and Mobile not so. English children could see many interesting things and learn about their own culture and history, and receive a proper English education. Baker most likely believed that to be the best parent he could be, he needed to raise his children in his native Britain. Perhaps, in addition, he wanted all that it entailed as a member of his class and station. He wanted his original community of origin to guide his children’s moral

²²³ F.O. 5/337: 301.

²²⁴ F.O. 5/337: 301.

and academic training. Baker's convictions were so strong that when the Foreign Office told him to stay in Mobile, Baker threatened to resign. The Foreign Office relented and reassigned him to Riga.²²⁵

If the consuls did not want their children "going native" or completely assimilating into the local populations, the consuls also often had to endure financial hardships. Baker chose to maintain two households, one in Mobile and one in England. Sending children overseas or maintaining two households was expensive. Baker, for his own reasons, chose to do this for a number of years. Baker's convictions were so devout that his wife and seven children remained in England and only his eldest son assisted him in his final year in Mobile.²²⁶

While Baker did not address it, what did his children feel when separated from both parents? If both parents were not with their children, most likely the young children endured long separations from their missing parent obediently serving his country. It may have been less expensive to educate children in the United States. Geography and proximity certainly made it more cost efficient. Even so, all education in either area, England or the South at the time, was

²²⁵ F.O. 5/337: 308-310 and 314-319. Baker had to obtain a medical certificate stating he had poor health due to his assignment to Mobile before he could receive his reassignment. Even though the Foreign Office seemed not to care about the education or identity of British consuls' children, British fathers, such as Baker, did.

²²⁶ F.O. 5/490: 80.

private.²²⁷ Other consuls lacked the resources to divide their households onto two continents. In 1845, when Robert Grigg arrived to be the new consul at Mobile he brought with him a wife and eight children.²²⁸ Large families seemed the norm. In 1842, Colonel Fitzgerald arrived in Mobile with a wife and eight children.²²⁹ Raised in the South, adult children married and remained there. For example, George Salkeld's youngest daughter Eliza married in 1843, several years after her father retired from the consulate in New Orleans.²³⁰ However defined, the children of the consuls inherited the cultures of two different countries, a brilliant old heritage from their parents' homeland and a new one from their adopted country.

3.2.6 Money Problems Associated with Settlement

In addition to the costs of educating and raising families, consuls endured other financial hardships. After George Canning's reformatory Consular Act (1825), consuls realized that the salaries for their posts declined. The reform changed the rules and did not allow them to engage in private merchant

²²⁷ England did not have tax-supported government school districts inspected by government officials until 1870. See, Walter L. Arnstein, *Britain Yesterday and Today, 1830 to the Present* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2001), 60.

²²⁸ F.O. 5/434: 74.

²²⁹ F.O. 5/383: 199.

²³⁰ Park Benjamin, ed., *The New World* vol. 6 (January to June 1843), (New York: J. Winchester, 1843), 18 March 1843, advertisements. George Salkeld was appointed to the New Orleans consulship in 1826 and served until 1834. See, *The Annual Register, or a View of the History, Politics, and Literature of the Year 1826* (London: Baldwin, Cradock, and Joy, 1827), 212.

activities. Furthermore, the act did not reward consuls for years of service, their efficiency, or effectiveness in performance of their jobs. The reform limited consular incomes to only their consular receipts and government slavery. Platt comments that before Canning's reform the consular service was in effect composed of "individual owners of consular freeholds."²³¹ He meant that by virtue of the original appointment or by shifting global alliances and/or changes in power, some consulates were more important than others, and consuls had independent discretion in all matters relating to the running of their office. After Canning's reform, pay additions depended upon such things as hazardous climate conditions or cost-of-living expenses. If a particular consul was extremely talented and gifted, his only hope for better pay was to try to gain the attention of the Foreign Secretary and justify his reasons for a pay raise or to seek another consulate where the pay rate was higher.

Charleston's consul Ogilby learned firsthand just how low the consular receipts were after he arrived.²³² Sometimes consuls had to clear the indebtedness of their predecessor. Upon taking office in Norfolk, G.P.R. James had to pay Francis Waring's debts!²³³ Waring had died insolvent and indebted to

²³¹ Platt, *The Cinderella Service*, 33.

²³² Ogilby, 19 June 1830. He was more surprised to learn that his commission included North Carolina as well as South Carolina.

²³³ F.O. 5/570: 98-103. Mrs. Waring held onto the consulate papers and seal hoping that the Foreign Office would give her some money for their safe return. She offered to sell her husband's coat and official seal to James for fifteen dollars. In addition, she claimed that her husband mortgaged their furniture. James declined the coat and offered to purchase the seal. A

residents of Norfolk.²³⁴ James called Waring a “mere swindler” and believed that the “English character and Government have suffered more than it is possible for me to tell or you to conceive.”²³⁵ James charged Waring with the crime of peculation, the unlawful taking of public funds, the property of the government entrusted to his care for one’s own use. James believed that Waring had fraudulently misappropriated the money entrusted to him from fees that he collected from commercial vessels.

Even though James did not approve of Waring’s impoverished state, one of Waring’s indebtedness transactions requires comment and discussion. Francis Waring paid large sums of money for information about slavers. Slavers would bring young West Indian boys to the South and sell them into slavery. Waring paid various people for information regarding the activities of slavers in the region, which in turn caused him to run up debts. Using the information he obtained from informants, Waring would then join in a lawsuit to condemn the slave ships. After condemnation proceedings ended, Waring received one-half the proceeds. The legal fees unfortunately added up as Waring had to hire lawyers to condemn the slavers and then to collect his reward money.²³⁶ The

benevolent James gave her a check for fifty dollars. Surprised by her behavior and the state of the consulate, James informed the Foreign Office what had happened.

²³⁴ F.O. 5/551: 42.

²³⁵ F.O. 5/551: 74.

²³⁶ F.O. 5/551: 78-80.

ports of Virginia were important because James believed that Richmond was “the greatest slave market of the United States.”²³⁷ However, James disapproved of Waring acting in that capacity. James believed that Waring acted beyond the scope of his duties as a British consul.

Depending upon the personal tastes of the consul, it could cost a great deal to keep up appearances. In 1830, Ogilby paid \$600 a year to rent a furnished house on South Bay Street in Charleston. He paid \$100 a year to rent an office on 30 East Bay Street. The office came unfurnished, so he had to purchase his own furniture.²³⁸ He advertised in the local paper for servants, a groom and a cook.²³⁹ He paid Mr. Allen \$750 a year to be his vice-consul.²⁴⁰ Moreover, for transportation, he bought a horse and gig.²⁴¹ Six-years later, he rented a small, unfurnished house that contained a dining room, a drawing room, two bedrooms, and servants’ apartments for £150 a year. He paid his white servants £40 to £60 a year and his black servants £30 to £40 a year. According

²³⁷ F.O. 5/551: 75.

²³⁸ Ogilby, 7 and 8th November 1830.

²³⁹ Ogilby, 19 November 1830.

²⁴⁰ Ogilby, 20 November 1830. Ogilby had a habit of not including people’s first names in his diary entries. This is typical of a certain formal style. First names were for persons of inferior social status.

²⁴¹ Ogilby, 15 and 17 December 1830. He paid 100 dollars for a horse and his Stanhope (gig) cost 250 dollars.

to Ogilby, clothing was sixty percent more expensive in Charleston than in London!²⁴²

In 1855, Robert Bunch, the consul at Charleston after Ogilby, paid a manservant £40 and his cook and housemaid £25 each. He believed that he lived “in the simplest and most frugal style, without a horse or a carriage, doubly necessary in a city in which no one walks for the shortest distance and where every merchant drives to and from his counting house.” He commented that he could not support himself on his meager wages and had to go to his father for help so that he might “keep up a decent appearance.”²⁴³ In 1842, Colonel Fitzgerald in Mobile paid his house servants \$30 and \$35 per month.²⁴⁴

3.2.7 Slavery in America and the Conflict of British Abolitionist Ideology

The most difficult problem the consuls encountered was, of course, American slavery. Slavery proved to be the best yardstick measurement to test British settlement and assimilation into the South. But not all consuls approached the problem of slavery in the same manner. For one consul seeking a promotion to New Orleans, living within the South for many years had its advantage. Baker believed that because he had lived in the Southern community

²⁴² F.O. 5/308: 251. In 1855, G.P.R. James concurred and argued that the cost of clothing in Virginia was double that of England. F.O. 5/626: 50.

²⁴³ F.O. 5/626: 344.

²⁴⁴ F.O. 5/383: 197.

for some time, he had an advantage over his rivals when he was seeking to move up to the New Orleans consulship. Baker reasoned that:

My long residence in the Southern Country has made one form with the peculiar duties rendered necessary by our local position and the experience which I have gained during seventeen years of official duty in the United States would I trust make me to do credit to his Lordship nomination, should he be pleased favorably to consider my application object in requesting the transfer is that I maybe promoted to the more important station of New Orleans, the commerce of which place, with Great Britain, is not [*sic*] inferior to [*sic*] other port in the United States and must soon be [*sic*] beyond all competition. Mobile will before long also exceed in exports to Great Britain all other ports in the United States excepting New Orleans.²⁴⁵

Baker's appeal did not sway the Foreign Office and he did not receive the desired promotion. Perhaps his grammar was not good enough. Nevertheless, what is important is that Baker realized the difficulties of serving in the South and the *peculiar duties* associated with it. Hoping for a promotion, Baker continued to keep track of the comings and goings of the other consuls stationed in the South. In 1834, before taking a six-month leave for England, Baker informed the Foreign Office that the consul for Charleston had sailed for England, the consul for Savannah was on leave, and that the consul at Norfolk remained, not taking leave at that time, and the consul at New Orleans had recently died.²⁴⁶

Slavery deeply disturbed other consuls. G.P.R. James, the noted British author and London celebrity, arrived in Norfolk apparently unaware or at least naive about what he would encounter, in Baker's words the "Southern Country."

²⁴⁵ F.O. 5/295: 169-170.

²⁴⁶ F.O. 5/295: 171-172.

Not long after arriving at his station, James continued what Waring had begun and began to prosecute Southerners who kidnapped and then sold into slavery British West Indian sailors. His actions alarmed slave owners. In a private letter to the Foreign office, James informed the Secretary that since his arrival five attempts had been made to burn down his house. Even though none succeeded, he believed it was just a matter of time before someone torched his home. Fearing for his family's safety, James asked the Foreign Office to relocate him to a non-slaveholding state.²⁴⁷ Historian Laura White in the 1930's argued that:

The most difficult adjustment required of the consuls was doubtless that of living in the midst of a social system of which they disapproved without any betrayal of their sentiments, which would force them to a swift departure.²⁴⁸

James fits her assertion well because he wrote the Foreign Office that when questioned by Virginian slaveholders as to his beliefs on slavery, he refused to answer.²⁴⁹ While James may have believed that his life was in peril, the Foreign Office was not convinced. James was never forced, either by the Foreign Office or by the Virginia slaveholding community, into a swift departure. Instead, he served for five years. Perhaps he feared for his life when he first arrived, but the Foreign Office, for whatever reasons, chose to ignore his pleas.

²⁴⁷ F.O. 5/570: 108-109.

²⁴⁸ White, "The South in the 1850's as Seen by British Consuls," 31.

²⁴⁹ F.O. 5/570: 109.

Nevertheless, James's writings to the Foreign Office described the horrors of slavery in Virginia. James informed the Office about a weekly slave market in Ashland where slaves were chained together and sold to traders who then took them on to New Orleans. James described the floggings that slaves received in Richmond. He argued that slavery was more injurious to the masters than to the slaves themselves. Moreover, as if to illustrate this, he wrote that most masters "were kind to their slaves."²⁵⁰ While James personally opposed slavery, he did not see how the process could end without "bringing general ruin and confusion" except by a gradual emancipation. James described "dens of horror" at the city jails.²⁵¹

James always endured a conflicted existence in the South. Disgusted by slavery and the trade, James represents consuls who chose not to assimilate into the slaveholding communities that surrounded them. In the dedication of his 1856 novel *The Old Dominion*, James articulated his moral condemnation of Southern slavery. "There are many things in this world we could wish removed without seeing the possibility of removing them."²⁵² James knew *he* could not end slavery, but he never believed in the concept of holding another in bondage.

²⁵⁰ White, "The South in the 1850's as Seen by British Consuls," 31. See also, F.O. 5/570: 62.

²⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 31-32.

²⁵² G.P.R. James, *The Old Dominion* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1856), 1.

Because of slavery, James never fully settled into the South. To James, slavery was “a very great evil.”²⁵³

James believed that a question of morals separated Southerners from their Northern brothers. He insisted to the Foreign Office that dependence upon the cultivation of one particular crop to supply a state’s population with the necessities of life narrowed the people’s chances for progress. To him, the most immoral act that Southerners engaged in was slavery. He concluded that, “[A] man who has to pay a laborer for his daily toil appreciates much better the value of that which he purchases, than the man who merely feeds a slave.” James’ argued that “the man who is surrounded by the mere creatures of his will, who has nothing to do but to order and be obeyed and who can compel performance under the penalty of the lash, loses many powerful motives to activity, care and forethought.”²⁵⁴

In the next paragraph, James separated slavery from the slaveholders. He refused to judge Virginian slave owners; instead, he even praised them.

I do not believe kinder masters or more humane men exist; and I think the condition of the slave in this State except in the great point of freedom – as happy as that of any peasant in the world; but I still do think the institution a great evil, far more detrimental in its effects upon the masters than upon the Slaves themselves, and one of the principal causes why the immense resources of Virginia are only now beginning to be developed.²⁵⁵

²⁵³ Ibid., 28.

²⁵⁴ F.O. 5/570: 61-62.

²⁵⁵ F.O. 5/570: 62.

To James, slavery condemned both the master and the slave and the institution of slavery prohibited Virginia from progressing.

A large number of slaves lived in each port community and their activities caught the attention of consuls. William Ogilby's first encounter with Charleston's black population came immediately after his harrowing night of lightning and storms onboard his transport ship in the harbor. The next morning he saw "not less than a hundred boats passed under our stern filled with Negroes going out to fish."²⁵⁶ In July 1830, Ogilby wrote about the destruction from a storm that had moved quickly through the area. He wrote that a pleasure boat overturned in the harbor during the storm, drowning "a very fine young man and three negroes."²⁵⁷ The next time he encountered slaves rowing was when he was "rowed by black boatmen – their singing very wild and monotonous" to a plantation on John's Island to attend a Christmas celebration.²⁵⁸ While still on the boat, Ogilby commented that he "passed several plantations on the banks of the river – the negro huts are always collected together and built like a street – very comfortable small wooden houses, with a garden of about a quarter acre to each – they have in general a great number of poultry, which they sell to their owners."²⁵⁹ Not all

²⁵⁶ Ogilby, 18 June 1830. Ogilby did not distinguish between free people of color and slaves.

²⁵⁷ Ogilby, 29 July 1830.

²⁵⁸ Ogilby, 24 Friday December 1830. When Ogilby returned to Charleston on 27 December, he commented that the slaves sang "all the way" when rowing him back to town.

²⁵⁹ Ogilby, 24 Friday 1830.

his encounters were so benign. By the end of the year while visiting Waterloo plantation located outside Charleston, Ogilby was shocked to see “a girl of only eleven years of age who was large in the family way – and another who had changed her husbands ten times.”²⁶⁰ Ogilby saw firsthand slavery’s immoral aspects.

Another questionable practice was whether consuls could legally hire slaves. Before the 1841 Act that prohibited British consuls from hiring slaves, some consuls had hired slaves to work for them.²⁶¹ Right after he arrived in 1830, Ogilby hired a groom and house servant, a man named Tour, for \$8 dollars a month.²⁶² He also hired a black cook named Abigail for \$7 dollars a month.²⁶³ It was common for masters to hire out their slaves to foreign nationals, businesses, or townspeople. In 1833, Ogilby answered a set of inquiries from

²⁶⁰ Ogilby, 26 December 1830. This was his next to last entry in his diary. It would be wonderful if there existed any other yearly diaries to compare to see Ogilby’s identity transformation in each progressing year, but unfortunately this researcher cannot find any. Searching on both sides of the Atlantic, the researcher only found the 1830 diary.

²⁶¹ This is not to say that other British subjects living abroad did not own or hire out slaves. For example, Frederick Law Olmsted visited Mobile in 1855 and commented that he witnessed English merchants who wanted to be “recognized as members of Mobile’s society” owning slaves and hiring them out. Ella Lonn, *Foreigners in the Confederacy* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 7.

²⁶² Ogilby, 20 November 1830. This is a hired out slave. However, there were no legal prohibitions because England had not yet outlawed British slavery in the West Indies.

²⁶³ Ogilby, 8 December 1830.

the Foreign Office. One question inquired about the cost of labor in Charleston.

Ogilby wrote:

The labourers in the continuous country are exclusively negroes and as they are all mostly [*sic*] owned by the proprietors of the plantations and farms on which they are employed it is difficult to form a correct estimate of the average price of agricultural labour in this section of country but where negroes are hired out the common rate of wages is from 80 to 100 dollars a year for able bodied men including food and clothing.²⁶⁴

The amounts add up correctly. Ogilby paid Tour and Abigail between \$80 and \$100 each a year. Therefore, when Ogilby wrote his answer to query number 28, he knew that the information he recited was accurate because he himself paid for slave labor. The date of his answer is significant because it was close to when the British Emancipation Act was passed. It is uncertain whether debates in England directly influenced the questions asked the consuls, but there is no reason to argue that they did not.

In 1841, the Foreign Office sent Ogilby a copy of the new parliamentary act prohibiting British functionaries that lived in slaveholding countries from owning, renting, or selling slaves. Ogilby responded by assuring his superiors that in the “eleven years which I have resided in South Carolina, I have rarely had any other than white servants in my employment.” As if that was not enough of an explanation, he continued to justify hiring slaves. He wrote, “I hope your Lordship will pardon my saying (and I make the observation more on behalf of others than on my own account) that I think it rather hard, considering the

²⁶⁴ William Ogilby to the Foreign Office, 29 June 1833, Great Britain. South Caroliniana Special Collections Library, University of South Carolina, South Carolina.

smallness of the salaries allowed to Her Majesty's Consuls in this part of the world in proportion to the expensiveness of the County, to require them to hire none other than white servants, they are not only difficult to be had, but can not be hired for less than double the wages usually paid for negro servants."²⁶⁵ Ogilby, in other words, justified the hiring of slave labor to work in southern consulates on the low wages the British government paid its public servants. Ogilby was certainly not the only consul to make this argument.

After the 1841 Act, one consul was so bold as to ask the Foreign Office if he could hire slaves to work either at the consulate or at his home. Francis Waring, the British consul for Norfolk, sent a letter in 1848 to Lord Palmerston inquiring whether it was possible to get an exception to the 1841 act. According to Waring he had advertised for free servants, but none responded. Waring informed the Foreign Office that Virginia's state law at the time prohibited free people of color from residing in the state and northern whites who might serve as domestics refused to move to the state because of slavery.²⁶⁶ Waring did not know what to do. Perhaps neither amused nor sympathetic, Lord Palmerston swiftly and firmly replied that the Act's injunction could not be "relaxed" for him.²⁶⁷

The discrepancy in pay for servants reveals compromised principles. In 1836, William Ogilby continued to hire and pay discriminatorily. He wrote the

²⁶⁵ F.O. 5/367: 102.

²⁶⁶ F.O.S.T. 736: 194.

²⁶⁷ F.O.S.T. 736: 192-193.

Foreign Office that part of his yearly expenses was the £30 to £40 he paid a year to his black servants.²⁶⁸ He never clarified their status as free or enslaved, and their salaries correspond in dollars to what he paid in 1830. These may have been the same servants, but this researcher could not answer this question.

In 1849, Francis Waring sought advice again from the Foreign Office on the subject of abolition. The African Institute to Advance the Abolition of Slavery asked Waring to serve as its Honorary Vice President. Waring asked the Lord Palmerston if he could serve. Palmerston responded that he should decline the invitation and say to the society, "it would not be consistent with his official position to keep the honor which had been [intelligible] to him."²⁶⁹ What this means is that consuls in the South were never expected by the Foreign Office to join abolitionist societies. It would have been too dangerous for them. What this also means was that Waring had made acquaintances, even perhaps friends, among the abolitionists. Unsure of what to do, he dutifully asked his superiors what he should do and they responded. Waring was a man caught between many worlds, his newly found abolitionist friends, American slavery that surrounded him, British laws against slave ownership, and the Foreign Office. What could he really do, but follow the directive of his superiors?

The passage of the 1841 act seemed to trigger moral responses from the consuls. John Crawford, cotton merchant and consul at New Orleans, felt it

²⁶⁸ F.O. 5/308: 251.

²⁶⁹ F.O.S.T. 773: 108-111.

appropriate to inform the Foreign Office that he had “not, either directly, or indirectly, interest [*sic*] in slave property.”²⁷⁰ However, Crawford was fired just two years later when the Treasury Department informed the Foreign Office that Crawford was drawing funds from the Treasury apparently without the Foreign Office’s permission. It appeared that Crawford’s low salary and his acts of charity toward stranded and needy British subjects in New Orleans led to his need to draw funds from the Treasury. He was a cotton merchant, but his merchant business floundered.²⁷¹ Crawford embarrassed himself with the Foreign Office by becoming indebted and not able to pay off his creditors. Beginning in 1841, he began to spiral downward, constantly attempting to cover his debts, and his descent eventually caught up with him in 1843.

Robert Bunch, stationed at Charleston, also had trouble assimilating into the local community when it came to the issue of slave ownership. For example, Bunch complained to the Foreign Office of the “frightful atrocities of slave holding” including a story of his neighbor, a member of the southern aristocracy and lawyer, openly bragging to Bunch that he flogged all his slaves, women and men, “when they misbehaved.” Bunch summed up his position when he wrote, “It is literally no more to kill a slave than to shoot a dog.”²⁷² In 1860, Bunch reported a story about an Irishman condemned to death for kidnapping a slave

²⁷⁰ F.O.S.T. 377: 147.

²⁷¹ F.O. 5/396: 182-187. His business partner was Drummond Stewart.

²⁷² Eric Foner and Manning Marable, eds., *Herbert Aptheker on Race and Democracy, A Reader* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2006), 99.

that was found at the Irishman's residence. Bunch believed the Irishman to be "dull while the Negro was bright." A local lawyer later persuaded the governor to commute the Irishman's sentence. Bunch's final observations on Charleston's slaveholding community was that it they depended upon "unnatural doctrines upon which...to rely for support in advocating their 'Institution,' obfuscates the intellect and lowers the standard of moral sense."²⁷³

Some consuls simply did not like residing in the South and often asked for transfers. In 1854, Bunch requested the Foreign Office transfer him to New Granada because he viewed "Bogotá as the greatest prize I could ever hope to obtain, in my career of official service."²⁷⁴ Ogilby reported in 1844 that while he never interfered with the internal affairs of the United States, he believed that he lived within the "strong hold of slavery" at a port where all the political parties that wanted slavery maintained were active. Ogilby was afraid that certain politicians were "stirring up a very hostile feeling towards us throughout the Southern States," linking Britain and the British as a whole to plotting to end slavery in the U.S. Lastly, Ogilby wanted to be clear that the Foreign Office did not see him as an "apologist of slavery or of those who uphold it for no person can deplore its existence more than I do." However, Ogilby was afraid to act openly even

²⁷³ White, "The South in the 1850's as Seen by British Consuls," 33. This is the same Robert Bunch implicated, then vindicated, in the Trent Affair in 1861. See Milledge Louis Bonham, *The British Consuls in the Confederacy* (New York: Columbia University, 1911), 28-35.

²⁷⁴ F.O. 5/504: 66-67.

though he viewed himself as a philanthropist.²⁷⁵ Based on his statements, Ogilby appeared fearful and unhappy living in the South. At the time, South Carolina had just condemned John Brown to death for helping a female slave escape and that was probably why emotions ran high. Ogilby later informed the Foreign Office that Brown received a full pardon from the governor and was freed.²⁷⁶

On another occasion, John McTavish, the consul at Baltimore, arrested a British subject who appeared in Baltimore attempting to sell into slavery Edward Watson, a fifteen-year old British subject born in Jamaica. While the slave dealer got out of jail and escaped back to Jamaica, McTavish sought the legal advice of

²⁷⁵ F.O.S.T. 539: 31-33.

²⁷⁶ F.O.S.T. 539: 41-42. In that same year, the Foreign Office in London received a request from James Brown claiming that John Brown was his brother. But James believed his brother lived in New Orleans, not Charleston. The Foreign Office followed up on his request and asked consul Mure to make inquiries. Mure did and then informed the Foreign Office that John did not live in New Orleans and perhaps James should inquire at Charleston where this famous court case took place. Lastly, Mure informed the Office that Louisiana did not seek the death penalty for helping a slave escape, but instead imprisoned offenders. F.O. 5/414: 161-162 and 214-215. Mure's words did not stop a London newspaper from reporting the rumor that a man was condemned to death in Louisiana for helping a slave escape. Lord Brougham read the notice to the House of Lords. The parliamentary debates from the year 1803 to the present time: forming a continuation of the work entitled "The parliamentary history of England from the earliest period to the year 1803." Published under the superintendence of T.C. Hansard. London, 1812-. The *Debates* began publication in 1804. The first series comprised 41 volumes covering 1803-20; these were followed by New Series, 25 volumes, 1820-1830, and then 3d Series, 365 volumes, 1830-91. The 4th Series, 1802-1908, consisted of 199 volumes published by various contractors under the title *The Parliamentary debates (authorized edition)*. The 5th Series, 1909 to date, entitled *The Parliamentary debates (official report)*, is published by the Stationery Office. United Kingdom. *Hansard Parliamentary Debates*, 3d ser., vol. 73 (1844), col. 491-492 and 1156-1160.

the Foreign Office about what he could do in Baltimore. The Foreign Office responded that McTavish should write a letter to the authorities in Jamaica making them aware of what had happened and then send Watson back to his birthplace, Jamaica.²⁷⁷

3.2.8 *The Negro Seamen Acts: Another Challenge to Settlement*

While consuls did not feel safe combating slavery overtly, they did fight openly for the freedom of British black seamen. Perhaps the best forum where British consuls could openly assert their government's official condemnation of slavery was through the campaign to release British black seamen who were jailed in Southern ports and then often sold into slavery. These savage laws existed in each of the southern states where the consuls worked: Virginia, Louisiana, Alabama, Georgia, and South Carolina. While the researcher does not discuss in this study every letter to the Foreign Office, a sample are offered to demonstrate the efforts some consuls made to free British subjects whose liberties were taken.

In 1839, John Crawford, the consul at New Orleans, worked to free young British West Indian sailors imprisoned in New Orleans.²⁷⁸ In 1843, Ogilby attempted to free four British black seamen jailed in Charleston by the Sheriff; E.J. Elder, a second mate; John Jones, a steward; John Thomas, a cabin boy;

²⁷⁷ F.O. 5/324: 329-338. This event took place in 1837, one year before British apprenticeship program would end.

²⁷⁸ F.O. 5/337: page numbers unreadable.

and Lawrence Eivers, an apprentice. Jones and Thomas were from Barbados. Eivers was from Liverpool where his white father, Daniel, was employed as a dock-keeper and his mother, a woman of color, was a native of County Cork, Ireland. Ogilby was unable to free the men alone. Therefore, he went to the state legislature and listened to the debates on a bill that he hoped would end the mandatory imprisonment of British black seamen laws. The bill passed the House, but was defeated in the Senate.²⁷⁹

Not long after his arrival in Charleston in 1850, the Foreign Office requested that Britain's consul, George Matthews, negotiate with South Carolina's government for repeal of the Negro Seamen's Act. The Act was originally created in 1822 in response to the Denmark Vesey slave revolt. This act created a mandatory imprisonment of black seamen entering a South Carolina port. The captain had to pay a fine of \$1000 or face two months imprisonment. But not all captains paid the fines. If the captain failed to pay the fines, then the black seamen would be either publicly auctioned or privately sold into bondage for payment of the fines. Matthews petitioned the state legislature for repeal of the law. He continued to harass that group until the legislature passed a motion stating in part that they would no longer accept any communications from Matthews. At some point, an angry mob threatened Matthews. Having failed in the legislature, Matthews used the court system to end the heinous practice. Matthews filed a suit seeking the redress of British

²⁷⁹ F.O.S.T. 485: 70-80 and 84-86.

seamen Manuel Pereira and Ruben Roberts. Both men were aboard British vessels when city officials boarded their ship and took them away. Because they were on British ships, Matthews filed action in the U.S. District Court in Charleston. Judge Gilchrist decided against Matthews and upheld the state law. Matthews appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court, but due to a technical error, the court refused to hear the case.²⁸⁰

The next year Matthews continued his fight to free British subjects. In 1851, Lord Palmerston approved of Matthew's hard work and granted him money from the British Treasury to purchase the freedom of two British boys sold into slavery in Charleston.²⁸¹ As late as 1861, Consul Mure in New Orleans had to deal with a similar case of seamen incarceration after the incident of Harper's Ferry. He reported that due to his efforts, all British seamen of color were free in New Orleans, but two Canadian sailors were jailed. Working diligently, he obtained the Canadians' release.²⁸²

Informed that "Charleston was no place for a British Abolitionist to exercise the free use of his tongue," the Foreign Office quickly removed Matthews when Lord Clarendon became the Foreign Secretary. As discussed in chapter two, each Foreign Secretary had his own agenda for what mattered most

²⁸⁰ London Anti-Slavery Conference, *Papers Read and Statements Made on the Principal Subjects Submitted to the Anti-Slavery Conference* (London: British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society, 1854), 35-36. The South Carolina Negro Seamen's Act remained until the Civil War.

²⁸¹ F.O. 5/535: 10-11.

²⁸² F.O. 5/744: 15-20.

during his tenure. It appeared that Palmerston, who had a more aggressive personality, did not balk at confrontation; but for reasons not entirely clear, Clarendon did not push the issue and instead quickly reassigned Matthews to Philadelphia. Next, the British Minister in Washington, Mr. Crampton, officially withdrew the case that Matthews had started.²⁸³ South Carolina's legislature never passed the act Matthews campaigned for. In 1851, at Norfolk, Francis Waring spent the year fighting the state law that imprisoned British black seamen. A part of his efforts included filing suit in the U.S. District court to have two British seamen released from jail. The case lasted nine days. The Foreign Office approved his efforts and reimbursed him.²⁸⁴

Robert Bunch in Charleston worked with the South Carolina legislature to rewrite its Colored Seamen's Act to be restricted to only "foreign nations." He explained his actions to the Foreign Office. To him, because of the growing unrest due to the Kansas and Nebraska violence, the "irritating language of the press," and the Fugitive Slave Law, citizens were growing bitter and hostile to each other over the issue of slavery. He blamed South Carolina's position of favoring imprisonment of foreign nationals on their "naturally sensitive temperament" due in part to their climate and because of their "conviction they are forced, however unwillingly, to entertain of the greater prosperity and progress of other Sections of the Union, [they] are peculiarly impressionable on

²⁸³ London Anti-Slavery Conference, *Papers Read and Statements Made*, 35-36.

²⁸⁴ F.O. 5/534: 245-246, 260-261, 263-264, and 312.

the subject of their so called 'rights.'"²⁸⁵ Bunch gave the Foreign Office a series of what he believed to be plausible explanations for South Carolinians' conduct. Bunch informed the Foreign Office that while dining with South Carolina's members of the U.S. House of Representatives, everyone at his table believed that "in five years from this date either slavery would have ceased to exist, or the Union have been dissolved." Bunch admitted that he did not know if this would in fact happen, but that he would keep the Foreign Office informed of new developments as they arose.²⁸⁶ The reason Bunch's words appear to have a pro-slavery slant is because that was who his friends were. The slave owners trusted him enough to voice their feelings so openly to him. His friends were the important members of South Carolina's slaveholding society. Perhaps the slave owners expected Bunch to inform the Foreign Office of what they said. But Bunch did not have to inform the Foreign Office, and that he chose to is interesting. It means that at this stage in his deployment, he saw himself as a dutiful government servant informing his government of what may happen in the future, war within the U.S. over the issue of slavery. Bunch appeared doubly foreign, caught in the middle between his government and his friends.

In South Carolina in 1855 at the time of the letter, free persons of color from Northern states were being jailed in addition to foreign nationals of color. However, Bunch only worked to have the state legislature include the phrase

²⁸⁵ F.O. 5/626: 389-390.

²⁸⁶ F.O. 5/626: 390.

“foreign nations.” Perhaps, he believed that as a British consul, he only had legal standing to free British seamen illegally jailed. His efforts failed when the South Carolina legislature did not pass the repeal bill. In a private and confidential correspondence to General J.H. Adams, Bunch believed the bill would never pass because “the entire question is so complicated by prejudice and bigotry.” Bunch lamented that he had “yet to learn how to contend successfully against the willful ignorance and the angry rapines of slaveholders.”²⁸⁷ Based on his writings and sentiments to Adams, Robert Bunch in 1855 did not identify himself at least privately with the slaveholding class. To the contrary, to the Foreign Office Bunch appeared to be identifying himself with Britain’s abolitionist identity. Bunch went so far as to meet General Adams at Adams’s plantation, Live Oak Hall, just north of Charleston, in 1855 to discuss the possible repeal of South Carolina’s Negro Seamen Act.²⁸⁸

Historian Philip M. Hamer details the efforts of the consuls and the Negro Seamen Acts in two articles he authored.²⁸⁹ He asserts that the consuls acted heroically in their attempts to repeal the acts. What is important is that this research demonstrates that combating the Negro Seamen Acts allowed the consuls to exhibit openly their abolitionist ideologies without fear of reprisals from

²⁸⁷ F.O. 5/626: 405-405A.

²⁸⁸ F.O. 5/626: 393-395.

²⁸⁹ Philip M. Hamer, “Great Britain, the United States, and the Negro Seamen Acts, 1822-1848,” *The Journal of Southern History* Vol. 1, no. 1 (Feb., 1935): 3-28. And, “British Consuls and the Negro Seamen Acts, 1850-1860,” *The Journal of Southern History*, vol. 1, no. 2 (May, 1935): 138-168.

their slaveholding neighbors. Fighting against the Negro Seamen Acts also allowed the consuls to demonstrate their willingness to appease the British Foreign Office and support their government policies. Rebelling against the Negro Seamen Acts allowed the consuls to demonstrate their patriotism as British nationals fighting to protect other British subjects. It was a way to do good when surrounded by an atmosphere of slavery.

3.2.9 *The Issue of the Atlantic Slave Trade Affected the Consuls' Ability to Settle*

British consuls stationed in the U.S. South faced several challenges to maintaining their British identity and the creation of a transatlantic identity. Some men felt loyalty to Britain while at the same time loyalty to their new imagined, self-created identity in the South. Evidence supporting this theory can be found by examining in detail the consuls' answers to various slave trade inquiries that the Foreign Office required them to answer. Their cumulative answers revealed that all was not as it seemed in the South.²⁹⁰

In 1843 while the British parliament debated another round of Slave Trade Suppression bills, British consuls on the ground in Savannah, Charleston, Mobile, and New Orleans, who daily found themselves in frontal contact with slavery, had to answer a series of inquiries by the Foreign Office. Slave states and ports were areas of interest because slavery continued to exist. No group

²⁹⁰ Note: the researcher searched each consul's name in the U.S. Census and Slave Schedule Records for the years 1830, 1840, 1850, and 1860. Most consuls were not listed and if a consul was listed, it will be mentioned in the chapter content.

could provide a more accurate expression of what was going on in the year 1843 in the South. By 1843, abolition of slavery and the trade in humans had become formal British Foreign Office policies. The Earl of Aberdeen, as Foreign Secretary, sent out a series of questions to the British Consuls stationed in these ports. Thirteen out of fourteen total questions dealt with the trade and state of slavery in Georgia, North and South Carolina, Alabama, and Louisiana. The following is a discussion of each consul's response.

The first question inquired about the total free and enslaved population for the year 1840. The second question was about how many slaves were imported from Africa in the last ten years. Col. Fitzgerald at Mobile, responded "none, or if any, very few" while all the other southern consuls said none, noting that the response was because the federal law of the United States prevented it. The third question asked whether slaves received equal protection in criminal cases to whites. Fitzgerald, the consul at Mobile, and Stow, the consul at Wilmington, North Carolina, believed slaves did receive equal treatment, but all the other consuls believed that slaves did not receive equal treatment in criminal cases. The fourth question inquired whether slaves received fair treatment by their masters. They all responded that masters had free rein to punish their slaves, but that state laws protected slaves from certain punishments, such as maiming, disabling, or killing a slave. Question five inquired whether slaves could testify in court. The consuls responded that slaves could only testify against other slaves. Question six asked whether slaves were well fed or treated. While all consuls answered that to their opinion, slaves were generally well fed, consul Molyneux

at Savannah offered the greatest detail on diet. For example, he wrote that slaves received a weekly allotment at coastal plantations of one peck of Indian corn, "which is more than any man can consume." He also noted that slaves were "allowed gardens and the privilege of raising hogs and poultry, either for their own use or for sale." Domestic slaves, according to Molyneux, "received a one quart of corn ration and from a half pound to one and a quarter pound of sugar." Furthermore, he states that slaves received a weekly coffee and meat allowance. As far as the up-country slaves, he found them a "much finer looking race and more intelligent. They have no task, but work side by side with white men, from sunrise to sunset, and are not restricted to any quantity of food." But in the low-country, all the work was done by task labor.²⁹¹ So according to Molyneux, the up-country farms offered a better life than the low-country plantations for enslaved peoples. Even though the Foreign Office never commented on it, Molyneux, in effect, revealed his own racial prejudices. Molyneux's knowledge of slaves' diets and planters' rations imply that he knew firsthand what he was saying. It appeared from the correspondence that Molyneux was quite familiar with slavery in the state of Georgia. Lastly, his comments reveal insight into his real identity and with whom he associated.

Question seven inquired into the health of slaves. Most consuls believed that slaves enjoyed a longer and healthier life than free people of color. The

²⁹¹ *Correspondence with British Consulates, Queries as to the State of the Slave Trade and Slavery in Several States*, vol. 25, Slave Trade, cmd. (1843). A peck is equal to one-fourth of a bushel.

eighth question inquired whether the slave population was on the increase. All consuls remarked that it was increasing. The ninth question asked whether manumission occurred commonly. Only the Louisiana consul reported that it was common, “but confined to those of good character, and capable of taking care of themselves afterwards.” Question ten inquired whether the laws that regulate slaves had become more or less strict over the last ten years. All consuls recorded that the laws had become more restrictive. Molyneux offered a specific example, masters traveling with their slaves. He told the Office that in 1835 Georgia restricted its citizens from traveling with slaves to foreign countries. The final restriction of the act addressed the difference between traveling with a male slave versus a female slave. He states that the act prohibited “the return of a male slave from a non-slave holding state or country.” But that “females are still allowed to return.”²⁹²

Question eleven asked whether there was an abolitionist party in the state and all responded in the negative. Again, Molyneux had more to say. He went on to explain that “doubtless, [there are] many slaveholders who condemn slavery in the abstract, but there is no party in this state favorable to the abolition of slavery without compensation.” He appeared to be splitting hairs by stating that slaveholders condemned slavery in the “abstract” because if slaveholders genuinely did not like it, they could free their slaves. Question twelve inquired whether there were any legal differences between a free person of color and

²⁹² Ibid.

whites. All consuls replied yes, except the Louisiana consul. Question thirteen asked whether free men of color could hold state offices. All the consuls replied in the negative. The final question asked from what sources the consuls obtained their information in order to answer the inquiries. Fitzgerald (Mobile) and James G. Moodie (Charleston vice-consul) replied that they obtained their information from public documents such as census records and personal observations. Molyneux (Savannah), John G. Lingham (New Orleans), and Stow (Wilmington, North Carolina) replied that they obtained their information from public documents, private information, and personal observation. Stow stresses the point by stating that he had resided in North Carolina for more than twenty-five years.²⁹³

This unique and well-organized Foreign Office document, preserved at Kew and in the Parliamentary Papers, forced the consuls to provide statements and opinions on slavery and the slave trade. These inquiries were as controversial in 1843 as they are today. For example, slaveholders discovered the existence and content of the questions and were quick to inform their members.

We know that at this very moment, the British Government have sent written questions to their Consul in Charleston [William Ogilby], (and we are informed the case is the same in every port where they have a Consul) inquiring most minutely into our laws and usages in regard to slaves; their condition, rights, labors, treatment, &c.²⁹⁴

²⁹³ Ibid.

²⁹⁴ Clyde N. Wilson, ed., *The Papers of John C. Calhoun vol. XVIII, 1843-1844* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1986), 363.

The members of planter groups, such as the “Central Committee,” gathered as much information as possible about these inquiries so that they could spread “proper information among the people” to those most affected by the Foreign Office’s inquiries.²⁹⁵ What the Central Committee really sought was funding in anticipation of the 1844 United States Presidential election in order to promote their candidate, John C. Calhoun.

These inquiries are important not only because they reveal consular impressions about the state of slavery and the trade, but also because they were proposed and answered just ten years after British emancipation. The answers are in effect a benchmark of British identity as it relates, at least with the consuls and their representatives, to their ideas and ideals about slavery. Finally, these answers are important because they reveal what outsiders thought about Southern slavery twenty years before emancipation in the United States.

Because in 1843 Ogilby was on a six-month leave, James G. Moodie, his vice consul, answered the inquiries. For performing his job as vice-consul, the Foreign Office paid Moodie £70 from Ogilby’s account.²⁹⁶ Vice consul John George Lingham answered the inquiries for William Mure, the consul at New Orleans, who was also on leave. According to the 1861 New Orleans City

²⁹⁵ Ibid., 364.

²⁹⁶ F.O. 5/395: 125-126. However, in 1833, Ogilby paid Moodie £1000 a year to act as vice-consul and to fill in while Ogilby was on leave for a few months in England for his health. It is unclear where Ogilby got the money to pay Moodie. F.O. 5/284: 345-346.

Directory, Lingham was a commercial merchant. According to the 1850 U.S. Census, seven people lived with Lingham, two were free people of color; additionally, according to the 1850 Slave Schedules, J.G. Lingham owned six slaves.²⁹⁷ When Lingham answered the 1843 slave trade queries, he was therefore doubly foreign. He dutifully performed the job assigned him, but hid his real feelings about slavery and slave ownership. Perhaps in 1843, Lingham was not a slave owner, but later he clearly became one by 1850. Either way, Lingham's actions proved that he was not an abolitionist when he answered the 1843 queries.

There were occasions when the consuls informed, in private, slave trade correspondences with the Foreign Office about Atlantic slave traffic in their regions. The following are instances of such information provided to the British government. In 1830, James Baker informed the Foreign Office that he had some intelligence relative to slavers seen off the coast of Cuba.²⁹⁸ According to Baker, slavers "hover round the back of the Island of Key West" waiting on

²⁹⁷ U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Seventh Census of the United States, 1850*. Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 1850. Census Place: *New Orleans Municipality 1 Ward 2, Orleans, Louisiana*; Roll: M432_235; pg. 82, image; 167. U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Seventh Census of the United States, 1850 Slave Schedules*. Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 1850. Roll: M432, 1,009. However, by the 1860 U.S. Census, only the three members that immediately made up his family, his wife, himself, and his child were listed on the census records. No slaves were listed. U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Eighth Census of the United States, 1860*. Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 1860. Census Place: *New Orleans Ward 9, Orleans, Louisiana*: Roll: M653_422, pg. 0, image, 252.

²⁹⁸ F.O. 5/262: 58.

instructions from agents as to where they were to disembark at Cuba.²⁹⁹ Baker appeared to be an abolitionist at least when it came to the transatlantic slave trade. In 1837, Baker informed the Foreign Office that he was diligent on his watch and if he should obtain evidence of the traffic in his region, he would “prosecute the parties” involved.³⁰⁰ However, it is unclear if he ever prosecuted anyone. In 1855, Robert Bunch promised to “make every inquiry” to find out if British subjects were being sold into slavery in South Carolina.³⁰¹ He found that British black seamen were being jailed upon port entry and he worked for their release.³⁰²

In 1858, William Mure, the British consul at New Orleans, informed the Foreign Office that the state legislature planned to bring 2,500 Africans to Louisiana to serve as indentured laborers for fifteen years. He believed the idea was the legislature’s attempt to reopen the Atlantic slave trade. While the state house passed the bill with a wide majority, the state senate rejected the act by two votes.³⁰³ Robert Bunch informed the Foreign Office of a similar scheme that a private company attempted to operate out of Charleston. The Custom House manager submitted the inquiry to the U.S. Treasury Department, which quickly

²⁹⁹ F.O. 5/262: 73.

³⁰⁰ F.O. 5/316: 60-62.

³⁰¹ F.O. 5/626: 340-341.

³⁰² F.O. 5/626: 369-372.

³⁰³ F.O.S.T. 1059: 60-66.

informed the group that their operation would violate U.S. laws against the Atlantic slave trade.³⁰⁴

As news arrived about slave ships sailing from their ports, consuls informed the Foreign Office with details. In 1858, Mure informed the Foreign Office that the *Charles*, a slave ship, had left New Orleans on 28 March 1857. He reported that when the ship was captured in September, of the 1200 slaves originally onboard, 847 had drowned when the ship attempted to evade capture.³⁰⁵ Most likely, the crew threw the slaves overboard in their efforts to outrun the patrol ships and eliminate evidence of their illegal activities. In another savage but less horrific tale, in 1858 the *Niagara*, a slaver captured off the coast of Cuba, arrived in Charleston's harbor with 306 slaves onboard. But by the time the U.S. government arranged for its departure to Liberia, 35 had died³⁰⁶ waiting for freedom.

In 1859, Charles Tulin, the British consul at Mobile, wrote to the Foreign Office that the local paper reported that a U.S. barque the *Rawlins* had been seized as a suspected slave ship.³⁰⁷ In 1860, he again reported the arrival of another slave ship into Mobile Bay, the *Clotilde* with 124 Africans onboard.

³⁰⁴ F.O.S.T. 1059: 80-85. A U.S. Census search of the years 1850 and 1860 of William Mure revealed that while he had a large household of nine people, no records were found of him owning slaves.

³⁰⁵ F.O.S.T. 1059: 71-73.

³⁰⁶ F.O.S.T. 1059: 96-97.

³⁰⁷ F.O.S.T. 1086: 358-360.

Transported to a steamer, the crew moved the slaves north on the Alabama River passing the city of Mobile.³⁰⁸ Also in 1860 and not long after the *Clotilde* incident, Tulin reported that a camp of abolitionists had been discovered near Talladega, Alabama. At the camp were whites and runaway slaves. All were arrested with the charges of “endeavoring to excite an insurrection” of the enslaved. After a brief time in jail, the camp members were hanged.³⁰⁹

By the end of the year, more tensions developed in Mobile when a Haitian representative arrived and attempted to ship all free people of color to Haiti. After visiting with the mayor, the sheriff informed the man that Alabama did not recognize his embassy and advised him “that a speedy departure from within the limits of the commonwealth would probably comport with the tenor and spirit of the statutes.” The Haitian representative left that day for New Orleans.³¹⁰ In October 1860, Tulin informed Lord Russell that a slaver *Cygnets* had been captured after its August docking at the port of Mobile and was to be sold at public auction.³¹¹ On 22 December, Tulin informed the Foreign Office that a plot for a slave insurrection in Montgomery County had been discovered. The

³⁰⁸ F.O.S.T. 1112: 162-164.

³⁰⁹ F.O.S.T. 1112: 166-167. If a newspaper account can be found, more details of what happened would help fill in the gaps. While Tulin states that the group was hanged, it is unclear the exact number involved and whether there was a trial. Without more details, it can be argued that the group was possibly lynched by a mob.

³¹⁰ F.O.S.T. 1112: 168-169.

³¹¹ F.O.S.T. 1112: 170-171.

alleged plan was that on 27th of December the slaves planned to rise up, murder their masters and their families, and then seize control of the county. Several people believed to be guilty of conspiracy were hanged.³¹² None of Tulin's reports mention there being any court hearings or trials.

Tulin was not the only consul reporting increased Atlantic slave trade activity in the Gulf coast. In 1858, Robert Bunch, the British consul at Charleston, informed the Foreign Office of the slave ship *Wanderer* captured along the coast of Georgia.³¹³ As far away as Galveston, Arthur Lynn, the British consul, reported to the Foreign Office in 1860 that a slave ship had landed along the Texas coast.³¹⁴

3.3 *The Consolidation Phase*

As demonstrated in this chapter, the degree of cultural assimilation varied from consul to consul. For Ogilby an important component of his assimilation involved going to dinner parties and meeting single women. On Christmas Eve 1830, he accepted an invitation to attend a party at the plantation of Mr. Milne of John's Island. He wrote his impressions of the local planter class that received Christmas service near Mr. Milne's Waterloo plantation.

³¹² F.O.S.T. 1112: 172-173. Again, Tulin does not state whether the group was hanged after a trial or lynched by a mob. A newspaper account maybe helpful to fill in the missing details.

³¹³ F.O.S.T. 1112: 78-101 and F.O.S.T.: 1059: 104-108.

³¹⁴ F.O.S.T. 1112: 139-143. Lynn believed the slave ship to be the *Thomas Watson* owned by a suspected slave trader, Mr. Watson who resided at Indianola.

How strange every thing appeared to me on driving up to the Church for it is situated in the midst of the woods – the horses of those who attended were tied to the trees all around and gigs and carriages standing all about. The Gentlemen were all assembled under the portico talking of the prices of Cotton and the Ladies were talking about in the aisle of the church chattering away about the news of the day – this lasted until the Parson (Mr. Taylor) drove up, and I was a good deal surprised to see him mingle in the group for a time and talk on the same subjects – he gave us an excellent sermon though.³¹⁵

Some consuls joined local social clubs as a way to make friends and establish contacts. In Charleston, Ogilby joined the local fishing club.³¹⁶ Bunch joined the Charleston Club, the Jockey Club, the Chamber of Commerce, and several other public groups.³¹⁷

Others found marriage a way to assimilate. For some lonely consuls marriage seemed a better choice than remaining a bachelor. Young men far away from home began to investigate the local prospects, looking for ideal companions among the respectable ladies. After a dinner party at Mr. Wetherspoon's, Ogilby met three young women for evening tea. While he forgot their names, he "found the youngest of them very pleasant, so much so that I shall not long remain in ignorance of who she is."³¹⁸ However, Ogilby was weary of Mr. McCaulley's daughter who seemed as "anxious for a husband as any

³¹⁵ Ogilby, 25 December 1830.

³¹⁶ Ogilby, 14 August 1830.

³¹⁷ F.O. 5/626: 345.

³¹⁸ Ogilby, 15 July 1830.

young Lady.”³¹⁹ Ogilby’s first real female interest was a woman he called the “cracked widow,” Mrs. Hutchinson. He sent her a copy of *Don Juan* and sealed the book so she could only read a portion of the text and underneath the seal, he wrote her the following poem.

A little learning, folks declare,
Is dangerous, therefore, pray beware
Of how you touch this magic seal,
Which mysteries many conceal
For if you once but take a peep
You may be tempted to drink deep
And thus perhaps disturb your sleep,
*Which ‘twere a pity should be broken,
Unless by some substantial token,
Of the reality of things
The Poet to the fancy brings.

He comments in his diary that he did not send the last four lines.³²⁰ Even though Ogilby soon made new friends at the St. Cecilia Society ball and other balls of the season,³²¹ he remained a bachelor during his fifteen-year tenure in Charleston. Love did not come until late in life when, at the age of 50, Ogilby married Harriett Canny of Castle Fergus in County Clare, Ireland.³²²

³¹⁹ Ogilby, 23 September 1830.

³²⁰ Ogilby, 27 October 1830.

³²¹ Ogilby, 2 December 1830.

³²² Ogilby married Harriett Canny in 1850. She was the fourth daughter of Matthew Canny. Ogilby attended Dungannon College, served as a Justice of the Peace for Londonderry, and the British Consul at Caen, France. Ogilby was originally from County Londonderry, Ireland and returned to Ireland to marry after he retired from service in the United States.

3.3.1 *But Not All Consuls Assimilated to the American South*

One reason why some consuls assimilated and others did not depended upon the port. Some areas offered a more conducive imagined community within which British consuls could operate and maneuver. As described by the consuls, Charleston afforded a more pleasant seaport experience than Mobile. Even though Mobile had trade ships laden with cargoes of various consumer goods arriving from India and Europe, the Caribbean and New England. British consuls for one reason or another never enjoyed their tenure there. The Foreign Office assigned consul after consul to the port city, but none established any lasting relationships among the various groups or communities in the area.

According to Robert Grigg in 1845, during the winter the city's population was about 20,000 but after May 10,000 to 12,000 residents migrated north and inland to escape the malaria season.³²³ Another reason why consuls did not like Mobile was that there were so few British residents. Without respectable British merchants or residents, consuls at Mobile felt isolated from home and countrymen. James Baker, the consul at Mobile in 1836, wrote the Foreign Office that "no respectable British merchant can be found in this place."³²⁴ Baker had to live essentially alone without a vibrant British community surrounding him; he instead sought the companionship of "respectable Germans" living in

³²³ F.O. 5/434: 74.

³²⁴ F.O. 5/309: 126-127.

Mobile.³²⁵ Baker kept asking for a transfer out of Mobile.³²⁶ At one point, his health declined so much so that he had to seek medical care in Paris. Baker wrote lengthy letters to the Foreign Office detailing his career in public service and in effect begging for a transfer to anywhere that had a different climate. Additionally, this correspondence also demonstrates Baker's desire to be recognized by the Foreign Office as a valuable employee.

Baker, a career consul, served a total of twenty-six years in the Foreign Service, fourteen of those years in Mobile.³²⁷ Mobile was not the only area that lacked "respectable" British subjects. W.M. Dyer, consul for Mobile, complained in 1855 to the Foreign Office that he had chosen an American to serve as vice-consul in Pensacola since "there are no British born subjects residing at Pensacola or at least none competent to hold the office."³²⁸ In 1835, Baker had this problem in Mobile when he nominated H.A. Schroeder as a vice-consul. The Foreign Office responded reminding Baker that "British subjects, and not foreigners, should hold situations of this description and as it would appear from Mr. Schroeder's name that he is not a British subject."³²⁹ Lord Palmerston refused to grant Baker's recommendation.

³²⁵ F.O. 5/309: 126-127.

³²⁶ F.O. 5/337: 276-285, 293-304.

³²⁷ F.O. 5/316: 75.

³²⁸ F.O. 5/627: 143-144.

³²⁹ F.O. 5/303: 121-122.

Even later, Mobile offered little for British consuls serving there. Charles Lionel Fitzgerald, another career public servant and the British consul for Mobile, served the region from 1841 until his death in 1845. By the time he arrived, Mobile had many advantages of other similar-sized cities (population of 12,672 in 1840): a College of St. Joseph's at Spring Hill, city water works, a municipal hospital, Barton Academy (a boy's school), Christ's Church, a police station and jail, a U.S. Marine Hospital, and various religious and samaritan societies. However, no social clubs or theaters existed when Fitzgerald lived there and the city often suffered from fires and malaria epidemics.³³⁰ Whatever cotton trade advantage existed in Mobile, there were the overriding negative aspects of isolation from one's fellow citizens and elemental dangers of possible death. By 1843, Fitzgerald's health had begun to fail.³³¹

Originally from Turlough, County Mayo, Ireland, in 1811 "C.L." (as Fitzgerald identified himself) married Marianne Breedon from New Jersey. Fitzgerald's mother was the daughter of a Baronet and his father a lieutenant colonel of the North Mayo Militia. Perhaps family connections led Fitzgerald to enlist in military service. He had served as a major in the British Legion in Spain

³³⁰ Caldwell Delaney, ed., *Craighead's Mobile* (Mobile: The Haunted Bookshop, 1968), 104-105.

³³¹ F.O. 5/396: 72.

and as a Brigadier-General in the Peninsular War. However, after the war, he reverted to his permanent rank as Lieutenant Colonel.³³²

For unknown reasons, Fitzgerald fell into debt while stationed at Mobile. Near death, he granted a power of attorney to George MacDonald.³³³ To ensure payment from his estate, Macdonald held Fitzgerald's seal of office for ransom from the Foreign Office. Robert Grigg, Fitzgerald's replacement, soon realized he needed the Office's advice on how to proceed in the matter.³³⁴

A later replacement, W.G. Nicolas, commented in 1849 that while there were several so-called "British merchants," only one fit "in the definition of a *British Mercantile House*."³³⁵ However, Nicolas never defined what he meant by a British Mercantile House. The only clue was that he mentioned that many merchant houses did business with Great Britain, but were not owned by British citizens. Nicolas chose not to rent a house or purchase one and instead

³³² Arthur Meredyth Burke, ed., *The Prominent Families of the United States of America* (London: Sackville Press, 1908), 224. His wife was Mariann Breeden the daughter of Lieutenant-Colonel Breeden, R.M. Before serving in Mobile, C.L. served as a British consul in the Balearic Islands (1838- ?) and briefly at Carthagen (1841). His will was not present in the Mobile County courthouse archives, which leads one to speculate that perhaps he did not plan on his assignment lasting long enough to purchase real estate of that he did not own anything of value while there.

³³³ Miscellaneous Papers, Book D, 419: Mobile County Courthouse. Note: this was the only document on record of all the Mobile consuls from 1830 to 1860. The researcher was unable to find any other courthouse documents after an exhaustive search.

³³⁴ F.O. 5/434: 83-85. There is no extant reply from the Foreign Office.

³³⁵ F.O. 5/504: 51.

informed the Foreign Office that in 1849 he lived in a city hotel and performed his job without an assistant.³³⁶

The turnover continued in Mobile. By the time of the Civil War, acting consuls were the only members of the Foreign Office in charge in Mobile. Even they did not last very long. During the war, Mobile had no less than four acting British consuls, as one consul after another left office.³³⁷

Some consuls simply never intended to become Southern. For these individuals, their posts were merely stepping-stones to further their careers. Upon his arrival, G.P.R. James immediately disliked Norfolk. He wrote, "the place has no attractions either social or physical."³³⁸ Facing ill health in 1858, G.P.R. James was happy to be transferred from Richmond, Virginia to Venice, Italy. "I shall be ready to set out for Venice whenever your Lordship commands it," he wrote the Earl of Malmesbury. But that was after he took a two-month leave to take care of his neglected, large properties.³³⁹ However, the Foreign Office only allowed James a one-month leave. James challenged the nominal

³³⁶ F.O. 5/504: 67. This was very different situation than William Mure found in New Orleans in 1849. He comments that there were at least 46 British merchant houses in New Orleans from 1842 to 1849. Furthermore, Mure did not delineate between merchant houses that did business with Great Britain and those that were owned by British subjects. One emerges with the clear impression that New Orleans had a more vibrant British community abroad than Mobile. F.O. 5/504: 143-145.

³³⁷ These were: Charles Tulin (1858-61); Charles Labuzan (1860-61); James Magee (1861-62); and Frederick Cridland (May – June 1863).

³³⁸ F.O. 5/551: 76.

³³⁹ F.O. 5/698: 149-150.

leave award and informed the Foreign Secretary that he looked forward to receiving the Secretary's "verbal instructions in London."³⁴⁰

George Benuenuto Buckley-Matthews, the British consul for Charleston from 1850 to 1853, never assimilated into the Southern life. According to the 1851 Charleston city directory, his consular office was located on Central Wharf and Broad Street.³⁴¹ As the son of a British soldier that had fought in the American Revolution, Matthews remained a British career man that never adapted Southern ways. Matthews's first career was in the British Armed services. He served in the 52nd Light Infantry, the Rifle Brigade, the 70th Foot, the Coldstream Guards, the 85th Foot, and the Grenadier Guards before finally retiring in April 1841 as a Lieutenant and Captain, having served in the Mediterranean and North America. Near the end of his military career, he began to become interested in politics. From 1835 to 1837, he served as MP for Athlone (Ireland) and represented Shaftesbury (England) from 1838 to 1841. During this time, he founded the Conservative Club at St. James Street, London, and then joined the Camden Society, an association formed to publish historical and literary materials.³⁴² He retained his memberships in his homeland's social and political clubs throughout his tenure in any country. No records can be found

³⁴⁰ F.O. 5/698: 159-160.

³⁴¹ J.H. Bagget, *The Directory of the City of Charleston for 1852* (Charleston: Edward C. Councill, 1851), 84.

³⁴² The Camden Society published his death notice in their 2 May 1881, *Report of the Concil Read at the General Meeting* (London: Camden Society, 1882) and digitized 26 Feb 2007 by the New York Public Library.

of Matthews joining any hunting, social, or political groups within South Carolinian society. Clearly, this was a man who wanted to retain his home identity.

After leaving Parliament, Matthews began his Foreign Office career. In 1844, the Foreign Secretary appointed him Governor and Commander-in-Chief of the Bahamas Islands. In 1850, Lord Palmerston appointed Matthews to serve as the consul at Charleston. Matthews remained there for three years. After a change in Foreign Secretary leadership, Lord Clarendon, in 1853, reassigned Matthews to Philadelphia. Matthews remained there until 28 May 1856 when President Franklin Pierce revoked the consul's diplomatic status. This did not affect Matthews' Foreign Office career. Next, he served as the Consul-General for Russian ports at the Black Sea and subsequently as the Consul-General for the Sea of Azov. Then, in 1858, he became Secretary of the British Legation in Mexico. From 1859 to 1861, he served as the Chargé d'Affaires in Mexico. In 1861, he became the Chargé d' Affaires and Consul-General to the Republics of Guatemala, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Honduras, and Salvador. Matthews disliked this assignment for some reason. In 1864, he sent Lord Malmesbury, the former British Foreign Secretary a quetzal bird from Guatemala. Malmesbury wrote in his memoirs years later that he believed Matthews to be a "very able man."³⁴³

In 1865, the Foreign Office promoted Matthews to be Her Majesty's minister Plenipotentiary to the Colombia, and the very next year promoted him to

³⁴³ Malmesbury, *Memoirs of an Ex-Minister*, 586-8.

Her Majesty's Minister Plenipotentiary to the Central American Republics.³⁴⁴ After a lengthy career, Matthews died in London in 1879 at the age of 72. His family buried him at St. Kew, Cornwall. Later his family erected a marble tablet in his honor at the Royal Military Chapel at St. James Park. Inscribed were his many deeds including his service in the Coldstream Guards (1833-36), Governor of the Bahamas and Her Majesty's Minister in Brazil.³⁴⁵ Perhaps because the position of Minister is the more advanced position, his family did not feel it necessary to mention his service as a British consul in the United States.

Ironically, Matthew obtained his hyphenated name when in 1865 he inherited the Buckley estates from his cousin Abednego Matthew of Salop. The irony was that Abednego's mother was an heir of sugar estate owner William Buckley of St. Christopher in the British West Indies.³⁴⁶ Matthews' inheritance

³⁴⁴ London Gazette, *Bulletins and Other State Intelligence* (London: Harrison and Sons, 1869), 41-42.

³⁴⁵ *Royal Military Chapel, Wellington Barracks* (London: Hatchards, 1882), 43. Today, it is called the Guards Chapel. Matthews married three times. His first marriage in 1835 was to a British subject Anne Hoare. He divorced her in 1847. His second marriage was in 1849 to Rosina Adelaide Handley the daughter of the provost-Marshal of Turk's Islands. His third in 1875 to an American widow Elizabeth (Ida) Gerard Sumner Wiggin, niece of General Sumner of Boston.

³⁴⁶ See the Mathew Family of St. Kew, Cornwall, and the Caribbean Islands papers, Glamorgan Record Office, Archifau Cymru Archives Wales. The Earl of Mamesbury liked Matthew. When Matthew was the Charge d'Affairs at Costa Rica, he sent Lords Malmesbury a "quezal" bird from Guatemala. Even at Costa Rica, Matthew complained to the Foreign Office that his post in central America was a wretched place and that he looked forward to returning home. Even with his complaints about his job posting, Lord Malmesbury found Matthew "a very able man." Earl of Malmesbury, *Memoirs of an Ex-Minister*, 586-588.

proved that long after 1833, there was still a link between slavery and its diplomats. Even a consul such as Matthews, who worked so hard to retain his British identity, in the end his identity included family wealth obtained from the labors of enslaved men and women working the sugar plantations of the British West Indies.

3.4 Conclusion

Consular records examined here including a diary, letters, official correspondences, court records, and census records support the conclusion that some British consuls stationed in the South were conflicted ethically and morally between following British abolitionist laws and living within a slavery system. As demonstrated here, most consuls did not fully assimilate into the slaveholding classes. Those that remained in the South for most of their careers formed a unique transatlantic identity. The others who came and went carried with them some of their experiences while serving in the U.S. South.

Most likely, the consuls were affected in some way with what they witnessed. Slavery permeated every part of Southern society, whether on the plantation or in the city. Every wealthy family had slaves. Slaves cooked the meals, kept the houses, washed the clothes, dressed their masters, drove the coaches, and performed nearly every task. Businesses, railroads, families, and factories all owned slaves. "A man who did not have a slave to do his work for

him was disgraced.”³⁴⁷ The tragic scenes of families being broken up at slave auctions, whether done in private or in open port markets, must have affected the consuls in some manner even if they did not write about it. Not to be affected by it, to varying degrees, meant that they were inhuman and insensitive to the wretchedness of slavery that surrounded them.

There were many definitions as to what it meant to be British in the South; an exact definition cannot be given. What is important is that each consul defined what Britishness meant for himself and his family. However, there are a few unifying themes. One theme was that each individual remained extremely proud to be British, even if each one defined what Britishness meant differently. These men had many identities - as consuls, husbands, brothers, fathers, friends, and businesspersons. Managing identities, when one had so many, was difficult. A healthy respect for what constituted proper behavior was another unifying theme for each man. Finally, these men appear to have respected the position of the monarch and the institution of the Foreign Office even if they did not always follow all of Parliament’s laws.

But importantly for this research, these men belonged to two worlds, American and British, living neither completely in one or the other. During the time of their careers in the South, they were neither always in one world or the other. Their official positions mainly concerned trade and commercial relations among peoples and/or companies in the American South and in Britain. The

³⁴⁷ Cadwell, Delaney, *The Story of Mobile* (Mobile: HB Publications, 1994), 94.

private challenges they faced led to a diffusion of their previous values that, over time, reworked their identities so that Britishness took on new meanings in a variety of forms in a very different setting from England. Thus, some created a new identity, a transatlantic identity, while others did not. As they navigated their foreign communities seeking cohesive networks with those of similar or shared values, they also held onto their individual ideal of what it meant to be British living in the South. For some, they easily retained a sense of national identity and a common culture, at least in terms of how they defined it. And others struggled to find where they belonged.

Finally, British consuls became “doubly foreign” in that they held multiple identities while performing their many duties. It is clear that British identity in the South was complex and diversified. The consuls’ ingenuity lay in how they adapted to and worked within the communities where they found themselves. All the while, they had a duty to remain loyal to their homeland’s government and laws, their British communities on both sides of the Atlantic, and their own individual families. Some men found that they lived a conflicted existence in the South. One consul, by contrast, found ways to live and thrive on the empire’s periphery and took on an identity similar to the slaveholding class. We turn now to Edmund Molyneux.

CHAPTER 4

EDMUND MOLYNEUX: THE CONSUL WHO WENT NATIVE

Pray, my dear Sir Richard do not you, who are clearly a man of the world, fall into the great error of your countrymen, and fancy you can carry England about you wherever you go. When you are in your own room, with nothing but your trunk, you can be as English as ever you please; but the moment you are brought into contact with Virginians, you must be Virginian to a certain extent.³⁴⁸

G.P.R. James

Edmund Molyneux became the consul who assimilated more than the others did in the South. As the British consul for Savannah, he served at his post for over thirty years. Three themes consistently defined Molyneux's tenure in Georgia. He was a merchant, a consul, and an illusionist. Each part of his life will be examined separately. The reason why Molyneux becomes significant is first because of his detailed answers to the 1843 slave trade inquiries sent to the Foreign Office (discussed in the last chapter), and second, because of two articles historian Laura White wrote in the 1930s. By examining the official correspondence of several British consuls, including Edmund Molyneux, she concluded that "the most difficult adjustment required of the consuls was doubtless that of living in the midst of a social system of which they disapproved

³⁴⁸ G.P.R. James, *The Old Dominion* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1856), 57.

without any betrayal of their sentiments, which would force them to a swift departure.³⁴⁹

White's interpretation was that the British consuls disapproved of slavery and slavery economics. The problem with her analysis is that when the consuls wrote their reports, they knew the government would print their official correspondence. Naturally, they responded in the appropriate manner to their superiors. Therefore, the only effective way to know what consuls such as Edmund Molyneux were actually *doing* at the Empire's periphery, in furtherance of the British foreign policy of abolition in the Atlantic World, is to dig into their lives and determine if their actions supported their words.

4.1 *Molyneux as a Merchant*

Molyneux served in Savannah, Georgia from 1831 to 1863. First and foremost, he was a merchant. For many years, he worked as a cotton merchant in addition to being the British consul in Savannah. It is clear that Molyneux wanted to succeed, that is, become wealthy. All relevant correspondence and research indicates that Molyneux was intensely determined to become a well-known merchant and business owner in Savannah. He set up his cotton merchant house at 70 Bay Street, adjacent to the river. Nineteenth-century consuls were not constricted by today's government restrictions, whereby a government employee could not seek outside work that might appear to interfere with his job title or duties. The Foreign Office knew about Molyneux's cotton

³⁴⁹ White, "The South in the 1850's as Seen by British Consuls," 31.

business because his younger brother, Anthony Molyneux, informed the Foreign Office that his older brother was a successful merchant in Savannah when Edmund Molyneux received his appointment.³⁵⁰

Historian Jennifer L. Goloboy asserts correctly that “friendship and family provided security in an unstable world” during the early nineteenth-century business world. She argues that merchants built friendships “for sound business reasons” that “fostered personal connections” to financially sound business partners that could help “in times of trouble.”³⁵¹ Following his family’s example, Molyneux made a great deal of money from investments he made with friends and family members. His connections helped him in his quest for wealth. Molyneux’s father was a well-known sail-maker by trade, who later became the mayor of Liverpool. His father was not the only politician in the family. Molyneux’s uncle also served as mayor of Liverpool. Many members of the consul’s family were share brokers, iron merchants, and cotton brokers or cotton merchants. According to one author, the Molyneux families owned valuable English estates and supported the Tory party.³⁵²

³⁵⁰ F.O. 5/268: 98.

³⁵¹ Jennifer L. Goloboy, “Business Friendships and Individualism in a mercantile Class of citizens in Charleston” in Simon Middleton and BillyG. Smith, *Class Matters: Early North America and the Atlantic World* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), 109-110.

³⁵² Neil McKendrick and R.B. Outhwaite, eds., *Business Life and Public Policy, Essays in Honour of D.C. Coleman* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1986), 156-7.

Edmund Molyneux, initially, was only interested in securing his Georgia consular post to advance his personal business interests. According to the New York Passenger Lists, Molyneux arrived in the United States registered as a merchant from Liverpool, England on 29 October 1827, at the age of 32.³⁵³ Interestingly, he did not list any country in which he intended to reside permanently. At this point in his life, what did this ambiguity mean? Perhaps it simply meant that he was unsure whether he would remain in the United States, and that he might return home at some point in the future.

Molyneux's native city is important to understanding Molyneux's identity. Liverpool gained a majority of its wealth from commercial trade in the Atlantic World. The United States' cotton trade facilitated the city's economic growth after Britain ended the legal overseas slave trade. Before abolition, the city was legitimately involved in the Atlantic slave trade. Many slave ships were active in Liverpool. A merchant class of ship traders, ship owners, ship builders, and capital investors lived in Liverpool. These men composed most of Liverpool's elite, so that by the time Molyneux made his way to the United States, he probably had met many members of this group through his family's connections. To become a merchant was a natural business choice for him because he had

³⁵³ Ancestry.com. *New York Passenger Lists, 1820-1957* [database online] (Provo, UT: The Generations Network, Inc., 2006). Original data: *Passenger Lists of Vessels Arriving at New York, New York, 1820-1897* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M237, 675 rolls); Records of the U.S. Custom Service, Record Group 36; National Archives, Washington, D.C. Source Citation: Year: 1827; Microfilm serial: M237; Microfilm roll: M237_10; Line: 3; List number: 729.

grown up well-connected in a major port city. Due to his family's involvement in shipping, he would probably have felt at home in any cotton-exporting city. Slave-grown products, such as cotton, offered an opportunity for wealth accumulation. Molyneux was intensely interested in making money. As the consummate businessperson, he saw that his best opportunity to make money was to trade in slave-grown cotton cultivated in Georgia.

Because the Foreign Office allowed consuls to engage in private business ventures and enterprises, some consuls became cotton factors and cotton merchants. Cotton factors worked at the piers inspecting, grading, and then purchasing cotton upon arrival from the plantations. In Savannah today, there remains an iron walkway called "factor's walk." This was where the factors stood, bargained for the best prices, and then walked their purchase orders to merchant houses. The walkway conveniently connected the factors to the many merchant houses along the river. Cotton factors did not just work for one cotton merchant, but purchased cotton for many different cotton merchant houses. Cotton merchants owned and worked in their cotton merchant houses. Cotton merchant houses sold the cotton overseas or to the Northern states.

Some consuls also worked as insurance agents or bankers. The modern concept of a "conflict of interest" simply did not exist in the nineteenth-century Atlantic World. The only stipulation from the British government was that the consuls were not to discuss Foreign Office business with their overseas bosses or business partners. In keeping with that principle, not surprisingly, most consuls never discussed the details of their private business endeavors with the

Foreign Office. However, in 1861 Edmund Molyneux could not help boasting to Lord Lyons, the British Minister to the United States, that his land speculation and other business activities in Savannah had gained him over £20,000 a year.³⁵⁴

Molyneux's family had been important Liverpool cotton merchants for a number of years before his arrival in Savannah. For example, in 1816 his first cousin, Anthony Molyneux, joined an already established Liverpool cotton trading firm and renamed it upon his entry, "Greaves, Molyneux, and Company." After David Taylor joined the firm in 1824, it changed its name to "Anthony Molyneux and Company." In 1831, the name changed again to Molyneux, Taylor, and Company. After Anthony's death in Madeira in 1838, his son, John Blayds Molyneux and his nephew, Henry Royds, kept the merchant house operating. As of 1883, the firm, "Molyneux, Taylor and Company" was still active.³⁵⁵ Henry Royds married Edmund Molyneux's oldest daughter, Ella. Henry was her second cousin. The consul and his wife trusted Royds enough to list him as a trustee of their wills.

Edmund Molyneux owned or worked for the cotton merchant firm, "Molyneux and Witherby," considered one of Liverpool's leading cotton

³⁵⁴ Eugene Berwanger, *The British Foreign Service and the American Civil War* (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 1994), 6.

³⁵⁵ Thomas Ellison, *The Cotton Trade of Great Britain* (New York: A.M. Kelley, 1968), 230-31.

importers.³⁵⁶ For reasons unclear, however, Molyneux, Witherby and Company failed in 1841 with huge debts of £400,000 sterling.³⁵⁷ In a letter from Savannah resident Edward Neufville to a local planter, George J. Kollock, Neufville informed Kollock that the consul concerned him. Neufville believed that the consul had “sold a great deal of Exchange last spring which will return, unless special provision was made for *his* bills.”³⁵⁸ It seemed that Molyneux sold a great deal of cotton futures and could not repay his debts. Molyneux found other ways to survive and managed to continue his business endeavors until his exit from the South in 1863.

As an insurance agent, he found another way to make more money. As of 1833, no fire insurance companies had been incorporated in Savannah. Still, several outside agencies sold policies in Savannah. These originated mainly from New York and other northern cities.³⁵⁹ In addition to fire and casualty insurers from the United States, foreign insurance agents operated in town as well. In 1833, the Phoenix (fire) Assurance Company of London had an agency

³⁵⁶ McKendrick and Outhwaite, *Business Life and Public Policy*, 156-7.

³⁵⁷ *The Georgia Historical Quarterly*, vol. 31 (1947): 304. Witherby is also written Witterby.

³⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 304.

³⁵⁹ A.L. Molyneux to the Board of Trade, 19 July 1833, Great Britain. Consulate, Savannah Papers, 1816-1875, Duke Special Collections Library, Duke University, North Carolina.

in Savannah.³⁶⁰ The consul also participated in the insurance business. He was on the founding board of directors of the Royal of Liverpool, a fire and casualty insurance company based in Liverpool.³⁶¹ Insurance companies, such as the one Molyneux was involved with, the Royal of Liverpool, had agents in the South.³⁶² Most likely, Royal insurance agents in Charleston, Savannah, Mobile, and New Orleans shared information with their company's home base.³⁶³ A British global economy tied the Southern port cities together. British agents and workers migrated wherever British businesses went. It was only natural that Molyneux should join these groups to satisfy his desire to make money as well as maintain connectedness with his British identity.

4.2 Molyneux as Britain's Consul in Savannah, Georgia

The Foreign Office advised the consuls to use their discretion in all matters while being faithful servants of Her Majesty's Government.³⁶⁴ The

³⁶⁰ A.L. Molyneux to the Board of Trade, 19 July 1833, Great Britain. Consulate, Savannah Papers, 1816-1875, Duke Special Collections Library, Duke University, North Carolina.

³⁶¹ McKendrick and Outhwaite, *Business Life and Public Policy*, 157.

³⁶² Ibid. By 1852, the Royal had agents globally including Brazil, Calcutta, Batavia, Demerara, Manila, Singapore, New Brunswick, Gothenburg, Barbados, Newfoundland, Montreal, and Sydney, as well as in the United States.

³⁶³ However, this researcher did not locate any reports from Molyneux to the Royal of Liverpool.

³⁶⁴ Earl Russell to William Tasker Smith, 14 March 1865, Great Britain. Consulate, Savannah Papers, 1816-1875, Duke Special Collections Library, Duke University, North Carolina.

consuls received a Queen's commission and instructions from the Foreign Office. If they were not already at their assigned posts, they had to make their way there immediately.³⁶⁵ "Immediate" was a relative term depending upon where the consul was physically located when called to a new duty station. When Molyneux became the British Consul in Savannah in 1831, he replaced his younger brother, Anthony Lancaster Molyneux. The younger Molyneux had served as British consul to Georgia from 1826 to 1831. For reasons that remain unclear, Anthony Molyneux returned to Liverpool and remained there until his death in 1851.³⁶⁶ Older brother Edmund Molyneux remained as consul in Savannah until the Confederacy removed him in 1863. He is the only consul to have served continuously for three decades, from 1831 to 1863, at the same Southern port.

The Molyneuxs judged the Southerners based upon wealth. According to a report that Anthony Molyneux sent to the Board of Trade, due to his position and wealth in the United States, he believed that he was a member of the upper class. By 1833, in order to be a member of the Savannah upper merchant class, a person had to own capital assets worth about ten thousand pounds sterling or forty-five thousand dollars. However, such individuals were usually not as wealthy as the planter class. Anthony Molyneux believed that the planters in

³⁶⁵ Foreign Office to W. Tasker Smith, 11 February 1865, Great Britain. Consulate, Savannah Papers, 1816-1875, Duke Special Collections Library, Duke University, North Carolina.

³⁶⁶ See the family genealogy site, www.fitzwalter.com/afh/Molyneux/molypl.htm.

Savannah in 1833 were worth about one hundred fifty thousand dollars (equivalent to twenty to thirty thousand pounds.)³⁶⁷ However, he criticized the planters' extravagant lifestyle. Commenting that they lived such an overly large lifestyle, he complained that their excesses reduced them to a state of "beggary and poverty."³⁶⁸

Edmund Molyneux received several rewards for serving as a consul in Savannah. From the British government, consuls were rewarded with the rights, privileges, and immunities of office.³⁶⁹ Based upon specific duty stations, consuls had some rewards or benefits from that state's government. For example, while in Georgia Molyneux did not have to pay for horse or carriage licenses.³⁷⁰ However, special rules applied to land ownership. For example, some state legislatures restricted foreign nationals from owning real estate. But consuls

³⁶⁷ A.L. Molyneux to the Board of Trade, 19 July 1833, Great Britain. Consulate, Savannah Papers, 1816-1875, Duke Special Collections Library, Duke University, North Carolina.

³⁶⁸ A.L. Molyneux to the Board of Trade, 19 July 1833, Great Britain. Consulate, Savannah Papers, 1816-1875, Duke Special Collections Library, Duke University, North Carolina. It appears that Anthony Molyneux did not like the planter class.

³⁶⁹ Earl Russell to William Tasker Smith, 14 March 1865, Great Britain. Consulate, Savannah Papers, 1816-1875, Duke Special Collections Library, Duke University, North Carolina.

³⁷⁰ Lord Lyons to Edmund Molyneux, 16 January 1861, Great Britain. Consulate, Savannah Papers, 1816-1875, Duke Special Collections Library, Duke University, North Carolina.

could inherit from U.S. citizens by will.³⁷¹ Perhaps the refusal of states to allow foreign nationals the ability to own land is why several consuls rented property for their consulates, businesses, and homes. There were other benefits to being a British consul in the U.S. Francis Waring, the consul at Norfolk, commented that some of the privileges he received when coming into the United States as a British consul included his bags passing through customs without search and a pianoforte sent from Europe arrived at his residence without any import duty tax.³⁷² Molyneux commented that he was exempt from military service.³⁷³

Molyneux had many duties as a consul in Savannah. His primary duty was to protect and encourage British trading in his assigned area. He was to aid and assist British subjects “in all their lawful and mercantile concerns.”³⁷⁴ In order to do this, he had to keep abreast of prices and send a yearly report detailing information about commerce, navigation, agriculture, and anything else requested.³⁷⁵ He had to collect fees and protect British merchants and other

³⁷¹ A.L. Molyneux to the Board of Trade, 19 July 1833, Great Britain. Consulate, Savannah Papers, 1816-1875, Duke Special Collections Library, Duke University, North Carolina.

³⁷² F.O. 5/453: 129.

³⁷³ F.O. 5/414: 18. All British consuls in the U.S. South were exempt from this duty.

³⁷⁴ Earl Russell to William Tasker Smith, 14 March 1865, Great Britain. Consulate, Savannah Papers, 1816-1875, Duke Special Collections Library, Duke University, North Carolina.

³⁷⁵ Earl Russell to W. Tasker Smith, 13 March 1865, Great Britain. Consulate, Savannah Papers, 1816-1875, Duke Special Collections Library, Duke University, North Carolina.

subjects who might trade, visit, or reside within his assigned state. Molyneux had the power to appoint vice-consuls within his consular district. In short, he served at the pleasure of the British government.³⁷⁶ While it is impossible to know all the duties the consul was called upon to perform, some generalizations can be made.

Because the consul's main objective was to promote British trade as a whole in their area, many of Molyneux's duties involved commercial functions. Before 1865, the consuls were required to prepare monthly Commercial Reports in duplicate and send them to the Foreign Office for publication to Parliament. Their reports often arrived late and the reason given by the consuls was that the forms had to be in duplicate and in a particular format. After April 1865, the Foreign Office instructed consuls to send only a single copy, thus ensuring early delivery so the reports would make it in time to be printed and sent to Parliament. The Foreign Office often rebuked the consuls for sending in tardy reports. The Foreign Office continued to inform the consuls that they must avoid inserting any political language or other matters that should not go in a commercial report. Their Annual Commercial Reports could contain paragraphs with personal observations.³⁷⁷

³⁷⁶ Earl Russell to William Tasker Smith, 14 March 1865, Great Britain. Consulate, Savannah Papers, 1816-1875, Duke Special Collections Library, Duke University, North Carolina.

³⁷⁷ James Murray, Foreign Office to W. Tasker Smith, 6 April 1865, Great Britain. Consulate, Savannah Papers, 1816-1875, Duke Special Collections Library, Duke University, North Carolina.

Molyneux had many clerical duties. The first was to maintain confidential and accurate record-keeping. To fail meant potential embarrassment for the Foreign Office. In 1824, the Foreign Office suffered a “serious inconvenience” when the press published a report about “political occurrences” detailing the activities of some consuls.³⁷⁸ This correspondence probably exposed the transfer of monies or funds or their payments for consuls working as Lloyds’ agents. Molyneux always denied being an agent for Lloyds.³⁷⁹ The Foreign Office allowed supplementary employment so long as it did not interfere with the discharge of a consul’s official duties. Because the Foreign Office and the consuls deposited their salaries and incomes into individual Treasury accounts, until a researcher examines those records it will be difficult to know accurately how much money consuls made from their many professions.

Finally, the Foreign Office advised the consuls to use all due diligence in their reporting. The Foreign Office advised consuls to keep and retain only letters and correspondences that directly involved their consular service. The Foreign Office reminded the consuls that their official duties dealt with the Foreign Office Secretary, the Secretary of State, his Majesty’s Minister, the General Consul in the country where they resided, British officers in the Royal Army or Navy where they lived, and finally to whomever “it may be necessary to

³⁷⁸ George Canning Foreign Office to His Majesty’s Consul at Georgia, 25 June 1824, Consulate, Savannah Papers, 1816-1875, Duke Special Collections Library, Duke University, North Carolina. In this letter, Canning never explained what the embarrassing “activities” were.

³⁷⁹ F.O. 5/414: 19. He was an agent for the Royal of Liverpool.

communicate immediately any event of public interest.³⁸⁰ In other words, George Canning advised the consuls that anything they wrote could be published and made public.

Consuls had a duty to report on certain agricultural crops, such as corn, wheat, cotton, and tobacco.³⁸¹ Grains became especially important because of the Corn Laws. For example, the Foreign Office instructed Anthony L. Molyneux to keep itemized quarterly returns detailing the lowest and highest weekly prices of corn.³⁸² In addition to regular agricultural products, lumber exports were important topics as well. The Board of Trade asked the consul to record staves and lumber total tonnage exports, including the country of destination. Savannah shipped most of its goods to Great Britain, followed next by France, and last by Holland. The consuls also recorded imports into their port cities. Most imports to Savannah came from Great Britain; salt and sugar arrived from the British West Indies, and specie from France, Mexico, the Danish West Indies, and Cuba. The younger Molyneux noted that while smuggling was not a problem in Savannah, it

³⁸⁰ George Canning Foreign Office to His Majesty's Consul at Georgia, 25 June 1824, Consulate, Savannah Papers, 1816-1875, Duke Special Collections Library, Duke University, North Carolina.

³⁸¹ Thomas Lack, Office of the Committee of Privy Council for Trade to Joseph Planta, Foreign Office, 9 June 1826 and 26 June 1826, Great Britain. Consulate, Savannah Papers, 1816-1875, Duke Special Collections Library, Duke University, North Carolina.

³⁸² John Bidwell, Foreign Office to A.L. Molyneux, His Majesty's Consul, 27 November 1828, Great Britain. Consulate, Savannah Papers, 1816-1875, Duke Special Collections Library, Duke University, North Carolina. The Corn Laws included all grains, not just maize/corn, so the term "corn" used here means all grains from Savannah.

did occur in Darien, a nearby port in Georgia. Penalties were generally minor with the most severe penalty being forfeiture of goods seized.³⁸³

Consuls had to make commercial inquiries and answer a wide variety of questions. For example, the Board of Trade wanted to know what happened when a merchant captain came into port. Molyneux dutifully reported that the Custom House regulations required that a captain, within 18 hours of his arrival, swear before the Customs Collector his cargo manifest list, crew and passengers lists, and turn over all mail to the local postmaster except the letters of “his countrymen.” Next, the captain had to offer his ship registry and foreign clearance to the Custom House. When Molyneux answered the inquiry in 1833, the United States did not have a uniform warehousing system. Local laws dictated that imported goods could remain at the Custom House stores up to nine months without having to make a duty payment.³⁸⁴ Since no bailment concerns are listed, it is unclear whether or not there were any bailment problems associated with Savannah’s warehousing system.

Other mundane issues which concerned the Board of Trade were the depth of water in the port, issues of moorings, steamboats’ availability, landing expenses and port charges, harbormasters’ fees, tonnage fees, custom house

³⁸³ A.L. Molyneux to the Board of Trade, 19 July 1833, Great Britain. Consulate, Savannah Papers, 1816-1875, Duke Special Collections Library, Duke University, North Carolina.

³⁸⁴ A.L. Molyneux to the Board of Trade, 19 July 1833, Great Britain. Consulate, Savannah Papers, 1816-1875, Duke Special Collections Library, Duke University, North Carolina.

fees, and custom clearance fees. The Board wanted to know about banking, bankruptcy, and currency matters, such as which most often was used to repay debts, precious metals such as gold or silver, or currency. Molyneux reported that in Savannah, most people used either Spanish, U.S dollars, or silver to repay debts. In 1831, four banks operated in Savannah. Molyneux reported that the members of the board of directors each received \$100 dollars paid in specie for their services, and they could receive discounted bills of exchange from 5 to 90 days at a rate averaging about 8 percent annually. Newspapers published board members' names. Foreign goods were subject to a 3-to-6 month credit if held in Savannah while domestic articles were held on a cash-only basis.³⁸⁵ Since the Foreign Office had to maintain accurate port charge records, the consuls had to stay abreast of tolls, dues, fees and other charges imposed by the Port Authority on British shipping and then relay that information back to the Foreign Office.³⁸⁶

Molyneux had to remain current about Parliament's laws, rules, and regulations pertaining to commercial activities. For example, the Foreign Office sent consuls copies of Parliament's customs laws each year, all of parliament's trade and navigation acts, and forms that had to be filled out for the quarterly

³⁸⁵ A.L. Molyneux to the Board of Trade, 19 July 1833, Great Britain. Consulate, Savannah Papers, 1816-1875, Duke Special Collections Library, Duke University, North Carolina.

³⁸⁶ British Consul in Savannah to Lord Aberdeen, 24 December 1844, Great Britain. Consulate, Savannah Papers, 1816-1875, Duke Special Collections Library, Duke University, North Carolina.

corn returns. The Foreign Office also instructed the consuls how to fill out the forms explaining the differences between the Imperial Bushel and the Winchester Bushel.³⁸⁷

Molyneux had a duty to collect customs and fees at his port. As explained to the consuls in 1859, they had to report their daily cash collections and describe each fee they kept and then at the end of each quarter inform the Foreign Office of the total amount of fees collected. These fees then were deposited in their British Treasury Consul accounts by a single entry titled "Fees Received." Each consul kept a Fee Cash Book and had to certify his deposit as a true and accurate accounting of fees collected.³⁸⁸ It is unclear whether there were any person(s) overseeing how and from what source these monies really came. If no one was watching, then there was the potential for hiding monies not received from real or actual fees. Without being able to view their individual treasury banking accounts, it is not known whether any of the consuls openly hid monies collected from their business endeavors. Nor is it known if any of the consuls lied about the *source* of their "fees" collected. When all they had to do is sign an affidavit, the potential for fleecing or abuse of power certainly existed.

³⁸⁷ James Bidwell, Foreign Office to Edmund Molyneux, her Majesty's Consul in Savannah, 28 September 1846, Great Britain. Consulate, Savannah Papers, 1816-1875, Duke Special Collections Library, Duke University, North Carolina. Note: A Winchester Bushel contained only 2150.42 cubic inches. An Imperial Bushel contained 2218.192 cubic inches. Eight Imperial bushels made one Imperial Quarter.

³⁸⁸ Foreign Office to her majesty's Consul, 8 July 1859, Great Britain. Consulate, Savannah Papers, 1816-1875, Duke Special Collections Library, Duke University, North Carolina.

However, that is not to say that any consul abused this power or privilege. In theory, when a person of the consul's class signed his name to a document, it created an endorsement of an accurate document.

Molyneux had a duty to report on any technological advances in his region. In 1839, the Board of Trade inquired into the availability and condition of Georgia's railroads. The consul had to answer inquiries about the length and width of rails, gauges, number of passengers transported monthly divided by class, fares charged and monthly receipts, volume and value of commercially transported goods. Dutifully, Molyneux provided a detailed report for the year 1838-39.³⁸⁹ The clarity and beauty of his penmanship as well as a detailed drawing of a cross sleeper compartment makes one believe that perhaps the consul did not write the report himself, but someone else did it for him on his order. It begs the question of how he would have ready access to the profits, charges, and rail specifics. While his wife owned shares in the Georgia railroad company, it is unknown whether she or her family had the power to order a railroad office clerk to make the report. On the other hand, perhaps the railroad company simply provided the information for free or at a nominal charge.

Consuls had a duty to report on labor issues at their assigned ports. Molyneux reported that there were no obstacles for foreigners to establish

³⁸⁹ Edmund Molyneux to the Board of Trade, 1 May 1839, Great Britain. Consulate, Savannah Papers, 1816-1875, Duke Special Collections Library, Duke University, North Carolina.

themselves as merchants or manufacturers in southern port cities.³⁹⁰ Molyneux believed that there were no obstacles to hiring foreign nationals, but ships arriving with foreign laborers required the laborers to post a bond payment upon disembarkation. This was limited to the period from 1 July to 1 October, the time when most laborers arrived in the city seeking work. Bond had to be paid to the mayor and city council, but the rates depended upon the type of skilled labor employed. For example in 1833, ship carpenters were required to pay a duty of \$2.00, blacksmiths \$1.50, painters \$1.50, cabinetmakers \$2.00, tailors \$2.00, shoemakers \$1.50, and common laborers \$1.00. Transatlantic workers arriving from Britain also had to pay for their passage. A cabin passage cost from £30 to £35 and steerage from £10 to £15.³⁹¹

The government's inquiries into quarantine regulations revealed the port city's racist attitudes and regulations. For example, black seamen or free people of color had to remain in quarantine for 40 days. However, Anthony Molyneux believed that slaves could leave the ship if accompanied by their owners.³⁹² According to him, in 1820, Savannah's white population was 3,864 and African-

³⁹⁰ A.L. Molyneux to the Board of Trade, 19 July 1833, Great Britain. Consulate, Savannah Papers, 1816-1875, Duke Special Collections Library, Duke University, North Carolina.

³⁹¹ A.L. Molyneux to the Board of Trade, 19 July 1833, Great Britain. Consulate, Savannah Papers, 1816-1875, Duke Special Collections Library, Duke University, North Carolina.

³⁹² A.L. Molyneux to the Board of Trade, 19 July 1833, Great Britain. Consulate, Savannah Papers, 1816-1875, Duke Special Collections Library, Duke University, North Carolina.

Americans totaled 3,557.³⁹³ He does not specify how many were free or enslaved. For much of his career, Edmund Molyneux danced between dutiful public servant and prosperous businessperson. In 1842, as a loyal servant he reported that the Georgia legislature passed an act requiring ship owners or agents to appear at the courthouse and give a \$1000 bond “to secure and protect the citizens of Georgia in the possession of their slaves” upon arrival in Savannah.³⁹⁴ According to Molyneux’ letter, the legislature feared that merchant ships were abducting Georgian slaves. But Molyneux did not inform his superiors of the act until it had been published in the local newspapers, six months after it passed. Twelve years later, Molyneux attempted to repeal the state’s Negro Seamen Acts. One of his wife’s relatives was by then a state senator who submitted a bill on behalf of the consul for the repeal of the act.³⁹⁵ When the repeal passed the senate in 1854, Molyneux sent the senator “a bountiful supply of champagne” to celebrate.³⁹⁶ As late as 1861, Lord Lyons praised Molyneux for his efforts on behalf of British black seamen. Lyons felt that

³⁹³ A.L. Molyneux to the Board of Trade, 19 July 1833, Great Britain. Consulate, Savannah Papers, 1816-1875, Duke Special Collections Library, Duke University, North Carolina.

³⁹⁴ F.O. 5/383: 150-151.

³⁹⁵ F.O. 5/504: 176.

³⁹⁶ F.O. 5/504: 179-180.

Molyneux's "large fortune and his established position in Georgia appear[ed] to give him considerable influence."³⁹⁷

Consuls had a duty to make inquiries of a humanitarian nature. Sometimes the consuls had to answer family requests for information about lost seamen. As early as 1820, a British family asked Anthony Molyneux to help locate a missing British black seamen and to determine if he were alive or dead and if any pay was due him.³⁹⁸ As to all British seamen, consuls were encouraged to inform the Foreign Office about any naval officers who abandoned crewmembers on shore.³⁹⁹ Consuls had a duty to provide for abandoned sailors. Furthermore, consuls had to protect British sailors from crimping, forcing someone into shipping or naval service. But British black seamen needed the most protection in the South.

The Brodie incident exposes how British black seamen were treated. In 1858, William Brodie, a British black seaman, served on a U.S. vessel, the *Overman* when it docked at Darien, Georgia and Brodie suddenly became a slave. Two years later when forced to answer inquiries, Molyneux reported that the mayor of Darien convicted Brodie of enticing a slave to run away from his

³⁹⁷ White, "The South in the 1850's as Seen by British Consuls," 34.

³⁹⁸ G. Crawford Antrobus(?) to James Wallace, British Vice Consul, 11 January 1820, Great Britain. Consulate, Savannah Papers, 1816-1875, Duke Special Collections Library, Duke University, North Carolina.

³⁹⁹ Navy Office to James Wallace, Consul at Savannah, 9 December 1824, Great Britain. Consulate, Savannah Papers, 1816-1875, Duke Special Collections Library, Duke University, North Carolina.

master. Brodie had to pay a \$500 fine. Since he did not have the money, the mayor ordered the sheriff to sell Brodie into slavery.⁴⁰⁰ The British consul at New York had heard about Brodie and in 1860 requested that Lord Lyons intervene and tell Edmund Molyneux in Savannah to initiate an inquiry.⁴⁰¹ It is interesting that the New York consul requested that the southern consul act on behalf of a British seaman. No explanation indicates why Molyneux did not already act on a Brodie's behalf. It appeared as if Molyneux did not want to act on Brodie's behalf and that the New York consul knew it. Therefore, the New York consul wanted Lyons, as Molyneux's superior, to order the local consul to act. Lyons' response was to forward Archibald's letter to Molyneux informing him that he (Lyons) requested that the two men correspond directly with each other. There were no further instructions.⁴⁰² Why did Lyons avoid the issue? Or was he instead trying to avoid the appearance of siding with one consul and against another or was there something more? Something is wrong because Lyons later requested the

⁴⁰⁰ E. Molyneux to E.M. Archibald, 10 August 1860, Great Britain. Consulate, Savannah Papers, 1816-1875, Duke Special Collections Library, Duke University, North Carolina. This was the official story that Molyneux related to Archibald, but the researcher believes the more accurate story was that the captain sold Brodie into slavery.

⁴⁰¹ E. M. Archibald, Her Majesty's Consulate in New York, to Lord Lyons, 13 March 1860, Great Britain. Consulate, Savannah Papers, 1816-1875, Duke Special Collections Library, Duke University, North Carolina.

⁴⁰² Lord Lyons to Edmund Molyneux, 19 March 1860, Great Britain. Consulate, Savannah Papers, 1816-1875, Duke Special Collections Library, Duke University, North Carolina.

federal government to intervene on Brodie's behalf.⁴⁰³ That action determined what Molyneux did next.

Because the captain was in New York at the time, the New York consul, E.M. Archibald, concluded that Brodie's British captain Sterling had sold him into slavery at Darien. Archibald wanted the captain to go back to Darien and reclaim Brodie.⁴⁰⁴ For obvious reasons of safety, even when Archibald offered to pay two hundred dollars to cover his expenses, Sterling did not want to make the trip unless compelled by law to do so.⁴⁰⁵ Molyneux offered a new option when it appeared that the former mayor of Darien could be indicted by a grand jury.⁴⁰⁶ Since Sterling, a material witness, was not returning to Darien anytime soon, a trial delay might result. Instead of interpreting this as a bad omen, Molyneux saw a ray of hope that would give the "guilty parties ample time to make efforts to find Brodie and restore him to freedom on favorable terms." Molyneux believed that when Sterling heard about the "ample compensation" that he would be awarded, he might testify. Molyneux closed the correspondence by offering to pay for all of

⁴⁰³ E. Molyneux to Lord Lyons, 7 April 1860, Great Britain. Consulate, Savannah Papers, 1816-1875, Duke Special Collections Library, Duke University, North Carolina.

⁴⁰⁴ E.M. Archibald to E. Molyneux, 4 April 1860, Great Britain. Consulate, Savannah Papers, 1816-1875, Duke Special Collections Library, Duke University, North Carolina.

⁴⁰⁵ E.M. Archibald to E. Molyneux, 7 April 1860, Great Britain. Consulate, Savannah Papers, 1816-1875, Duke Special Collections Library, Duke University, North Carolina.

⁴⁰⁶ It is unclear from the correspondence Molyneux was referring to a state grand jury or a federal grand jury action.

Archibald's costs.⁴⁰⁷ Molyneux sent a check for \$200 to Archibald and, as he predicted, Sterling left New York.⁴⁰⁸

But Sterling never arrived in Darien. In the meantime, the district attorney, Hamilton Couper, found some information about Brodie. He informed Molyneux that the slave trader who had transported Brodie to the west was Alexander Blount from Brunswick. Couper did not seem surprised that Sterling did not appear at trial, and he chose to write Sterling "a letter which may frighten him into seeking for, and returning Brodie."⁴⁰⁹ Couper, for whatever reason, did not believe it was wise to seek an indictment at that time.⁴¹⁰ Until the court reconvened in December, Molyneux suggested that Archibald visit a Mr. Cooke, who lived in Brooklyn, and was connected in some manner with the Nassau

⁴⁰⁷ E. Molyneux to Hamilton Couper, Esquire, 11 April 1860, Great Britain. Consulate, Savannah Papers, 1816-1875, Duke Special Collections Library, Duke University, North Carolina. Note: Hamilton Couper was the District Attorney.

⁴⁰⁸ E.M. Archibald to E. Molyneux, 10 April 1860, Great Britain. Consulate, Savannah Papers, 1816-1875, Duke Special Collections Library, Duke University, North Carolina.

⁴⁰⁹ Hamilton Couper to E. Molyneux, 15 April 1860, Great Britain. Consulate, Savannah Papers, 1816-1875, Duke Special Collections Library, Duke University, North Carolina. Note: Molyneux later calls Alexander Blount, Edmund Blount. E. Molyneux to Lord Lyons, 17 August 1860, Great Britain. Consulate, Savannah Papers, 1816-1875, Duke Special Collections Library, Duke University, North Carolina.

⁴¹⁰ E. Molyneux to E.M. Archibald, 18 April 1860, Great Britain. Consulate, Savannah Papers, 1816-1875, Duke Special Collections Library, Duke University, North Carolina.

government.⁴¹¹ Molyneux never explained how he knew this man or why he believed the man had information on how best to find Sterling. However, a surprise late evening visit at Molyneux's home on 21 April ended the mystery of Brodie.

Blount arrived at Molyneux's home with Colonel Spencer from Darien. Blount informed Molyneux that he had purchased Brodie from Sterling, who claimed to be Brodie's owner, and then he resold Brodie somewhere west. Molyneux then ends his correspondence by predicting that a conviction of all the interested parties "in this flagrant outrage" would make it easier to find Brodie.⁴¹² The researcher believes that Molyneux knew more about Brodie's case than he told Lyons. He was certainly closer to the events than any other consul. It is odd that Molyneux called the incident a "flagrant outrage." Had he now become an abolitionist or was he posing as one? The researcher believes that Molyneux hid what he knew and pretended to be the faithful British servant. Otherwise, why would the consul offer \$200 to Sterling? Most likely, Molyneux knew Sterling would take the money and disappear.

For his continued employment with the Foreign Office, it was good judgment on Molyneux's part to send \$200 for Sterling's expenses in order to

⁴¹¹ E. Molyneux to E.M. Archibald, 18 April 1860, Great Britain. Consulate, Savannah Papers, 1816-1875, Duke Special Collections Library, Duke University, North Carolina. Cooke's first name was not listed.

⁴¹² E. Molyneux to Lord Lyons, 21 April 1860, E. Molyneux to E.M. Archibald, 18 April 1860, Great Britain. Consulate, Savannah Papers, 1816-1875, Duke Special Collections Library, Duke University, North Carolina. See also, F.O. 5/744: 214-215. Blount's first name was not listed.

travel to Darien. Molyneux informed the Foreign Office of his generous gesture. Soon after, Lord Lyons and Lord Russell quickly began to act on Brodie's behalf. Lord Lyons dispatched Molyneux with news that he was also offering Archibald any monies needed for the case and that Lord John Russell had authorized the purchase of Brodie from slavery, if Brodie could not be freed by other means. What is important is Lord Russell's belief that Molyneux had done all in his power as information came to Molyneux to prosecute the perpetrators who had created the "outrage" of Brodie's enslavement.⁴¹³

By November 1860, the Brodie case remained unsolved. District Attorney Couper informed Molyneux that the mayor of Darien could have faced indictment on two offenses. The first was malpractice in office, a misdemeanor; the second, a kidnapping for the sale of a person beyond the county limits, a felony. Because the two-year statute of limitations had run on the first offense, the misdemeanor would not be prosecuted. Couper believed that the second indictment would fail as well since the trader Blount, "an ignorant man was assured that his title was a valid one." Therefore, Couper believed that a jury would not indict Blount. The only way to release Brodie from slavery was to find him. Since the only people who knew where Brodie was could be indicted, they would probably not talk

⁴¹³ Lord Lyons to Edmund Molyneux, 28 April 1860, E. Molyneux to E.M. Archibald, 18 April 1860, Great Britain. Consulate, Savannah Papers, 1816-1875, Duke Special Collections Library, Duke University, North Carolina.

unless rewarded somehow. Couper was still optimistic that Brodie would be found.⁴¹⁴

It should be noted that Hamilton Couper's father, James Hamilton Couper, was a well-known planter in Darien. Molyneux informed Lyons that James Couper was his "intimate friend" and promised that the elder Couper would do everything in his powers to help find Brodie. Molyneux suggested that Lyons find proof of Brodie's Bahamian nationality and suggested that the Secretary of State might help. Molyneux believed that the only effective government detective work available in Savannah that might be able to help find out what happened to Brodie was a post office detective named Norcross.⁴¹⁵ For reasons unknown, Molyneux believed that the post office conducted the best detective work and could solve the Brodie mystery.

Perhaps Hamilton Couper genuinely cared about what happened to Brodie. In August, he went to New York to speak with Archibald on the case and talked to witnesses. Molyneux directed Archibald to seek out and interview Allen A. Law, former chief mate on the same ship as Brodie, and inform him about what had happened to Brodie with the hope that either Law would sign an affidavit attesting to Brodie's citizenship or that Law would travel to Darien to

⁴¹⁴ Hamilton Couper to E. Molyneux, 13 November 1860, E. Molyneux to E.M. Archibald, 18 April 1860, Great Britain. Consulate, Savannah Papers, 1816-1875, Duke Special Collections Library, Duke University, North Carolina.

⁴¹⁵ E. Molyneux to Lord Lyons, 11 August 1860, Great Britain. Consulate, Savannah Papers, 1816-1875, Duke Special Collections Library, Duke University, North Carolina.

testify at court. Molyneux ended the correspondence claiming that he could not find an “efficient” person in Georgia to aid him in tracing what happened to Brodie.⁴¹⁶ What about the efficient postmaster inspector Norcross? There is no evidence that Molyneux ever employed Norcross to find Brodie.

While at his Flat Rock summer vacation home, Molyneux wrote his close friend James Hamilton Couper requesting to see his son’s evidence for trial. Molyneux’s rationale was that James’s son Hamilton, a special prosecutor hired by Molyneux to prosecute Darien’s mayor, was away for the summer and that Molyneux needed to review the files immediately. Molyneux specifically asked that James make sure that affidavits proved that the mayor acted unlawfully in the kidnapping and selling of Brodie. Molyneux ends by promising to pay all the legal expenses incurred.⁴¹⁷ Now there were political, job security, image, and other motivations involved as well. It appeared that finding Brodie was not as important as prosecuting the mayor.

And yet no prosecution ensued. Hamilton Couper met in November with Lord Lyons and convinced him that a conviction would probably not happen.

⁴¹⁶ E. Molyneux to E.M. Archibald, 10 August 1860, Great Britain. Consulate, Savannah Papers, 1816-1875, Duke Special Collections Library, Duke University, North Carolina. It is unclear whether Molyneux was referring to the Federal Secretary of State or the Georgia Secretary of State. But the argument can be made that he meant the Federal Secretary of State. It certainly makes more sense for the Federal Secretary of State to investigate and determine Brodie’s nationality than a state Secretary of State.

⁴¹⁷ E. Molyneux to James Hamilton Couper, 10 August 1860, Great Britain. Consulate, Savannah Papers, 1816-1875, Duke Special Collections Library, Duke University, North Carolina.

Lyons lamented, but agreed. The case now closed, Lyons forwarded Lord Russell his findings. Influenced by what Lyons told him of Molyneux's efforts to find Brodie, Lord Russell praised Molyneux.⁴¹⁸ So what had really happened to Brodie? Historian Eugene Berwanger believes that William Brodie was really a U.S. citizen. He argues that Brodie lived for a while in the West Indies before his capture. According to Berwanger, because Brodie was an American, the British could not protect or help him gain freedom.⁴¹⁹ This researcher could not find what happened to Brodie nor confirm his citizenship.

In 1861 and before Fort Sumter, another seaman incident reflected the growing tensions that pointed toward war. A British merchant sea captain, named Vaughan preferred to dine with seamen onboard his ship. The problem for some of Savannah's residents was that some of Vaughan's invited guests were black. After Vaughan's ship, *Kalos*, arrived in Savannah's harbor, the captain and his wife dined with several black stevedores at his cabin table. Angered by Vaughan's familiarity, sixty or seventy men, alleged members of a local secret society, came onboard the ship and then kidnapped the captain and assaulted him. Vaughan's captors cut his hair, tarred him, and then placed cotton on his face and body, and in a final act of humiliation, they flogged him.

⁴¹⁸ Lord Lyons to E. Molyneux, 21 November 1860, Great Britain. Consulate, Savannah Papers, 1816-1875, Duke Special Collections Library, Duke University, North Carolina. And, Lord Lyons to E. Molyneux, 18 December 1860, Great Britain. Consulate, Savannah Papers, 1816-1875, Duke Special Collections Library, Duke University, North Carolina. See also, F.O. 5/744: 197-198 and 225-229..

⁴¹⁹ Berwanger, *The British Foreign Service*, 1994), 67.

He received fifty stokes of a leather strap across his bare shoulders and back. After his assault, his capturers threw a coat over him and returned him by carriage to his ship.⁴²⁰ Of course, everyone in town either heard what had happened to Vaughan or read about the assault in the newspapers. The mayor, Charles C. Jones, Jr., offered a \$500 reward for information leading to the arrests of the persons involved. Additionally, Molyneux offered a \$1000 reward and posted the notice in the local newspaper seeking information leading to a conviction for the assault on Vaughan. Vaughan left Savannah soon after that, no doubt never to return. The local sheriff later captured the assailants. After posting bail, the assailants never returned for trial.⁴²¹ One of the problems had the case gone to trial, was the issue of contradictory evidence. An agent informed Molyneux that the captain was never flogged nor sustained any personal injury.⁴²²

Molyneux believed that Vaughn “deserved what he got.” Molyneux judged Vaughn to be a “weak, foolish man which must account for his extraordinary conduct.”⁴²³ Molyneux let his real sentiments about Vaughn’s actions creep out, but the Foreign Office remained silent and never commented on Molyneux’s conclusions. Three men were eventually arrested, including one

⁴²⁰ F.O. 5/786: 422-423.

⁴²¹ F.O. 5/786: 401-405.

⁴²² F.O. 5/786: 404.

⁴²³ F.O. 5/786: 416-417.

from Germany, but they were soon released.⁴²⁴ Perhaps in a half-effort to appear as the concerned consul, Molyneux complained to Georgia's governor, Joseph E. Brown. The governor, as expected, did nothing to help. Perhaps because the state was getting ready for war, Brown informed Molyneux that the men were "in the army and could not be brought back" for trial.⁴²⁵ The matter closed for lack of prosecution.

Sometimes Molyneux had to help loved ones in Britain locate their lost relatives and ascertain if they were alive or dead.⁴²⁶ In 1836, the Foreign Office ordered Molyneux to find out what happened to British subject John Convoy. Molyneux informed the Office that Convoy had moved to Mobile with a female slave in 1833 and then moved on to live in Hannibal, Missouri in 1834.⁴²⁷ Often consuls received these requests. In 1852, the Foreign Office asked the consul at Baltimore to locate a missing British son for his father. The father had not heard from his son since he left Britain in 1845. Consul McTavish located the wayward

⁴²⁴ F.O. 5/786: 418.

⁴²⁵ Berwanger, 64.

⁴²⁶ James Gillies Mackie to the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, 20 August 1831, Great Britain. Consulate, Savannah Papers, 1816-1875, Duke Special Collections Library, Duke University, North Carolina. Mackie was searching for his lost relative David Gillies originally from Inarch(?), Scotland and a pastor before the Revolutionary War in Liberton, Georgia last seen trading fur on the banks of the Ohio River.

⁴²⁷ F.O. 5/309: 216.

lad and found him working in town for an alcohol salesperson. After the consul found him, the son promised to write a letter to his father.⁴²⁸

Sometimes the consuls performed marriages. The Foreign Office issued warrants enabling them to marry British subjects within their districts.⁴²⁹ The consuls had to perform other legal duties. On at least one occasion, Molyneux served as power of attorney for a British subject. In 1857, Robert Brice Isaac of Liverpool issued a power of attorney to the consul to act on his behalf in the United States.⁴³⁰

Sometimes consuls had to answer questions about health conditions in various ports. The British Minister of Public Health utilized consuls to report information pertinent to British subjects living abroad. Not only did the consul have to notify citizens in his assigned port of disease outbreaks in Europe,⁴³¹ he also had to keep London abreast of diseases in his assigned port. For example, the Royal College of Physicians asked the Savannah consul to report on various

⁴²⁸ F.O. 5/550: 224, 274-275.

⁴²⁹ Mr. Hammond, Foreign Office to William Tasker Smith, 3 May 1865, Great Britain. Consulate, Savannah Papers, 1816-1875, Duke Special Collections Library, Duke University, North Carolina. However, no records can be found that Edmund Molyneux performed any marriages during his tenure in Savannah.

⁴³⁰ This is from deed books records found at the Superior Court at Chatham County Courthouse, Savannah, Georgia (hereinafter cited as S.C.C.C.), Deed Book 3R, 39-40: S.C.C.C.

⁴³¹ Lord Palmerston Foreign Office to E. Molyneux, 11 September 1833, Great Britain. Consulate, Savannah Papers, 1816-1875, Duke Special Collections Library, Duke University, North Carolina.

human health issues. The college also asked about seasonal temperatures, wind direction, the months with the most active winds, the soil texture, and whether any mineral water contained saline or sulfur components. The colleges inquired about what medical substances were available, who prepared those medicines, and how they prepared them. The college wanted to know what diseases became active in which season, whether vaccines were used, and if so, for what purpose, as well as details on the average diet.⁴³²

Savannah's consul had to perform specific port duties. He had to make sure that all incoming British vessels followed the Royal Navy habit of hosting the Union Jack as a signal for the harbor pilot to come aboard. The harbor pilot would then maneuver the ship to dock and if the captain did not want to dock the vessel, then the harbor pilot would safely anchor the ship in the port waters and the seamen would row to shore.⁴³³

It appears that nineteenth-century questions of etiquette sometimes required the Foreign Office's intervention to prevent ego clashes. For example, in 1825 the Foreign Office issued a circular to its consuls detailing appropriate greetings that should occur between consuls and navy personnel. For example, based upon the pendant (flag) flying on incoming naval ships, which could be

⁴³² John Bidwell, Foreign Office to A.L. Molyneux, His Majesty's Consul, 16 May 1829, Great Britain. Consulate, Savannah Papers, 1816-1875, Duke Special Collections Library, Duke University, North Carolina.

⁴³³ Joseph Planta, Foreign Office to His Majesty's Consul Georgia, 31 May 1824, Great Britain. Consulate, Savannah Papers, 1816-1875, Duke Special Collections Library, Duke University, North Carolina.

either merchant or navy, the consul or vice-consul had to adhere to certain rules of etiquette. A blue pendant meant that the ship's captain had to send a written notice to the consuls announcing his arrival. Then, the consul or vice consul at his earliest opportunity would visit the commander and afford him any assistance required. If it were a red or white pendant flag signaling officers or commodores to come on board, then the consul had to greet the flag officers on the dock or pier. A consul could further request a blue pendant commander to provide a boat to transport the consul to and from the ship, returning him back to shore after the meeting.⁴³⁴ This meant that the egos of some consuls and navy personnel clashed at some point, which required the Foreign Office to issue such a request.

Molyneux had to notarize papers and issue passports as well as papers of nationality for British subjects. His lesser duties included maintaining personal relationships with the important members of the local community. For example, the Foreign Office expected consuls be friendly with local business leaders, members of the clergy, and political leaders. As noted in the last chapter, many consuls became members of social clubs and organizations. The Foreign Office expected consuls to entertain prominent visitors, both British and foreign, and to introduce them to the local community. For example, the British consul at Charleston, Ogilby, entertained the French consul when he visited Charleston.⁴³⁵

⁴³⁴ George Canning, Foreign Office to J. Moodie, His Majesty's Acting Consul, 31 March 1825, Great Britain. Consulate, Savannah Papers, 1816-1875, Duke Special Collections Library, Duke University, North Carolina.

⁴³⁵ Ogilby, 27 October 1830.

Molyneux made lasting friendships with the elite of Savannah and introduced foreign representatives when they came into town to his Savannah friends.

All relevant correspondence supports the belief that Molyneux enjoyed his position as British consul and that he considered it a great opportunity to enhance his and his family's reputation. For example, Molyneux used his position to purchase a military commission for his son, Edmund, Jr. This was not unusual because at the time most of the officers in the British armed forces obtained their positions by purchasing their commissions. Young men or their families purchased their beloved sons service positions. Officially, the Crown set the prices and unofficially the market demand of a particular regiment set the prices. In other words, whatever position the young man desired and in what regiment set the price for that commission. Because this tradition was a defining part of the nineteenth-century British armed forces, *The Queen's Regulations and Orders for the Army* 1844 edition contained an "Established Prices of Commissions" table, detailing the official price quote for commissions from Foot Guards down to the regular infantry ranging in positions from Cornet/Ensign to Lieutenant Colonel.⁴³⁶

⁴³⁶ Picard, *Victorian London*, 112. For example, a candidate might desire a Cornet position and the official price for a Cornet position was £1200, but a highly valued Cornet position in a highly respected or particular brigade or regiment could raise the unofficial price to as high as £40,000. That meant if the candidate wanted his first choice, it could cost £41,200. If a candidate and his family were fortunate to have enough money to make that purchase, there were no guarantees because it depended upon whether there was an opening. Prices were, in short, determined by position, placement, and supply.

Consuls had a responsibility to maintain the expense of running a consulate. In 1849, Molyneux informed the Foreign Office that he paid \$600 for renting his home that was “in the healthy part of the city” while his office was “in the sickly district contagious to the waterfront.”⁴³⁷ Sometimes the high costs spent to maintain their lifestyles overseas forced some consuls to file for bankruptcy. Ogilby commented in 1843 that he was proud of the fact that he had never filed for bankruptcy, unlike other consuls.⁴³⁸ It is unknown whether Ogilby was referring to Molyneux or Crawford at New Orleans. In 1830, Molyneux complained to the Foreign Office that his £500 annual salary was not enough to cover his expenses. He asked that he be allowed to engage in private commercial enterprises. The Foreign Office reminded him that when he took the office, he knew what the salary would be and that he would be restricted from engaging in commerce. The Foreign Office went so far as to remind him that they had letters written by Molyneux where he claimed to end his private merchant activities, which qualified him for the appointment. But, in the end, the Foreign Office relented and allowed Molyneux to resume his commercial enterprises. As a consequence, however, the government lowered his salary to £300.⁴³⁹ This did not stop his complaints.

⁴³⁷ F.O. 5/504: 15-16.

⁴³⁸ F.O. 5/395: 188.

⁴³⁹ F.O. 5/262: 108-110.

In 1856, Molyneux complained again to the Foreign Office that his £300 a year salary was not enough to cover his expenses. He complained that he paid £250 house rent a year for a small home not sufficient for his large family. He paid £25 a year for each housemaid and his other servants in proportion to their rank. He paid £18 in pew rent at the Episcopal Church. He also supported the Marine Hospital and the Mariner's Church, and answered numerous other charitable monetary needs of British subjects in need. He asked that his salary only be the same as Charleston's consul.⁴⁴⁰ The Foreign Office answered his plea and raised his salary to £500 a year.⁴⁴¹

During his tenure as a merchant and consul in Savannah, Molyneux continued to maintain his British identity through his connections to home. When possible, he returned to Britain to visit with his business partners, family, and friends. The length of the visits varied from two months to six months.⁴⁴² Sometimes he traveled with servants. For example, in 1853, Molyneux traveled to Liverpool with Eliza, his wife, two small children, and female servant.⁴⁴³ In

⁴⁴⁰ F.O. 5/649: 305-306.

⁴⁴¹ F.O. 5/649: 277.

⁴⁴² F.O. 5/295: 230-231.

⁴⁴³ F.O. 5/570: 258.

1851, he traveled to England to see a doctor, Sir Ben Brodie.⁴⁴⁴ On other occasions, he traveled for business purposes to Liverpool.⁴⁴⁵

Molyneux differed from the other consuls because he never had a problem assimilating to the South. Soon after he arrived, his identity began to change. Molyneux's words reveal that he was caught somewhere between being British and a member of the Southern slaveholding class. His 1838 answers to the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland reveal that Molyneux already had begun to create close friendships among the Southern residents of his new home. His answers revealed that he was a skilled agriculturalist with a keen operating knowledge of the cotton plantations in Georgia.

According to Molyneux, cotton plantations used well water, not irrigation systems, to water the cotton fields. He believed that water was readily available at 20 to 35 feet below the surface, thereby making irrigation unnecessary. Because of its scarcity, planters used manure on their cotton fields, but not on other fields on the farms. Planting began in April and harvesting started in late August and continued until December or until the fall frosts began. He then described the processes for plowing and hoeing. Next, he informed the Board that the average plantation owner planted ten acres of cotton, seven acres of Indian corn, and two acres of small grains. For best crop results, four pounds of

⁴⁴⁴ F.O. 5/535: 137.

⁴⁴⁵ Works Progress Administration of Georgia, *Savannah Newspaper Digest* vol. 5, part 1 (1937) "Annals of Savannah" 20 June 1854, pg. 89. Announcement that Molyneux sailed for Liverpool.

cottonseed produced one pound of clean cotton. Most farmers used the cotton gin to separate the cotton from its seed. Finally, he told the Board that he sent four soil samples from four different plantations to Britain along with limited information about soil color and crop yield for each plantation.⁴⁴⁶ At this point in his career, Molyneux appeared to be identifying - at least not directly by name, but by association - who his friends were by 1838: the planter class. Significantly, he never identified any of the plantation owners or their plantations either by name or exact location.

Molyneux was not the only British consul to be caught somewhere in-between being British and Southern. Dancing in between both identities, James Baker, the consul at Mobile, while on leave in 1838 picked up a second job. He represented Mobile's Planters and Merchants Bank as an agent in London and arranged with the "London Capitalists" for direct trade contracts between the Southern states and London.⁴⁴⁷ Apparently, Baker sought to improve his wealth and status by working for the Alabama bank in London with the goal that he could improve trade between Alabama and Britain. Baker was a British public officer making money by working for a foreign state bank. In the nineteenth-century Atlantic world, the modern concept of a "conflict of interest" was a non-issue.

⁴⁴⁶ F.O. 5/326: 76-81.

⁴⁴⁷ F.O. 5/326: 85-87.

By 1861, Molyneux had completely assimilated and he clearly identified with the slaveholding class in the antebellum South. After a group of secessionists met in Savannah on 12 December 1860, he commented to the Foreign Office that secession would be “peacefully accomplished.”⁴⁴⁸ His final act of total assimilation was to inform the Foreign Office that his consulate and the consulate in Mobile were unnecessary and should be closed.⁴⁴⁹ He had served as the British consul for Savannah for thirty-two years. He retired in 1863 when the Confederate government officially expelled all British consuls from the South.

An examination of what his fellow Southern consuls wrote about him reveals that at least one colleague did not like Molyneux. In 1851, George Matthews, consul at Charleston, called Molyneux a “mule bird.”⁴⁵⁰ Matthews called Molyneux stubborn because he would not help Matthews gather information about an expedition of 150 Southern men heading toward Cuba. According to Matthews, these men had gathered in Darien and proceeded to Savannah with the intention of creating an uprising in Cuba. Matthews believed that Molyneux could not or would not attend to his duties as a British informant because Molyneux made his real money as a cotton merchant.⁴⁵¹ To Matthews,

⁴⁴⁸ F.O. 5/744: 252-253.

⁴⁴⁹ F.O. 5/786: 414-415.

⁴⁵⁰ F.O. 5/535: 73.

⁴⁵¹ F.O. 5/535: 76-80. This was the only British consul stationed in the South who criticized Molyneux to the Foreign Office.

Molyneux's private commercial interests were more important than informing the British Foreign Office about a possible Cuban uprising instigated by unnamed Georgian filibusters.

On the other hand, reading between the lines, Matthews charged Molyneux as being a bird that sits on the back of a mule that devours ticks, waiting to pick up the juicy pieces. If the mercenary invasion ever came to fruition and Cuba gained its independence from Spain, Molyneux, like others, could profit. It can perhaps be inferred that Matthews believed that Molyneux was a scavenger on the southern slavery system, and that Molyneux kept his position as a British consul simply because he made money from slave products such as cotton. If so, Molyneux stood to gain if Cuba became a part of the United States and produced slave products such as sugar or cotton. In effect, Matthews called Molyneux an opportunist. This researcher found no documents detailing Molyneux's perspective on the matter. Because Matthews did not list who these men were, they may have been either social or personal friends of Molyneux or potential business partners. Furthermore, these men may have been members of the consul's extended family. Matthews, as a career civil servant, simply could not understand why Molyneux did not react or at least react in the manner that Matthews deemed appropriate for a consul. To Matthews, Molyneux's actions seemed doubly foreign.

4.3 *Molyneux as an Illusionist*

Over time, Edmund Molyneux went from a member of the British cotton merchant community, to becoming a British consul, and finally assimilating as an adopted native in a slaveholding community after Great Britain outlawed slavery. Molyneux effectively became a powerful member of Savannah's plantation elite. He was a city businessperson and part of the city's local history.

Whatever doubts, if any, that Molyneux had about living in a slaveholding society, his permanent transformation occurred when he married into the local plantation elite. In 1834, the consul married Eliza Harriet Johnston, daughter of Colonel James Johnston, Jr. and Ann Marian Houstoun in Savannah. Ann's father was Sir George Houstoun [sic Houslons], a baronet.⁴⁵² Eliza's brothers, George H. and James R. Johnston, after the death of her parents took over the family landholdings, including a 2,400-acre farm in McIntosh County, Georgia called "Turkey Camp." Their marriage certificate lists Molyneux with his full title, "His Britannia Majesty, Counsel", and Eliza was simply a "spinster."⁴⁵³

Mary Kollock, a sister of Eliza, described the bachelor Molyneux as a "lovely and romantic" man who was "gallant with his phaeton." She was so

⁴⁵² Nellie Zada Rice Molyneux, *History Genealogical and Biographical of the Molyneux Families* (Syracuse, N.Y.: C. W. Bardeen, 1904), 252. Eliza had several sisters.

⁴⁵³ Georgia. Probate Court Chatham County, *Marriage License* (1834). King William IV was monarch at the time. Queen Victoria began her reign in 1837.

impressed with him that she missed him while he was away in England.⁴⁵⁴ Based on Mary Kollock's comments, she certainly seemed to like Molyneux a great deal. It is uncertain how deeply the consul interested her. However, she continued to write about Molyneux and about the mundane things he did, such as his escorting a Belgian Baron to Bonaventure, a local plantation.⁴⁵⁵ Mary married George Kollock, the owner of Rosedew plantation. The Kollocks and Molyneuxs became close relatives when Edmund married Eliza, Mary's younger sister. The two families sometimes vacationed together. In 1834, Mary wrote that she and the consul visited the Philadelphia penitentiary, House of Refuge, and United States Mint.⁴⁵⁶ Certainly, Molyneux did not appear to be an abolitionist in 1834 when he married into a slaveholding family and then later vacationed with them. The year 1834 is significant because it was when British emancipation began in the British West Indies. No records can be found that identify whether Molyneux ever asked his in-laws to free their slaves or how they felt about their sister marrying a British Foreign Office representative when Britain's official Foreign Office policy position promoted abolitionist principles.

The Molyneuxs traveled a great deal. Because the climate in Savannah for four months of the year was insufferable to them, the Molyneuxs' left

⁴⁵⁴ Edith Duncan Johnston, "The Kollock Letters," *The Georgia Historical Quarterly*, 31 (1947): 55. Mary is writing her husband George Kollock when she described Edmund. A phaeton is a lightweight four-wheeled carriage usually driven by two horses. His brief trip to England was in 1830.

⁴⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 143. This was in 1833.

⁴⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 154.

Savannah for what they believed to be a healthier environment. One of their favorite destinations was Flat Rock, North Carolina.⁴⁵⁷ In 1841, the consul purchased a home there named “Brooklands,” located in Henderson County.⁴⁵⁸ Flat Rock became the “Little Charleston of the Mountains” because so many Charleston aristocrats fled there each summer.⁴⁵⁹ By vacationing together during the hot and humid summer months, the elite group had private access to each other’s families far away from the busy Southern ports with an opportunity to be a member of a private clique of elite families; the Molyneuxs naturally joined in.

In addition to owning a vacation home in Flat Rock, the Molyneuxs’ inherited several city lots within Savannah. Most of their landholdings came as a result of Eliza’s marriage contract to the consul, but for reasons unknown something prompted the couple to sell some of her inherited property. In 1845, Edmund Molyneux sold one of the city lots named in his wife’s marriage contract to James McDonald for \$6000. A tenant, L. Baldwin and Company, occupied the lot.⁴⁶⁰ In 1859, the Molyneuxs had enough money to purchase from her brothers

⁴⁵⁷ A.L. Molyneux to the Board of Trade, 19 July 1833, Great Britain. Consulate, Savannah Papers, 1816-1875, Duke Special Collections Library, Duke University, North Carolina.

⁴⁵⁸ E. Molyneux to Lord Lyons, 11 August 1860, Great Britain. Consulate, Savannah Papers, 1816-1875, Duke Special Collections Library, Duke University, North Carolina.

⁴⁵⁹ Galen Reuther, *Images of America Flat Rock, the Little Charleston of the Mountains* (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2004), 14.

⁴⁶⁰ Deed Book 3H, 156-8: S.C.C.C.

several other lots listed in her marriage contract for \$8,000.⁴⁶¹ Oddly enough, just the next year Molyneux turned around and sold the lots to Walter H. Mitchell for \$7000, losing \$1000 in the deal.⁴⁶² The Molyneuxs' most impressive land possession in Georgia was their home in Savannah. In 1856, the Molyneuxs built their family home at 450 Bull Street, a lot given to Eliza by her parents. While building their large and stately home, tragedy nearly happened. On 12 June 1856, a painter named "Laven" was working on the exterior of the home when he fell from the upper story roofline to the pavement. Luckily for Laven, he did not break any bones.⁴⁶³

The Molyneuxs owned a great deal of wealth, some of which perhaps their children were unaware. Like most parents, the Molyneuxs never gave their children a complete or accurate accounting of their total wealth and their children remained ignorant of it until after their deaths. In a very detailed 1873 letter after Eliza and Edmund Molyneux had died, their son hired an attorney to make general inquiries and investigate his parents' possessions in Savannah. Specifically, he asked the attorney to find out what land deeds - including plantations, rents, and profits - were due from timber, cotton, and tobacco.

⁴⁶¹ Deed Book 3S, 185-6: S.C.C.C.

⁴⁶² Deed Book 3T, 128-9: S.C.C.C.

⁴⁶³ Works Progress Administration of Georgia, *Savannah Newspaper Digest* vol. 7, part 1 (1937) "Annals of Savannah" 12 June 1856, pg. 5.

Curiously, the documents did not list a specific piece of property.⁴⁶⁴ Did the children know that their parents owned lands other than their main house and vacation home? On the other hand, did the children *presume* that their parents owned more? It has not been possible to find any estates owned outright by either parent other than their two homes. What is important is that the children *believed* their parents were involved in these types of business endeavors or they would not have hired an attorney to make the transatlantic inquiry. Molyneux moved his family to Europe during the Civil War. Molyneux later died in Paris on 19 November 1864, possibly while seeking medical care.⁴⁶⁵ Whatever property that remained in Savannah was later sold at public auction in 1879.⁴⁶⁶

The consul created the illusion of concern over the slave trade to the Foreign Office. Several times Molyneux had to answer inquiries from the Foreign Office about the trade. In January 1844, Molyneux claimed that “no Slavers have ever been owned or fitted out in this Port nor have any of the Inhabitants ever been engaged in the Trade.”⁴⁶⁷ In what may have been an attempt to hide his

⁴⁶⁴ Deed Book 4.O, 352-362: S.C.C.C. The sisters joined in the inquiry with their brother.

⁴⁶⁵ Deed Book 4O, 357: S.C.C.C.

⁴⁶⁶ Deed Book 4Y, 3: S.C.C.C. The researcher could not find a final estate accounting or sale receipt detailing exactly what the Molyneuxs’ owned at the time of the estate sell.

⁴⁶⁷ F.O. 5/414: 21. The next year, he answered the Foreign Office’s inquiries exactly the same, word for word. F.O. 5/434: 11. And, again in 1846, with the same response. F.O. 5/454: 11.

own activities or those of someone he knew, Molyneux in 1844 asked an unusual question of the Foreign Office. He wanted to know if a person born as a British subject but naturalized as a U.S. citizen could engage in the slave trade. Lord Aberdeen, the Foreign Secretary, responded clearly that a person born British remained a British subject regardless of naturalization. "Having been born within the allegiance of the British Crown they cannot by the law of this Country throw off that allegiance at their own will and pleasure only, and thereby divest themselves altogether of their original National Character." Aberdeen continued: "[A]s to the sons of British subjects born in the United States of America and continuing there to reside, it appears that they could not be held to come within the Act." Aberdeen believed that these children, under other acts of the Kingdom, might "claim the privileges of British born subjects, but it is [illegible] whether the penal clauses of an Act of Parliament applicable to British subjects could be enforced against persons who were born in a foreign country, and who have never in any way assumed a British Character."⁴⁶⁸ So, according to the Foreign Secretary, to be truly British meant being born and raised in Britain. He implied that this was the only way to ensure a proper British character. Britishness meant to the Foreign Secretary that one had to be exposed by birth and nurture to British customs, traditions, and laws in Britain to be fully British.

By writing this letter, Molyneux confessed that he knew British subjects who had become naturalized U.S. citizens and who owned slaves in Georgia.

⁴⁶⁸ F.O.S.T. 539: 137-138.

Specifically, he wanted to know if these people in any way conflicted with British laws.⁴⁶⁹ In 1844, Molyneux justified his inquiry by stating that he knew a man who had become naturalized in 1810 and had bought an estate and slaves. After the man died, his sons born in Georgia continued to own the land and slaves. Their mother was an U.S. national. Lord Aberdeen's response indicated that only British subjects born in Britain were bound by the 1841 Slave Trade Act. The Foreign Office drew a fine line of distinction of what being British meant and about whom British laws were meant to regulate.

This letter is fascinating because it mimics Molyneux's life. He was a British subject, his wife was an U.S. citizen, and his children were born in Georgia. Perhaps he was thinking about his own life when he wrote the letter and not someone else. It would have been a safe way to test the waters before venturing openly into full-blown plantation ownership himself. Reading between the lines, Molyneux was perhaps informing the Foreign Office of what his hopes or plans were.

Molyneux's dance between identities continued. In addition to answering various inquiries, and freeing British sailors, consuls had to be alert and report any Atlantic slave trade information in their region. One Savannah case caught the attention of the entire country. In 1858, the U.S. Navy captured the transatlantic slave ship, the *Wanderer*, after she emptied her slave cargo at

⁴⁶⁹ F.O.S.T. 539: 145-147.

Jekyll Island, Georgia.⁴⁷⁰ There were 471 Africans onboard when the ship began its journey, but 101 died before disembarkation. Robert Bunch, the British consul at Charleston, told the Foreign Office that he believed that “a notorious slave trader in Savannah” owned the ship but then he never identified the man by name. Bunch informed his superiors the details of the life of the *Wanderer’s* Captain Corrie. Captain Corrie was born in South Carolina. His father was a Scotsman who made his living as a carpenter repairing wagon wheels on South Carolina plantations. Even though he came from humble beginnings, Corrie had been a Washington lobbyist, and according to Bunch, was very good at it because he made a large amount of money lobbying U.S. Congressmen. Bunch did not like Corrie and found him to be a “vulgar, swaggering fellow, addicted to drink, habitually boasting of his power in Congress, and fond of specifying the exact amount for which each member is to be purchased.” Bunch never informed his superiors *how* he knew Corrie. Nevertheless, Bunch believed that Molyneux would inform the Foreign Office what had happened.⁴⁷¹

After the incident made the local Savannah papers, Molyneux dutifully notified the Earl of Malmesbury. In the letter, Molyneux sent a descriptive account of the transatlantic voyage of the ship, the capture of the captain and three crewmembers, and the various fines they faced. Then he states, “I think it will be difficult to convict the seamen, not from any defect in the evidence, but

⁴⁷⁰ The Atlantic Slave trade had been illegal in the United States since 1808.

⁴⁷¹ F.O.S.T. 1059: 104-108.

owing to a feeling in the community that the law is too severe.”⁴⁷² This is an incredulous statement. Was this a revealing slip-up on Molyneux’s part? Is he finally allowing his superiors to gasp that he is not an abolitionist? His position remains unclear because he never completed the thought, and surprisingly the Foreign Office never commented on it. Molyneux immediately goes on to mention that the steamer that met the *Wanderer* and then transported the slaves to several upriver plantations would not be prosecuted because “it is clear she violated no law, so imperfectly is the statute worded.”⁴⁷³ By 1859, Molyneux was clearly a part of the Southern slaveholding imagined community, thereby perceiving, as indicated in his report, that the legal code was to blame for the men’s probable lack of conviction. He never commented on the merits of the case or the morality or ethics associated with the illegal trade. However, not long after that, and for reasons he never offered, Molyneux quickly altered his position.

Two months later, Molyneux’s tone had changed. He dutifully informed his superiors that the U.S. government charged the slaver crew with piracy and that U.S. marshals had condemned the ship for sale.⁴⁷⁴ What happened next is fascinating. On March 9, Molyneux dutifully informed the Earl of Malmesbury

⁴⁷² *Correspondence with British Ministers and Agents in Foreign Countries and with Foreign Ministers in England relating to the Slave Trade. From April 1, 1858 to March 31, 1859* (London: Great Britain, Parliament, 1859), 275.

⁴⁷³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 276.

that the U.S. marshals had found another slaver in Savannah, the *Angelita*, as it was being outfitted. He quickly pointed out that it was not locally owned and a Spanish commercial house had outfitted it. He ended the correspondence informing his superior that the trial of the three Spanish businessmen would start soon in the U. S. District Court House.⁴⁷⁵ Molyneux appeared to be frightened, and who would not be? If the U.S. marshals were to suddenly appear and begin asking questions, anyone with something to hide naturally veiled his activities. Now that the U.S. marshals were in town, Molyneux became the good and dutiful British abolitionist civil servant reporting to his superiors. Molyneux became a “convenient” abolitionist. It is not surprising that no reports by Molyneux of any British citizen engaging in the slave trade – either domestic or foreign – exist during his entire thirty-two years as consul. How could he, when he himself participated in it at least twenty times? A master illusionist, Molyneux camouflaged as an abolitionist when it best served his needs.

Molyneux’s name appeared at least twenty times on the slave ship manifests of coastal ships. Molyneux was in no way loyal to British policies regarding abolition. Beginning in 1828, Molyneux sent slaves that he owned to Charleston from Savannah onboard the vessel *Delight*. In 1828, he sent slaves he owned from New York City onboard the vessel *Reindeer* to Savannah. In 1830, he shipped slaves he owned from Savannah to Charleston onboard the

⁴⁷⁵ *Correspondence with British Ministers and Agents in Foreign Countries and with Foreign Ministers in England relating to the Slave Trade. From April 1, 1858 to March 31, 1859* (London: Great Britain, Parliament, 1859), 276.

John Chevalier. In 1831, he shipped slaves that he owned from Savannah to Charleston onboard the *John David Mongin*. However, his activities before 1833 were not illegal according to British law as long as he was not participating in the transatlantic trade.

However, his activities after 1841 violated British abolitionist laws. In 1841, Molyneux shipped slaves he owned from Savannah to Charleston onboard the *William Seabrook*. In 1842, he sent slaves he owned from Savannah to Darien, Georgia onboard the *Ocamulgee*. In 1845, Molyneux shipped slaves he owned from Savannah to Charleston onboard the *General Clinch*. In 1845, he again sent slaves he owned from Savannah to Charleston onboard the *William Seabrook*. In 1849, he again shipped slaves he owned from Savannah to Charleston onboard the *William Seabrook*. In 1852, he sent slaves he owned from Savannah to Charleston onboard the *Gordon*. In 1855, he shipped slaves he owned from Charleston to Savannah onboard the *Gordon* (D. C. Seixas was also listed as an owner along with Molyneux.) Again in 1855, he sent slaves he owned from Savannah to Charleston onboard the *Calhoun*. In 1856, Molyneux again shipped slaves he owned from Charleston to Savannah onboard the *Gordon* (L. Rosenblatt was also listed as an owner along with Molyneux.) In 1857, Molyneux a third time sent slaves he owned to Savannah from Charleston onboard the *Gordon*. In 1857, for a fourth time Molyneux shipped slaves he owned from Savannah to Charleston onboard the *Gordon* (C.W. Godfrey and William Strickland were also listed as owners along with Molyneux.) In 1858, a fifth time he sent slaves he owned from Savannah to Charleston onboard the

Gordon (also listed as owners were Mrs. J.M. Chisholm and W.C. Trowbridge.) In another trip in 1858, for a sixth time, Molyneux sent slaves he owned from Savannah to Charleston onboard the *Gordon*. In 1858, for a seventh time, he shipped slaves he owned from Charleston to Savannah onboard the *Gordon*. In 1859, for an eighth time, Molyneux sent slaves he owned from Charleston to Savannah aboard the *Gordon* (J.P. Huger and Louis Manigault were listed as slave owners along with Molyneux.)⁴⁷⁶ So at least *twenty times*, this British consul was listed as a slave owner and shipper mainly from Savannah to Charleston and back again. While he was not officially listed as a *slave dealer*,

⁴⁷⁶ Robert E. Lester, ed. "A Guide to the Microfilm Edition of Papers of the American Slave Trade; Part 1: Port of Savannah Slave Manifests, 1790-1860. Series D: Records of the U.S. Customhouses." (Bethesda, MD: LexisNexis, 2005), 105, 110, 112, 122, 126, 132, 135, 145, 65, 75, 171, 78, 81, 179, 182, 184, 84, and 87. Note: James G. Moodie, who filled in occasionally as Charleston vice consul for William Ogilby is included on this manifest. In 1825, Moodie sent slaves that he owned from Charleston, S.C. onboard the vessel, *Pendelton* to Savannah. See, 100. And in 1826, he was listed as a seller of slaves sent from Charleston onboard the vessel *Delight* to Savannah. See, 102. However, at the time of Moodie's actions, Britain had not yet outlawed slave ownership. Special note, according to the U.S. National Archives, Southeast Region, the Bureau of Customs offices only have the custody of coastwise slave manifests dating from 1808-1860 for the ports of Savannah, Charleston, Beaufort, and Mobile. However, at this time only the Savannah manifests have been microfilmed. Other research has found that no New Orleans inward manifests have survived from the years 1808-1818 and 1858 and no outward manifests have survived from the years 1813-1817, 1837, and 1859. And according to the National Archives, of the years found, those records for New Orleans are not complete. This researcher only had access to the LexisNexis Savannah records. Most of Charleston's historical and courthouse records were sent to Columbia where they were destroyed by the Union army when the city was burned. No records of Molyneux were found at Charleston's courthouse or the Historical Society.

with so many trips one can certainly make the argument that he might have been or at least certainly knew some fairly well.

Domestic slave ships were only one method in the trade; there were also overland and local market trades. Records do not indicate how many times, if at all, he participated in these other trade transactions. Nevertheless, what the records do demonstrate was that owning and possibly selling slaves were not ethical concerns Molyneux was squeamish about, for he seems to have participated in it for twenty-eight years. Therefore, when he answered the British Government slave trade inquiries by reassuring the government that the *foreign* slave trade into Savannah had ended, he was in fact and at best “circumventing” or hiding the truth of his own actions. Never once did he detail his own activities to his superiors. Each time that he answered inquiries from his superiors, he created the illusion that “all was well,” and that the foreign slave trade had ended while never revealing the stark and shocking reality of his own economic interests in Georgian slavery and the domestic slave trade in which he participated and profited.

How could Molyneux do all this and get away with it? One possible explanation was that he acted as an intermediary who made money from each slave sold. Slaves shipped into Savannah were listed on the ship manifest as cargo. Newly-arrived slaves went directly from the ship at the pier to the auction block located at Charleston’s slave market or, if sent to Savannah, on the landing in front of Riverfront Street for immediate auction. Directly across Riverfront Street was Cotton Row, with Bay Street the next street behind. Molyneux’s office

was located at 70 Bay Street, near Bull and Gaston streets, close to the riverfront and cotton warehouses.⁴⁷⁷ Using this process, Molyneux circumvented having his name listed in the auctioneer's record book. If the auctioned entries listed the buyer's and not the seller's name, this left Molyneux's name clear. In recent years, a modern memorial has been erected at the location where the Savannah slave auctions took place on River Street. Image 2 depicts an African family embracing each other. Their bodies aligned east towards Africa, their homeland, and the family of four stands together holding each other. Their emotions are captured in bronze.

⁴⁷⁷ John M. Cooper and Company, *Directory for the City of Savannah* vol. 2 (1860): 121. Note: the city directory for 1858 listed Molyneux's business office at 77 Bay Street. The researcher does not know if he moved or if there was a clerical error in the printing. Nevertheless, the researcher chose to use the 1860 directory address for the place of his business. Note: One of Charleston's slave markets has been turned into a museum called The Old Slave Mart Museum and is located on 6 Chalmers St., Charleston, S.C.



Image 2. Slave Memorial in Savannah, Georgia. Photo taken by author.

The local newspapers posted some of the coastal trades. Newspaper accounts of incoming ships list Edmund Molyneux as a consignee for “freight” from Augusta, Georgia onboard the steamer *Gordon*.⁴⁷⁸ The name of this vessel stands out because *Gordon* was also the name of a coastal ship that frequently ran from Savannah to Charleston. This researcher believes that “freight” and “cargo” may have meant the same thing because the paper never defined the term “freight.” Perhaps Molyneux used this same ship to send slaves whom he owned to and from Charleston.⁴⁷⁹

In addition to living in an imagined community abroad, isolated in a foreign land away from his extended family and country, amid the challenges of following British law against any participation in slave ownership and the slave trade, Molyneux encountered other challenges to his British abolitionist identity. One difficulty he faced was whether, or to what extent, to become involved in the southern economy. Because of his privileged position of trust and the great distance away from his superiors, Molyneux could easily escape detection. It was easy for him. All he had to do was to remain in Savannah and hide his

⁴⁷⁸ Works Progress Administration of Georgia, *Savannah Newspapers Digest* vol. 4, part 1 (1937) “Freight Consignees,” *Savannah Morning News*, 24 June 1853, p.128. At the same time, the researcher concedes that “freight” from inland Augusta could have been cotton.

⁴⁷⁹ Readers may relate Molyneux’s actions to William Wells Brown’s fictional character William, an escaped slave, and his challenge to a train ticket conductor when the conductor refused William a seat in the passenger car and instead ordered William to ride in the train’s *freight* car in Brown’s abolitionist novel *Clotel*. William’s negotiation for his ticket price is a pivotal moment in the book.

commercial activities from the Foreign Office. In many ways, Molyneux became doubly foreign. He could talk one way to the Foreign Office and live another way privately in Savannah. Driven by a desire for money and power, Molyneux evaded British laws and policies and risked his capture and removal from office by becoming involved in slavery economics.

Molyneux created the illusion of not owning slaves. As discussed in Chapter 3, some consuls hired or attempted to hire slaves to work as domestic servants. Ogilby hired a groom and house servant, a man named Tour, for 8 dollars a month.⁴⁸⁰ He also hired a black cook, Abigail, for 7 dollars a month.⁴⁸¹ Ogilby did not inform the Foreign Office whether Abigail or Tour were slaves or not, but the argument can be made that they very likely were. Francis Waring, the British consul at Norfolk, informed Lord Palmerston that because he found it impossible to hire free servants, he asked the Foreign Secretary's permission to hire slaves. Palmerston responded that the 1841 Act restricted Her Majesty's functionaries in slave communities from "holding or hiring slaves."⁴⁸²

While it is unknown whether or not Molyneux owned slaves before his marriage, upon his wedding to Eliza Johnson in 1834, his life as a slave owner surely began. Edmund Molyneux (age 39) married Eliza Harriet Johnston (age

⁴⁸⁰ Ogilby, 20 November 1830. This is probably a hired out slave. But there was no legal prohibition because England had not yet outlawed British slave ownership.

⁴⁸¹ Ogilby, 8 December 1830.

⁴⁸² F.O.S.T. 736: 192-193.

24), a member of a wealthy aristocratic Georgian family. She owned a great deal of land in and around Savannah, making her one of the wealthiest women in the area. Before the nuptials, she and Edmund signed a marriage contract.⁴⁸³

When a nineteenth-century woman married, all of her property became the property of her husband. A settlement made before marriage allowed the bride to have some say in the conveyance and handling of her property. However, most often males in the wife's family brokered these contracts and it was not always to the female's benefit. In Eliza's case, her two brothers, George H. and James R. Johnston, negotiated on her behalf. According to the contract, she would receive all profits from her inheritance for life and then upon her death, her estate would go to her husband for life, and then it would pass to their children.

In addition to property and stock, she came to the marriage with 16 named slaves, some with minor children. Her marriage contract further guaranteed to her the right to "the future issue and increase of the said female slaves."⁴⁸⁴ Molyneux did not have to marry. He was wealthy in his own right with his cotton merchant business. So why did he marry a woman fifteen years younger than himself just after her parents died and who came from one of the wealthiest families in Savannah? Was it love? Or, simply a good business decision? It was probably a love match strongly joined with mutual business

⁴⁸³ Deed Book 2S, 328-331: S.C.C.C.

⁴⁸⁴ Ibid.

interests, because both partners complemented each other well. The surprise revelation was that her brothers held her estate in trust for her life, and then for her husband's life, and then for their children's life. It appeared that at the time of marriage, her family either did not know Molyneux well enough, or did not trust him enough to oversee Eliza's inheritance. This meant that her brothers could continue to control her estate even though she was married and that they could sell her property. Their only obligation to her was to tell her about it and invest the proceeds from sale.⁴⁸⁵

Oddly, the 1850 Slave Census records do not reveal whether Edmund or Eliza Molyneux owned any slaves at that time. However, according to the 1860 Slave Schedules, Edmund Molyneux owned two slaves in Liberty County, Georgia: a male aged 35, and a female aged 60. According to the census records, they shared a slave house. He also owned slaves in Henderson, North Carolina where his family's mountain summer retreat home was located. According to the census records, the enslaved men, women, and children ranged in age from three-months old to 80 years of age and somehow the 33 slaves listed lived in only four slave houses. According to the 1860 Federal Census Slave schedules, Eliza continued to own enslaved men, women, and children ranging in age from 8 years of age to 63 years of age and who lived in three slave houses in Savannah.⁴⁸⁶ The Molyneuxs' actions violated British laws.

⁴⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁸⁶ Ancestry.com. *1860 U.S. Federal Census – Slave Schedules* [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations Inc., 2004.

In 1841, the British Foreign Secretary, Viscount Palmerston, instructed his consuls that it was illegal for them to own slaves. Molyneux received his letter 8 May 1841 along with an enclosure of Thomas Clarkson's letter from the Anti-Slavery Convention.⁴⁸⁷ (See [Appendix B](#) for a copy of Clarkson's letter). Palmerston issued the memo to consuls stationed abroad to remind them of their official duties as government representatives and to prevent any Foreign Office embarrassment as Britain continued to battle the Atlantic trade and push other countries toward total abolition. However, no member of the Foreign Office ever instituted any audits of either the conduct or income of Edmund Molyneux.

However, Molyneux gave the Foreign Office clues to his real identity when he replied to the 8 May 1841 Foreign Office notice. On 16 July 1841, Molyneux wrote his acknowledgement of the Act and Clarkson's letter and then he began to discuss the difficulties of hiring English servants as domestics. He assessed that it was

very often unpopular to induce white persons to act as domestic Servants and the expense of English Servants I know, from many years experience, to be enormous. Those I brought out in the year 1839 having cost me, that year, £90 each, not infrequently, too, do they leave without giving a moments warning.⁴⁸⁸

Original data: United States of America, Bureau of the Census. *Eighth Census of the United States, 1860*. Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 1860, M653, 1,438 rolls. Note: Slave schedules were only added to the federal census in the years 1850 and 1860. However, slaves were never listed by name. Instead, the census takers listed the names of the slave owner with only a basic description of each slave such as age, gender, and color.

⁴⁸⁷ F.O.S.T. 377: 155-156.

⁴⁸⁸ F.O.S.T. 377: 161.

He explained that southerners considered domestic service a “great degradation.” Then he concluded that “(i)f, then, the occasioned hiring of the Servants of the Country be strictly prohibited by Her Majesty’s Government, a very serious inconvenience must necessarily ensure.”⁴⁸⁹ Note Molyneux’s language. He called enslaved men and women “Servants of the Country.” The Foreign Office did not notice or at least did not comment on them. Molyneux read the Foreign Office letter correctly; he just did not want to acknowledge the new conditions of continued service the Office imposed on him. Molyneux believed that slave ownership would be financially better for consuls that served in the South. All the consuls stationed in the South - such as Baltimore, Norfolk, Charleston, New Orleans, and Mobile - received this letter and enclosure. However, Molyneux was the only consul to express opposing opinions on the matter.

In addition to being involved in the coastal slave trade and slave ownership, Molyneux continued the dance between assimilating completely into a Southern lifestyle and dutiful British servant in another way. British merchants and bankers held large interests in U.S. cotton. The largest cash crop in the South was cotton. Because the opportunity for great wealth existed where slave labor agricultural products were produced, it was natural for Molyneux to become involved in banking.

⁴⁸⁹ F.O.S.T. 377: 161-162.

According to a questionnaire Savannah's consul answered for the Foreign Office in 1833, there were four banks in Savannah, each of which held limited charters and were incorporated for limited periods. A detailed statement of the condition and affairs of each bank, including a list of the stockholders, had to be sent to Georgia's governor every six months. The bank's financial statements also had to be printed in the local newspapers. For short-term loans, the banks discounted bills of exchange from five to ninety days at a rate averaging about 8 percent per year, while land loans were discounted from 8 to 6 percent per year according to the time they came due. Deposits received no interest payments unless there was a special agreement made with one of the bank's representatives.

This may be why consuls such as Molyneux made private loans. According to Molyneux's 1833 letter, savings accounts did not generate money. Loaning money made money became lucrative because high interest rates could be charged. Bank stockholders were only liable to the extent of their reserves on hand. While the stock market value of each bank-issued stock increased about 5 percent per year, the average bank dividend rate was about 7 percent per year. All four Savannah banks sold notes ranging from 5 to 100 dollar denominations payable in silver. Under the terms of credit, foreign goods in demand received a credit from 3 to 6 months; however, cotton, wool, and other articles of home

production were on a cash basis only. The discount charge for lending money was 8 percent per year.⁴⁹⁰

For agency purposes, any person could undertake the business of another. For example, a broker, commissioned merchant, or factor could ask anyone to fill in for them without any educational specialization or training. However, auctioneers were required to obtain a license from the governor and had to provide the state treasurer a security bond for the “privilege of performing an auction.”⁴⁹¹ Savannah’s custom house laws were the same allowed under the general United States Tariff Act of 1832. Merchants were required to pay the same tariff on all goods except sugar, which received a lower rate of 12 percent.⁴⁹² Due to the likelihood that a shipper might attempt to hide goods not included on the manifest, special rules applied. If anyone could prove that someone hid property from the local debtor court, that person received a monetary reward. In Savannah, for example, if any person discovered embezzled

⁴⁹⁰ A.L. Molyneux to the Board of Trade, 19 July 1833, Great Britain. Consulate, Savannah Papers, 1816-1875, Duke Special Collections Library, Duke University, North Carolina.

⁴⁹¹ A.L. Molyneux to the Board of Trade, 19 July 1833, Great Britain. Consulate, Savannah Papers, 1816-1875, Duke Special Collections Library, Duke University, North Carolina.

⁴⁹² A.L. Molyneux to the Board of Trade, 19 July 1833, Great Britain. Consulate, Savannah Papers, 1816-1875, Duke Special Collections Library, Duke University, North Carolina.

or concealed property at debtor's court, that person could receive half the recovered property value once clear title was established.⁴⁹³

Molyneux's name was listed at two Georgia banks. In 1838, he was listed as a stockholder in the Farmers' Bank of Chattahoochee, in Columbus, Georgia.⁴⁹⁴ For several years, he was also listed as a member of the Board of Directors for Merchants and Planters Bank in Savannah, where he owned shares in that bank as well.⁴⁹⁵ However, one surprise revelation is that Molyneux involved himself not only in merchant and banking endeavors, but also in private loans made to slave owners secured by enslaved men and women. There are numerous examples of Molyneux loaning money to plantation slave owners. Slaves often became collateral for those debts. Neither cattle, nor crops, nor gold, nor silver, or any other commodity was mentioned in these debts. Only

⁴⁹³ A.L. Molyneux to the Board of Trade, 19 July 1833, Great Britain. Consulate, Savannah Papers, 1816-1875, Duke Special Collections Library, Duke University, North Carolina. No records can be found where Edmund Molyneux participated in recovering any embezzled property.

⁴⁹⁴ Tad Evans, *Genealogical Abstracts from the "Georgia Journal" Newspaper, 1809-1840* vol. 5, 1836-1840 (Savannah, 1995), 392 and 541.

⁴⁹⁵ Works Progress Administration of Georgia, *Savannah Newspaper Digest* vol. 7, part 1 (1937) "Annals of Savannah" 6 February 1856, pg. 17. See also, Works Progress Administration of Georgia, *Savannah Newspaper Digest* vol. 10, part 1 (1937) "Annals of Savannah" 7 February 1859, pg. 18. Works Progress Administration of Georgia, *Savannah Newspaper Digest* vol. 11, part 1 (1937) "Annals of Savannah", 7 June 1860, pg. 12. Works Progress Administration of Georgia, *Savannah Newspaper Digest* vol. 12, part 1 (1937) "Annals of Savannah" 5 February 1861, pg. 21. See also, Tad Evans, *Genealogical Abstracts from the "Georgia Journal" Newspaper, 1809-1840* vol. 5, 1836-1840 (Savannah, 1995), 532. Molyneux was listed as a stockholder in Planters' Bank of Savannah.

slaves and land were listed. Owners used slaves as collateral for bank and private loans. More importantly, slaves formed a significant part of the South's cultural, social, and economic history. Preserved in the numerous documents stored on microfilm at Chatham County Courthouse are the names of the enslaved that were used, unbeknownst to them, as collateral by their owners for loans with the British consul in Savannah.

Courthouse records reveal that both Molyneux brothers became involved in private loans. The brothers Molyneux only made three types of loans. They provided loans to landowners. They made loans to landowners with slaves. Finally, they made loans to slave owners, with no land mentioned. Other types of recorded loans by the brothers are not recorded. In the Superior Court deed books, Anthony Molyneux is listed five times in the Grantee-Grantor Index. Of those five transactions, one was a land purchase, three were mortgages on plantations, and two were slave sale transactions. In the land deed conveyance, Anthony Molyneux in 1820 purchased two city lots for \$11,111.11 to be paid in full by 1823 from John P. Williamson.⁴⁹⁶ John P. Williamson owned Clifton plantation and inherited Brampton plantation. He made his fortune from rice, cotton, and real estate. He served at one time as the town's mayor and owned a

⁴⁹⁶ Deed Book, 21, 639-40: S.C.C.C. John P. Williamson's full name was John Postell Williamson. It is odd that the loan was all in "1"s.

townhouse in the city.⁴⁹⁷ In 1820, Savannah suffered a fire and this may have led Williamson to sell some of his city holdings.⁴⁹⁸

In 1820, Anthony Molyneux loaned \$5,000 to Edward Tattnall, owner of Bonaventure plantation. The houses, outhouses, buildings, edifices and 500 acres of land secured the debt. It appears from court records that the debt was repaid in 1825.⁴⁹⁹ In 1829, Anthony loaned \$12,000 at eight percent interest compounded yearly for six years to James Moore Wayne, owner of Red Knoll, a 420-acre tide rice “swamp of the first quality” on Argyle Island. The loan appears to have been repaid in 1833, ahead of schedule.⁵⁰⁰

In December 1833, Anthony Molyneux loaned Charles Harris Spalding \$10,000 secured by 640 acres on Hutchinson Island. The debt was not repaid until 1850.⁵⁰¹ Interestingly, George James Kollock, a local lawyer and in-law to Edmund Molyneux, recorded the mortgage. Spalding lived at Ashantilly plantation, near Darien in McIntosh County. He served three times as a state senator and was the son of Thomas and Sara Spalding. His father was a founder of the Bank of Darien, a local architect, politician, and planter. Thomas Spalding was the largest producer of Georgia’s Sea Island cotton.

⁴⁹⁷ Mary Granger, ed., *Savannah River Plantations* (Savannah: Oglethorpe Press, 1997), 409.

⁴⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 208.

⁴⁹⁹ Deed Book, 2K, 113-5: S.C.C.C.

⁵⁰⁰ Deed Book, 2P, 79-90: S.C.C.C.

⁵⁰¹ Deed Book, 2S, 144-46: S.C.C.C.

In 1821, Anthony Molyneux purchased two slaves, Hector and Will, for \$1500 from John Carnocham. Hector and Will were brothers. Hector was a carpenter by trade and Will worked as a house servant.⁵⁰² The document did not contain any further information about these brothers. Apparently needing more slaves in his household, in 1823 Anthony purchased John, a young boy, from Benjamin Barroughs for \$550 dollars.⁵⁰³ In this transaction and the previous slave purchase agreement, Anthony seemed to attempt to hide his full identity. For example, in the 1821 transaction, Anthony listed his name as W. Anthony L. Molyneux and in the second transaction, he simply listed his name as A.L. Molyneux. There are no clear answers to explain this possible bit of deception. Was it a clerical error, or did Anthony want to hide his activities?

In the Grantee-Grantor Index, Edmund Molyneux is listed at least 28 times. Molyneux made four types of loans. There were straight loans, land mortgages or purchases, mortgages secured with land and slaves, and loans secured by slaves only. There were only two instances of straight loans made by the consul. In 1834, Molyneux made a straight loan for \$20,000 to Phenicas Miller Kollock.⁵⁰⁴ Kollock was a physician in Savannah.⁵⁰⁵ Kollock had more

⁵⁰² Deed Book, 2K, 354: S.C.C.C. Carnocham's name is difficult to read in the courthouse-microfilmed records.

⁵⁰³ Deed Book, 2L, 558-9: S.C.C.C.

⁵⁰⁴ Deed Book, 2S, 148-9: S.C.C.C.

⁵⁰⁵ Georgia Historical Society, *The 1860 Census of Chatham County, Georgia* (Southern Historical Press, 1979), 207.

than a business connection to Molyneux. Kollock was Molyneux's brother-in-law. For example, Kollock's first wife, Jane Priscilla Johnston, was one of Eliza's sisters. Interestingly, Phineas Kollock's brother, George Kollock, married two of Eliza's sisters. His first wife was Priscilla Augusta Johnston who died after childbirth, and his second wife was another sister, Susan Marion (Mary) Johnston. This sister wrote about Molyneux when he was a bachelor. George Kollock owned Rosedew plantation and other lands on Ossabow Island. The brothers Kollock were the sons of Dr. Lemuel and Maria Campbell Kollock. In 1841, Molyneux made a straight loan for \$34,000 to Charles Spalding.⁵⁰⁶ Charles Spalding was a planter in McIntosh County, Georgia.

Molyneux entered several land mortgages. In 1832, he loaned \$10,000 to John P. Williamson secured by several city lots.⁵⁰⁷ This same man had sold Edmund Molyneux's brother, Anthony, two city lots in 1820. In 1836, Edmund Molyneux made three loans to Arthur Middleton Blake and Daniel Blake. On 11 February, the consul loaned the brothers \$40,000 in an unsecured loan. In a second 11 February loan for \$20,000, the consul secured this loan with three city lots. A steam rice mill was on one of the lots. The Blake brothers gave the consul an undivided one-third interest in the mill, steam engines, machinery, and houses that were on the city lots.⁵⁰⁸ The 18 February document described where

⁵⁰⁶ Deed Book 2Z, 147-8: S.C.C.C.

⁵⁰⁷ Deed Book, 2R, 157-8: S.C.C.C.

⁵⁰⁸ Deed Book, 2T, 522-24: S.C.C.C.

Daniel Blake was spending the \$40,000 borrowed from the consul. Important to this study is the inclusion that Daniel Blake gave Molyneux an undivided one-fourth interest in three Chatham county plantations owned by Daniel Blake's family. In another loan dated 18 February, the consul loaned Daniel Blake \$60,000 for an undivided one-fourth interest in Upper Point Plantation formerly owned by Thomas Savage that contained 280 acres. Molyneux gained a one-fourth interest in another plantation called "lower point plantation" that contained about 281 acres. The loan also secured for the consul a one-fourth interest in a plantation called "Rice Land" in Chatham County. Over 250 pine tree acres on Plainfield and Pine Island also secured the loan.⁵⁰⁹ What appeared to be going on was that the Blake brothers' father had recently died leaving the sons to deal as best as they could with their father's estate and large debts. Entering into loans with the consul seemed a comfortable arrangement. What is unknown is where Molyneux got \$120,000 to loan in the first place. The father, also named Daniel Blake, was a merchant and owner of "Blake's Steam Rice Mills." The elder Blake purchased Vallambrosa plantation located on the Ogeechee River. A wealthy man, he also owned gold mines and other lands in Georgia, North Carolina, and South Carolina. He was known for hosting lavish social events at his home. Perhaps maintaining his lavish lifestyle pushed him into debt.

⁵⁰⁹ Deed Book, 2T, 535-39: S.C.C.C.

In 1839, Molyneux loaned John B. Gaundry \$14,000 secured by two city lots.⁵¹⁰ No further information could be found on John Gaundry. In 1856, Richard R. Cuyler, a wealthy businessman, sold Molyneux two city lots for \$2,280.⁵¹¹ According to the 1860 U.S. Census, Cuyler was a banker in Savannah.⁵¹² He also served as the president of the Central Georgia Railroad and Banking Company.⁵¹³

Molyneux made two private loans secured by land and slaves. Beginning in 1832, Molyneux loaned Bryan M. Morel \$8,680 dollars with a penal sum of \$14,000 with conditions of payment. According to the 1850 U.S. Census, Morel was a navy officer.⁵¹⁴ The Morel family was the owner of Tweedside, a rice plantation, Greenwich, and Pembroke plantations, and other lands. One of the conditions was that Morel promised the consul 39 slaves “to have and hold and their future issue and increase of the female slaves.” The conditions of the loan stipulated that if Morel defaulted on the loan then the consul could take possession of the land and slaves and then sell them.⁵¹⁵

⁵¹⁰ Deed Book, 2W, 258-9: S.C.C.C.

⁵¹¹ Deed Book, 3P, 162-3: S.C.C.C.

⁵¹² Georgia Historical Society, *The 1860 Census of Chatham County, Georgia* (Southern Historical Press, 1979), 88.

⁵¹³ Jacqueline Jones, *Saving Savannah, the City and the civil War* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2008), 28.

⁵¹⁴ Rhea Cumming Otto, *1850 Census of Georgia Chatham County* (Savannah: Mrs. Walther W. Otto, 1975), page number did not xerox.

⁵¹⁵ Deed Book, 2Q, 573-4: S.C.C.C.

In his second private loan secured by land and slaves, Molyneux loaned \$12,000 to Alfred Cuthbert of Jasper County, Georgia. Fifteen hundred acres and 37 slaves secured the loan.⁵¹⁶ Cuthbert's brother, John A. Cuthbert, a Princeton law school graduate, had a long political career serving in Georgia's House of Representatives in 1811, 1813, 1817, and 1822 and in the state Senate in 1814 – 1815. Cuthbert subsequently served in the United States House of Representatives from 1819-21. He later moved to Mobile and practiced law until 1840, when he was elected county judge. After retiring from his judgeship, he practiced law until his death in 1881. He lived at Sans Souci on Mon Luis Island near Mobile Bay.

Molyneux also bought slaves outright. For example, in 1835 the consul purchased a male slave named Pompey from local attorney Levi S. de Lyon for \$450. At the time of the sale, Pompey was about fifty years of age.⁵¹⁷ No further information about Pompey was given. Molyneux made five loans secured by slaves. These loans did not list any real estate or other type of property as collateral, only the enslaved. In 1838, the consul loaned \$4,000 to Mary A. Cowper, her loan secured by 20 slaves. Cowper owned Causton's Bluff plantation and other lands. The 1837 economic panic resulting from inflation and speculation may have led to this loan from Molyneux. According to one author,

⁵¹⁶ Deed Book, 2Z, 140-2: S.C.C.C.

⁵¹⁷ Deed Book, 2T, 230: S.C.C.C. According to 1860 U.S. Census, DeLyon was an attorney in Savannah.

the depression lasted until 1843.⁵¹⁸ Courthouse records indicate that this debt was later repaid.

In 1841, Molyneux made three private loans in April and May. On 10 April, he loaned \$17,000 to Charles Spalding, a planter from McIntosh County, Georgia secured by slaves.⁵¹⁹ This debt was later satisfied. On 14 April, the consul loaned \$6000 to a local attorney, William B. Bulloch, secured by 20 slaves.⁵²⁰ This debt was later satisfied. Bulloch was an important connection because his father, Archibald Bulloch, was Georgia's first Governor. The son had some interests in politics and served at one time as the state attorney general and as Savannah's mayor from 1809-1812. During the War of 1812 he was an artillery officer, and in 1816 he founded the Georgia State Bank.

Now the consul appears to have participated in the slave purchasing or brokering business. For example, on 29 May 1841, Molyneux loaned \$200 to Sarah P. and William Reddish secured by a female slave named Sophie, aged 32. Right after that, Molyneux again loaned \$800 to Sarah and William Reddish secured by "Paris, Olivia, and Fanny and her infant children, Jim and Eleanor."⁵²¹ These debts do not appear to have been satisfied. The loans are not recorded

⁵¹⁸ Mary Granger, *Savannah River Plantations* (Savannah: Olgethorpe Press, 1997), 14.

⁵¹⁹ Deed Book, 2Z, 146-7: S.C.C.C.

⁵²⁰ Deed Book, 2Z, 155-6: S.C.C.C. According to the 1850 U.S. Census, Bullock was an attorney in Savannah.

⁵²¹ Deed Book, 2Z, 228-9: S.C.C.C.

as cancelled. The last entry when the consul secured a debt by using humans was in 1842. In May 1842, Molyneux loaned \$450 to George A. Logan, originally of Alabama but then living in Chatham County, Georgia. Two female slaves, Nancy and Charlotte, secured the debt.⁵²² This debt does not appear to have been satisfied. It appeared that these last three loans were in fact private slave sales between individuals. By 1842, the consul was no longer giving loans secured by slaves for unclear reasons. Perhaps Molyneux began to pay attention to Parliament's 1841 degree that denied British subjects and, more specifically, any British government employee from owning slaves. Was the fear of what could happen enough of an incentive for Molyneux to stop engaging in slavery or loans secured by slaves? Perhaps because no further courthouse entries exist, he chose instead to make money in other, more hidden ways because, according to the United States Custom House records, the consul remained active in transporting slaves along the southern coastline until 1859.

The Chatham Superior Court records list Edmund Molyneux 14 times in the Grantor-Grantee Index to Deeds and his wife Eliza Molyneux listed three times and her estate is listed four times. Out of these, one appeared to be a straight mortgage loan transaction and two were bills of sale for slaves. By 1823, Edmund Molyneux was in Savannah and held a general power of attorney to act on his brother's behalf.⁵²³ In 1834, Edmund Molyneux acted as an attorney for

⁵²² Deed Book, 3A, 15-6: S.C.C.C.

⁵²³ Deed Book, 2M, 89-90: S.C.C.C.

his younger brother, Anthony Lancaster Molyneux, in a loan transaction with Joseph Cumming for \$10,000. From reading the indentures, it appears that Joseph Cumming borrowed \$10,000 from Anthony Molyneux to purchase slaves. However, the business took place indirectly. Anthony Molyneux received an annexed mortgage from P.H. Bailsford. The property, whether it was land, slaves by name, or anything else, never became listed in the lien. The only clue that the money was used to purchase slaves is a 20 December 1834 conveyance that states

For value received, I Joseph Cumming do by the present assigns, transfer and set over to the Bank of the State of Georgia and its assigns, the within mortgages or rather annexed mortgage from P.H. Bailsford to Anthony L. Molyneux and by him assigned and transferred to me by his attorney E. Molyneux, together, with the Bonds of the said D.H. Bailsford thereto annexed to secure the payment of ten thousand dollars, together with all my right and interest to the *slaves* [emphasis added] thereby conveyed, to have and to hold the same until the said Bank of the State of Georgia and its assigns.⁵²⁴

No further entries describe this transaction. Clearly, by 1834, the Molyneux brothers were knowledgeable about finance and the local slave trade. Not only did they loan monies for the purchase of slaves, but they also loaned monies to plantation owners while Anthony Molyneux served as the consul in Savannah. After the younger brother (Anthony) returned to London, he made sure to give

⁵²⁴ Deed Book, 2S, 551, 560-1: S.C.C.C. The researcher could not find anything in secondary materials that informed her who Joseph Cumming was.

the consul (Edmund) a power of attorney to sue on his behalf for any nonpayment of those accounts.⁵²⁵

On 5 January 1843, Edmund Molyneux purchased slaves at a sheriff's sale in McIntosh County, Georgia for \$16,500. On 29 January 1850, he sold 74 slaves, a large number, to James P. Screven for an undisclosed amount of money. It appears these are the same slaves originally purchased in 1843 with their children. What did Molyneux do with the slaves for seven years? Where were they? Who took care of them? Did Molyneux rent them out or did they work for his wife's family during that time? Why then in 1850 did he sell the slaves? No explanations exist. Dr. James P. Screven practiced medicine in Savannah, but in 1834 he retired and thereafter devoted his full attention to his plantations, including Brewton Hall, and other business endeavors. In 1859 when Screven died, his estate was valued at \$356,763 and fully one-fourth (\$95,601) was the value of his human property, enslaved men, women, and children.⁵²⁶ Screven was an important member of Savannah's economic and political elite. He served as president of the Albany and Gulf Railroad and served as temporary mayor during a yellow-fever epidemic in 1854.⁵²⁷

Other family entries in the Deed Books include an 1837 loan for \$3000 by Eliza Molyneux's trustees. For reasons unknown, her trustees, James R.

⁵²⁵ Deed Book, 2R, 383-385: S.C.C.C. Note: The researcher could not find a mortgage book listing Anthony's loans.

⁵²⁶ Granger, *Savanna River Plantations*, 50-51.

⁵²⁷ Jones, *Saving Savannah*, 31.

Johnston and Patrick Houston Woodruff, borrowed \$3,000 from William Gaston, a Savannah merchant. The document lists a lot occupied by Edmund Molyneux as collateral for the loan.⁵²⁸ This debt did not appear to be cancelled. Maybe this explains, why in 1859, the consul purchased his wife's remaining city lots from her trustees for \$8,000.⁵²⁹

A final entry in the Deed Books is an 1857 notice. In the registered notice, Molyneux announced that he was to start immediately receiving stock dividends on 58 shares of Bank of the State of Georgia and 10 shares of the Central Rail Road and Banking Company of Georgia. The unusual part was that the stocks remained in other people's names. The stocks were still owned by Frederick Leyland Mawdesley, Robert Norris Jones, and William Daunt, trustees of Mrs. Marion Isobel Roberts.⁵³⁰ Loans were not the only way the consul made money. In 1858, Molyneux and P. Hunter divided \$85,000 in gold coins.⁵³¹ No explanation described this transaction.

Perhaps Molyneux never had fee simple title to land or estates because he was a foreign national. When Molyneux sold assets from defaulted loans, he could avoid putting his name on any transaction by simply transferring title

⁵²⁸ Deed Book, 2V, 156-9: S.C.C.C. According to the 1850 U.S. Census, James R. Johnston was a weigher and gauger by trade.

⁵²⁹ Deed Book, 3S, 185-6: S.C.C.C.

⁵³⁰ Deed Book 3R, 36: S.C.C.C.

⁵³¹ Works Progress Administration of Georgia, *Savannah Newspaper Digest* vol. 9, part 1 (1937) "Annals of Savannah" 16 December 1858, pg. 60.

directly from the old debtor to the new purchaser. This is how he kept his name clear and could be paid in the process. Because the new purchaser had to repay the defaulted debt before clear title could be issued, Molyneux stood to make money either way. He made money by granting direct loans secured by land, named slaves, and by courthouse mortgaged sales. Such reasons explain why his name is not provided on any land other than that listed in his marriage contract.

Molyneux also inherited slaves, by will, from one of his friends, a British national who became a naturalized U.S. citizen, Patrick Gibson. A business partner of Molyneux, Gibson made Molyneux the trustee of his large estate and devised Molyneux 34 slaves upon his death in 1837, four years before British law would prohibit it. It was a common practice in the South for slave owners to name slaves in their wills and then leave the humans as inherited gifts through testamentary disposition. A common slaveholder practice was to will slaves to a beloved friend or family member. However, not all slaves would go to one owner; sometimes relatives of the deceased broke up families dividing them. In Gibson's mind, he was transferring *personal property* from his ownership to a close friend, Edmund Molyneux. To the slave owner Gibson, there were no moral dilemmas. He had carefully deliberated and named whom he wanted to become the new owners of the slaves from his plantation. Disturbingly, some of the enslaved were possibly Gibson's own children.

According to one historian, four years earlier in 1834, Patrick Gibson, owner of Creighton Island plantation near Darien, arrived in New Bedford,

Massachusetts seeking to obtain an education for his black mistress, Betsey, and their two daughters, Helen and Jane. Helen and Jane were not the only children sent to New Bedford to obtain an education. Gibson also sent another female, named Margaret. However, it is unclear whether Margaret was Gibson's daughter or granddaughter. Margaret's mother, Mary, remained on the Gibson estate in Georgia. Interestingly and for reasons unknown by 1855, the mother Mary began calling herself Mary Molyneux, most likely after Edmund Molyneux, Gibson's close friend. Gibson also sent a young boy named Toby, whose parentage is unknown, to receive an education at New Bedford. It is unclear whether Toby was Gibson's son. However, Gibson paid for the children's education each term.⁵³²

Molyneux's and Gibson's business and personal lives became so intertwined that they often vacationed together in Newport, Rhode Island. It was common for many prosperous southerners to spend summer vacations in the north to escape the heat, malaria, and hurricane seasons. Sometimes personal slaves went along to take care of the family. On one occasion, one of Gibson's slaves, Nan, served as a nurse for Edmund Jr. in 1835.⁵³³ It is unclear whether the Molyneuxs brought their own slaves with them on vacation, but there is no reason to believe they did not.

⁵³² Kathryn Grover, *The Fugitive's Gibraltar: escaping slaves and abolitionism in New Bedford, Massachusetts* (Amherst: Univ. of Massachusetts Press, 2001), 149-50.

⁵³³ Ibid.

In February 1837, the education and northern freedom of Betsy and the children came into question. Patrick Gibson died, leaving Molyneux as the executor of his will and owner of 34 slaves. Being the consummate banker and accountant, Molyneux reluctantly sent the fall term education, housing, and boarding payments. Perhaps regretting the loss of funds, a short time afterwards he desired that the children return to Georgia. Molyneux the accountant and banker began to question the housing and educational costs associated with the children living in New Bedford. Letters were written back and forth for two years between Nathan Johnson, the boarding house proprietor, and Molyneux do not indicate an effective resolution. Perhaps not wanting to pay any more, Molyneux informed Johnson in 1839 that Robert Johnson (perhaps this was Eliza's brother and Edmund's brother-in-law) would collect Betsey and the children and then send them to Jamaica. Supposedly, Molyneux promised to send Betsey, the children, and their family members still on Creighton Island to Jamaica where slavery was illegal. By mid-May 1839, Molyneux requested that Johnson send Betsey and the children to meet Robert in Newport, R.I. Johnson was rightly suspicious of Molyneux's true intent and therefore did not take them to meet Robert in Rhode Island. When Betsey and the children missed the June sailing from Rhode Island, Molyneux responded by refusing to send further funds for their care and stated that Nathan Johnson could now take care of them.⁵³⁴

⁵³⁴ Ibid.

It was not in Molyneux's nature to give up without a fight. Molyneux attempted to retrieve the Gibsons a second time. In October 1839, Molyneux informed Nathan Johnson that Captain Howland would transport Betsey and the children to Savannah. Benjamin Rodman, another New Bedford abolitionist interested in the case, quickly convinced Betsey and the children to remain. His intervention could not have come at a better time. He secured their promise to stay two more days before they were to depart. Rodman asked Molyneux one last time to clarify his intentions and to submit the full details of Gibson's will. A stubborn Molyneux did not like to be questioned, but he did agree to certain facts. First, that Betsey and the children had been sent to New Bedford for an education, but then he went on to imply that he did not intend to release them. Another New Bedford resident, local minister Henry Jackson knew how to get around Molyneux's refusal to release Gibson's will to Rodman. Jackson obtained a copy of Gibson's will from a friend in Savannah. In the will, Gibson clearly stated that Toby, Betsey, Helen, Jane, Mary, and their families were to belong to Molyneux upon Gibson's death. If it had ever been Gibson's intention to free his slaves, he did not declare that in his will nor at the time did Georgia law allow him to free his slaves without the express permission of the state legislature. With this new information, Betsey and the children decided to remain in New Bedford.⁵³⁵ What happened remains unclear.

⁵³⁵ Grover, *The Fugitive's Gibraltar*, 150- 152.

In 1846, Molyneux sent private correspondence to the Foreign Office through a third party so that its contents would not be published in the Foreign Office slave trade papers. The irony is that this is exactly where the materials could be located. In this correspondence, Molyneux wrote Lord Stanley informing him that he had sent seven slaves to Trinidad for a local British subject. Molyneux went on to state that he did not want the letter published in Savannah's local papers, nor did he want it published in the Slave Trade papers at the Foreign Office. He feared that the information could create a "strong prejudice against me." Furthermore, he did not want the local community in Georgia to find out because he feared the incident had the potential to create a "fury of a mob excited by the question of abolition."⁵³⁶ At first blush, the letter appeared to profess fears for his safety; however, there is more going on than what he wrote.

What Molyneux was really doing was creating the illusion of abolition to the Foreign Office while hiding his real activities. The truth is that Molyneux did not in fact write on bequest of a local man, he was writing on his own behalf, and more importantly, the Foreign Office knew it. In August 1846, Molyneux confessed to Lord Palmerston that he had inherited slaves from Patrick Gibson and admitted that at least one was the daughter of Gibson. Molyneux stated that he moved the family of seven slaves from the plantation in Georgia to Darien until he could move them to Trinidad. Molyneux explained that he wanted to

⁵³⁶ F.O.S.T. 646: 102-105.

send the family to Trinidad because Georgia law prohibited slave emancipation.

Boldly, Molyneux explained how he came to inherit the slaves.

My abhorrence of slavery is such that I at one time thought of repudiating or rejecting the bequest, but finding that such a course would cause these persons to be escheated and sold, I accepted the legacy with the intention of giving the unfortunate people all the advantages of freedom until they could be removed to a country where their color would be [illegible] to their enjoyment [illegible] so highly prized by mankind in general.⁵³⁷

Molyneux was lying to the Foreign Office to protect his own skin.

Molyneux never identified who helped him in Darien, but he continued to tell the Foreign Office his story. Molyneux explained that he had removed the slaves from Darien; he brought them to his home in Savannah, and they stayed for a week making clothing “for themselves.” He ordered them to remain in the house, but they had ignored him. He explained that when he told them they were to go to Trinidad, they asked to remain in Savannah. However, after a grand jury in Darien indicted him, he thought it best for the slaves to go to Trinidad immediately. He never clarified who turned him in to a grand jury in Darien, but perhaps it was the abolitionists in New Bedford. Molyneux went on to explain that he gave the family money before they left and sent funds to a man in Trinidad to pay each family member thirty dollars weekly or all the money together once a month, but either way it was at this unnamed man’s discretion. He also informed the Foreign Office that he had to pay one thousand dollars for each family member to be sent to Trinidad. He seemed pleased to inform Lord

⁵³⁷ F.O.S.T. 646: 218-221.

Palmerston that the family went without “violence” or “force.” Lastly, he told Palmerston that he had watched as the family embarked “on their journey” from Savannah’s wharf.⁵³⁸

Molyneux wrote that he feared reprisals from the slaveholders in his district if they found out what he had done. Furthermore, he could have faced jail time from one to four years. The slaves could have been sold at auction with half the proceeds going to the informer and the other half going to the county. He informed the Foreign Office that he would begin the process of removing the other slaves that he had inherited from Gibson. Molyneux informed the Foreign Office that he had several of the slaves apprenticed out so that they could learn a trade to support themselves. Most likely, he had hired out the slaves. Lastly, perhaps in an attempt to clear his name and soul, Molyneux reminded Palmerston that he had sent a dispatch in February 1844 to Lord Aberdeen alluding to a man in such a position. That man, he confessed to Lord Palmerston, was Molyneux. Finally, Molyneux wrote, “though, being satisfied with the approval of my own conscience it was never my intention to give publicity to the act or to seek the commendation of Her Majesty’s government by divulging my name.” Unexpectedly, Molyneux ended the correspondence defending his brother’s reputation. Apparently someone had claimed that Anthony L. Molyneux, Edmund’s brother, was the father of several of Gibson’s children. Edmund Molyneux made it clear that his brother had not been in the

⁵³⁸ F.O.S.T. 646: 221-223.

United States since 1829 and so therefore he could not have fathered any of the children, the youngest being four and the oldest seventeen.⁵³⁹ The question perhaps then arises: was the consul the father of any of the children? Molyneux never approached this subject.

In an August 1846 letter to Lord Palmerston, Molyneux let it slip that he was to sell the inherited slaves and give the proceeds to Gibson's "relations in England."⁵⁴⁰ A review of the Foreign Office records does not reveal who turned in Molyneux. Most likely, the British government had received private correspondence from an interested party. If Molyneux had *not* been turned in to Darien's district court or the Foreign Office, then he would most likely have sold the enslaved persons and sent the proceeds to Gibson's British relatives as recipients of Gibson's estate. Molyneux never specifically named any of Gibson's extended British family members in the correspondences. Nor did the Foreign Office ever ask Molyneux who Gibson's English relatives were or where they lived in England.

Later, in September 1846, Palmerston acknowledged receipt of Molyneux's letter informing the Office that the Savannah consul had sent to Trinidad a family of seven slaves whom he had inherited from Patrick Gibson. Palmerston now wrote his opinion of Molyneux's actions.

I have to state to you that the explanation in question appears to me to be entirely satisfactory and that Her Majesty highly

⁵³⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁴⁰ F.O.S.T. 646: 224-225.

appreciates the motives of humanity which induces you to grant freedom to these persons, instead of availing yourself of the power reserved by the statute of the 7th and 8th Victoria [illegible] to persons becoming [illegible] of slaves by bequest of disposing of them for their own benefit.⁵⁴¹

To make his point clear, two months later that same year, Lord Palmerston reminded Molyneux of the 1841 Act prohibiting all British subjects residing in foreign lands from owning slaves. Lastly, Palmerston ordered Molyneux to publish the 1841 Act to all British subjects residing in his district.⁵⁴² Diligent to please, Molyneux continued keeping the Foreign Office abreast of his actions. In 1848, Molyneux informed the Office in a confidential letter that he had sent to Trinidad 33 slaves bequeathed to him by Patrick Gibson. Lord Palmerston responded that he “approved of [Molyneux’s] conduct and appreciate the humane motives by which you have been actuated in this matter.”⁵⁴³ While Molyneux inherited slaves by will, other consuls made it a point to inform the Foreign Office that they had never done so. Perhaps hearing what had happened to Molyneux in 1846, William Mure the consul at New Orleans informed the Foreign Office that he had never “administered upon any estate which slaves formed part of the property and I shall, on future, continue to [illegible] in such cases.”⁵⁴⁴

⁵⁴¹ F.O.S.T. 646: 214-215.

⁵⁴² F.O.S.T. 646: 216-217.

⁵⁴³ F.O.S.T. 736: 210-211.

⁵⁴⁴ F.O.S.T. 646: 173.

4.4 Conclusion

Whether or not he intended it, Molyneux's many activities became a part of Savannah's history. Even though Molyneux inherited upon marriage in 1834 a city lot at 450 Bull Street, he did not build a home there until 1857. By that time, Molyneux was one of the most powerful men in the city. After the Civil War, Molyneux's children sold the home to the wealthy General Henry Reade Roostes Jackson. Jackson was an attorney, minister to Austria-Hungary, Civil War hero, minister to Mexico, veteran of the Mexican War, and poet. Today, the home is a private dining club, the Oglethorpe Club having undergone many structural changes.⁵⁴⁵ (See [Image 3](#)).

⁵⁴⁵ Roulhac Toledano, *The National Trust Guide to Savannah* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1997), 156-57.



Image 3. Edmund Molyneux's Home in Savannah, Georgia. Today, it is the Oglethorpe Club, a private dining club. Photo taken by author.

Interestingly, it is difficult to find the names of British consuls stationed in the U.S. census records during the antebellum period. However, according to the 1860 U.S. census, Molyneux owned personal property worth \$80,000 and real estate valued at \$21,000. His wife owned \$32,000 in personal property and no real estate; and his son named Edmund, age 24, a British Naval Officer, owned personal property worth \$60,000.⁵⁴⁶ Molyneux grew rich on slave-grown cotton, personal plantation loans, and the domestic slave trade, precisely at a time when British subjects whom he assisted and monitored were no longer supposed to own slaves. The usual belief that all British subjects were anti-slavery or abolitionists is, as proven in this chapter, simply untrue.

There are many reasons why Molyneux participated in the slave trade, slavery ownership, and slavery economics. Most likely, he participated simply because he *could* with little or no fear of repercussions from the Foreign Office, parliament, or the courts. Molyneux clearly made lots of money from slavery and the human trade while maintaining a level of isolation that protected him from any potential prosecutorial danger. The atmosphere of the South allowed men such as Molyneux to succeed in their heinous acts. G.P.R. James made his readers aware of the different life value based upon race in Virginia during the 1850s. When the hero of the novel was just about to participate in a duel, he was reminded that if someone got in the line of fire to be sure to “shoot a white man

⁵⁴⁶ U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Eighth Census of the United States, 1860*. Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 1860. Census Place: *Savannah District 3, Chatham, Georgia*; Roll: M653_115, 1,438 rolls, pg. 233, image 234.

and not a black. A white man's life here is worth nothing, a black man's is worth from nine hundred to a thousand."⁵⁴⁷

The lure of slavery economics became too tempting for Molyneux. The main theme that described Molyneux and his participation in slavery economics was his never-ending desire for greed and power. The human quest for greed and power is not new. As noted historian David Brion Davis explains, British abolitionism is a wonderful example of how human history is "more than an endless contest of greed and power."⁵⁴⁸ Perhaps this applied to London, but it was not the case for isolated men such as Edmund Molyneux who lived on the empire's periphery. Because of his privileged official position of trust and the very great distance from his superiors, Molyneux could escape detection. It was easy for him. All he had to do was to remain in Savannah and hide his private activities. This chapter has examined how the contest for greed and power played out in one of the four main cotton-exporting ports in the South. At Britain's Atlantic periphery, many times the power broker was the British consul and the victims were the enslaved he exploited.

Molyneux accomplished all his goals because he lived on the periphery. Molyneux thrived on the empire's periphery and interestingly enough he built his home on the periphery of Savannah. His home was furthest away from the harbor, cotton warehouses, and his River and Bay Street offices. Intentionally

⁵⁴⁷ James, *The Old Dominion*, 57.

⁵⁴⁸ David Brion Davis, "Slavery, Emancipation, and Progress," *Historically Speaking* (July/August 2007): 13.

perhaps, he raised his family of five girls and one son far away from his river office activities, banking, and slave auction endeavors. Akin to a Venn diagram, he lived in many communities and at the same time, he lived on the periphery of many more communities. All the while, he juggled his business and family activities.

The fact that Molyneux moved so far away from his home and extended family perhaps made it easier for him to go native. It can be argued that Edmund Molyneux lived in an imagined community abroad. Benedict Anderson coined this phrase in his 1991 book with the same title, *Imagined Communities*. According to Anderson, the nation is an imagined community mentally constructed. That is to say, members of a nation need not live in the same community: they may live anywhere on the globe and remain part of the nation, as long as they perceive themselves as part of that group. According to Anderson, a collective identity, enhanced by the availability of print material, extends beyond the geographic boundaries of a nation, binding people together.⁵⁴⁹ In other words, those identifying with one nation state will naturally gravitate to each other, because in their minds remains the image of their common heritage or community. Molyneux, alone in a foreign land, naturally sought out other British citizens and local Southern families of the same or similar class status. Coming from a wealthy political and mercantile family, Molyneux socialized with Savannah's elites and married into that city's upper

⁵⁴⁹ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (New York: Verso, 1991), 6-7.

class. Molyneux completely assimilated into the Southern way of life for most of his adult life, certainly for his entire British Foreign Office career.

Even though Molyneux was a merchant and a consul, his greatest theme was that of illusionist. As a government employee, he most likely only received an annual salary of £500 with a £170 allowance.⁵⁵⁰ In order to make more money, he decided to become completely native; thus, he entered the slaveholding classes, making money as those around him did. Molyneux's identity was skewed toward those whom he wanted to emulate, the Southern planter class.

Another overlapping identity and possible reason for Molyneux's many deceptions to his superiors and a motive for hiding his activities was the fact that he was a father. According to the 1860 census, Edmund Molyneux, then 70 years old and his wife Eliza, then 55, had together six children ranging in ages from Ella 25, the oldest, to 10-year-old Julia. Perhaps he only wanted to provide for his growing family.

By the time of the Civil War, Molyneux's health was poor. He was over 70 years old and in a "feeble state." Even though the British Foreign Office granted him a leave of absence, he declined to return to England. The Foreign Office, however, praised him for his determination to remain at his post in Georgia during the war. The Foreign Office encouraged him to exercise his

⁵⁵⁰ Earl Russell to William Tasker Smith, 13 March 1865, Rare Book, Manuscript, and Special Collections Library, Duke University, Durham, N.C. While this is the pay schedule for Molyneux's successor, Molyneux received the same pay.

“great personal influence” in the state for the protection of British subjects residing there.⁵⁵¹ However, Molyneux’s failing health made that impossible. Beginning in the spring of 1861, Molyneux left Savannah for his summer mountain retreat at Flat Rock, North Carolina. He returned to Savannah only in December and at that time requested and received a leave of absence for his failing health. He turned over his consular duties to Allen Fullerton, another British subject and Molyneux’s personal banker.⁵⁵² Molyneux then returned with his family to Britain for the remainder of the war.

However, his wealth and position as British consul and a member of Savannah’s elite made his home a target when Sherman arrived in Savannah. When Sherman reached Savannah in 1864, U.S. troops occupied and looted Molyneux’s home. Union General Oliver Howard took possession of the Molyneux home for his personal residency. Before the war, Molyneux had always conducted his consular duties from his home office and library at 450 Bull Street. While he was away, Molyneux allowed Allen Fullerton to live in the home and to act as acting consul in his place. When he left, his home remained intact with consular and personal papers, personal objects, artifacts, and other household items. When Fullerton vacated Molyneux’s home in 1863, he locked the doors, boxed and sealed the consular records, and hung a British flag over

⁵⁵¹ Lord Lyons to E. Molyneux, 29 May 1862, Great Britain Consulate, Savannah Papers, 1859-1866, Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Emory University, Georgia.

⁵⁵² Berwanger, *The British Foreign Service*, 62.

the front doorway. The flag publicized that the property was under British protection.⁵⁵³

Unfortunately, that did not stop Union occupation of the home when Sherman arrived in December 1864. The Molyneuxs were upset when reports reached them that General Oliver Howard had taken their home for his personal residence during the Savannah occupation. Those reports included news that Howard had damaged the home. Supposedly, the troops sold a gold chain and “from the highest General to the lowest cook, were stealing.”⁵⁵⁴ Reportedly, the troops took clothing, jewels, china, and glassware, ransacked their closets and wardrobes, physically damaged the home and furniture, took or destroyed books, portfolios, private papers, carpets, and all of his expensive wine and brandy including 36 bottles of Madeira. Molyneux’s consular papers were left scattered over the basement of the home.⁵⁵⁵ According to one author, Howard ordered one of his captains to store the Molyneuxs’ expensive furnishings in a locked room with instructions that nothing be removed.⁵⁵⁶ Howard denied the family’s claims of \$11,000 in damages, but was later embarrassed when the missing

⁵⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁵⁴ F.O. 5/1233: pages did not record.

⁵⁵⁵ F.O. 5/1233: pages did not record.

⁵⁵⁶ Alexander A. Lawrence, *The Story of Savannah from Secession to Sherman* (Savannah, Georgia: Oglethorpe Press, Inc., 1997), 212-13.

items were found at the Union's headquarters after leaving Savannah.⁵⁵⁷ As for the confiscated cotton, the federal government later approved its return.⁵⁵⁸

Both of the Molyneuxs' homes were damaged during the war, including his summer residence in Henderson County, North Carolina. At his summer home, a housekeeper left in charge during the war almost died at the hands of Union troops. Mrs. Beddows, a trusted employee, was left in charge of the North Carolina home while the Molyneuxs were away in Europe during the war. According to the story Mrs. Beddows told Mrs. Molyneux, when the troops arrived at the home in Flat Rock they took all the horses and mules, the corn, and wheat, and searched the house for firearms, gold and silver. One group of soldiers allegedly put a rope around Mrs. Beddows's neck and hooked one end of the rope over a beam in the kitchen, hoping that she would give up "concealed treasures" on the property. Two guards held her at gunpoint while others broke open the closets, trunks and boxes, taking all the blankets and expensive items such as the silver including table ware and tea, candles, and in the end took "as much plunder as their horses could carry."⁵⁵⁹ After her husband's death, Mrs.

⁵⁵⁷ Preston Russell and Barbara Hines, *Savannah, A History of Her People Since 1733* (Savannah, Georgia: Frederic C. Beil, 1992), 123-24.

⁵⁵⁸ Frederick W. A. Bruce to W. Tasker Smith, 26 March 1866, Rare Book, Manuscript, and Special Collections Library, Duke University, Durham, N.C.

⁵⁵⁹ F.O. 5/1233: pages numbers were not recorded. However, this is from a Foreign Office volume devoted entirely to Mrs. Molyneux and her letters to the Foreign Office. The only one of its kind the researcher found at the British National Archives at Kew.

Molyneux fought to recover monetary compensation for lost possessions from and damages to her Savannah and Flat Rock homes from U. S. government.

After the consul died in 1864, Mrs. Molyneux sent a number of letters to the Foreign Office requesting their assistance in the matter. Unwilling to get involved, the Foreign Office offered kind words but simply refused to help her. It claimed that it was helpless because the American government failed to recognize her claims. After an investigation by the U.S. War Department, the federal government refused to acknowledge any wrongdoing or responsibility. In addition to losing house valuables, she lost a large quantity of cotton stored in the family's carriage house in Savannah.⁵⁶⁰ General Sherman refused Mrs. Molyneux's demands to return the cotton bales.⁵⁶¹ After the war, Molyneux's estate fought the federal government for the return of cotton seized in Macon that also belonged to the family. The matter was referred to the United States Treasury Department for a final decision.⁵⁶² Just a few days later, she made a second appeal to the U.S. Secretary of State, Mr. Stewart. In the meantime, the Foreign Office instructed consuls to file local claims in their respective states

⁵⁶⁰ F.O. 5/1233: page numbers not recorded.

⁵⁶¹ Derek Smith, *Civil War Savannah* (Savannah, Georgia: Frederic C. Beil, 1997), 222.

⁵⁶² Frederick W.A. Bruce to W.T. Smith, 11 February 1866, Great Britain. Consulate, Savannah Papers, 1816-1875, Duke Special Collections Library, Duke University, North Carolina.

against the seizure of any British cotton during the Civil War.⁵⁶³ The cotton was later turned over to Allen Fullerton. It is unclear how and from what means Fullerton was able to reclaim the cotton, but Frederick Bruce was curious enough to ask the postwar consul at Savannah, Tasker Smith, to find out confidentially how he had accomplished it.⁵⁶⁴

One interesting aspect of this case was the question of citizenship of Mrs. Molyneux. She was a native of Savannah, but had married a British subject. Therefore, what nationality did she hold after his death? The return of the cotton depended upon her citizenship status. If she was a United States citizen, then she did not have a proper claim. The Southern states had been in rebellion and anything seized during the war could not and would not be reimbursed or returned to a Southerner. On the other hand, if she was recognized as a British citizen, a neutral country during the war, then she had a valid claim for the return of her seized property.

A confusing letter from Frederick Bruce to Savannah's post-war consul Tasker Smith attempted to settle the question of citizenship. Bruce believed that "the wife follows the nationality of her husband," however he was unable or

⁵⁶³ Frederick W.A. Bruce to W. Tasker Smith, 14 February 1866, Great Britain. Consulate, Savannah Papers, 1816-1875, Duke Special Collections Library, Duke University, North Carolina.

⁵⁶⁴ British Consulate Savannah to Frederick W.A. Bruce, 20 March 1866, Great Britain. Consulate, Savannah Papers, 1816-1875, Duke Special Collections Library, Duke University, North Carolina. And, Frederick W.A. Bruce to Tasker Smith, 26 March 1866, Great Britain. Consulate, Savannah Papers, 1816-1875, Duke Special Collections Library, Duke University, North Carolina.

unwilling to present a claim on her behalf for the property in her home destroyed by Union occupation. He believed her only recourse was to file a claim as an U.S. citizen.⁵⁶⁵ As far as can be found, Mrs. Molyneux never received any monetary payment from the United States government for damages occurred as a result of the Civil War to her homes. However, it appeared that Fullerton returned the value of her confiscated cotton from Macon.

Edmund Molyneux died in Paris on 19 November 1864. As a member of the merchant class, his family buried him at Kensal Green located about three and a half miles from Kensington Palace, London. (See [Image 4](#)). A private company, the General Cemetery Company in 1833, opened the cemetery to provide a place for London's growing deceased population. The cemetery contains about 56 acres for paying customers and 7 acres for the indigent. The cemetery became famous in 1843 when the Duke of Sussex, Queen Victoria's uncle, died and wanted to be buried, not in the family vault at Windsor, but alongside his mistress. While he was married to his first wife, the Duke became involved with Lady Cecilia Buggin. He later married her, but because the Royal Marriage Act declared their marriage invalid, the Duke decided they could at least be together, in death, at Kensal Green.⁵⁶⁶ Kensal Green cemetery today is

⁵⁶⁵ Frederick W.A. Bruce to W. Tasker Smith, 2 March 1866, Great Britain. Consulate, Savannah Papers, 1816-1875, Duke Special Collections Library, Duke University, North Carolina.

⁵⁶⁶ Picard, *Victorian London*, 297-299. Later in 1849, Princess Sophia died and joined her brother at Kensal Green, 299. One of the most unusual dead buried at Kensal Green is James Miranda Barry. Barry was the Inspector

a somewhat run-down and forgotten spot occasionally used for movie and television productions. Buried there are other British personalities such as Lord Byron's wife, Oscar Wilde's mother, Charles Dickens' in-laws, and Winston Churchill's daughter.

General of the Army Medical Department, and it was later determined was a woman, 300.



Image 4. Edmund Molyneux's Mausoleum at Kensal Green Cemetery, London, England. Photo taken by author.

The monument after its completion in 1866 as Image 4 demonstrates represents the High Victorian Gothic style. Molyneux's large tomb naturally befits his larger than life personality. Molyneux's children went on to live proper English lives. His son, Edmund Jr., received his education at Rugby, Junior Preparatory for Berks and then went on to become a major (or colonel) in the 7th Dragoons guards. He married Sarah Anne Maria Gore de Crespigny, the fourth daughter of Sir Claude N. Champion de Crespigay a Baronet, in 1864. They lived at Sandfield, West Derby in Warren Lodge, Wokingham, Berkshire, England.⁵⁶⁷ His daughters continued to live and marry in Britain, never returning to Savannah to live.

According to Molyneux's will, he left everything he owned to his wife. Most married couples wrote a simple will leaving everything they owned to the other partner upon death. Eliza's brother, George Johnston, administrated the consul's will. Probably because of the war, the probate took longer than expected. A final accounting in 1869 listed the debts owed and debts paid out of the estate. There were only two payments that were not railroad coupons or dividends, state and city coupons. There was a \$30.00 rent payment by J. McGlashan for an unlisted reason. However, a receipt for \$1190.50 from J. Dauforth and agent in Augusta, Georgia is unclear. It is unknown what this was or for what purpose it was paid to the estate, but because it was the largest payment out of the 18 listed in probate it is mentioned here. The next closest was a \$980.00 dividend payment for railroad stock. After these two, the next

⁵⁶⁷ Molyneux, *History Genealogical*, 252.

closest payment was a \$284.00 Southwestern Railroad dividend payment. It is unclear if Molyneux was due any debt from land or cotton in Augusta. The family home at 450 Bull Street remained in the family until it was sold in 1885 to Henry R. Jackson. Jackson was a published poet, served as ambassador to Austria, minister to Mexico, confederate General, Circuit Judge, Mexican War hero, and United States assistant special prosecutor in the slave ship *Wanderer* case.

As administrator, George Johnson paid Molyneux's estate debts of \$511.24 to Wilder and Fullerton (Allen Fullerton), \$321.80 for a State Convention tax. Perhaps this was an estate tax. The estate also paid \$5.00 for oiling the front door of the Bull Street house and \$134.60 for ground rents on city lots to the Monterey board, \$15.00 to A. Stowe for depositions fees relating to Vicksburg Railroad stock, \$69.21 for a telegraph to Mrs. Molyneux, \$7.00 for advertisement in *Morning News*, leaving cash balance of \$2982.39. Molyneux's United States estate at final accounting only had income of \$4046.24, but debts of \$1063.85.⁵⁶⁸ While nearly three thousand dollars was a tidy sum at the time, it appeared that Molyneux's pre-war wealth was gone. No answers have been found detailing what happened to his wealth. Perhaps he took it with him to England when his family fled the war. Perhaps Fullerton, his private banker, hid it for Molyneux. Based on Mrs. Molyneux's desperate pleas seeking some sort of compensation for the destruction of her homes, it appears that the Molyneuxs lost at least much of their wealth during the Civil War. If their main source of income was tied up in

⁵⁶⁸ Probate Court, Chatham County, Georgia, *Will and Estate Accounting of Edmund Molyneux*, 1869.

loans to Southerners and in slave ownership, then those loans would not be repaid and the slaves were emancipated.

So what was Molyneux's real identity? Was he a dutiful government agent --- a husband, father, and provider --- a friend to the slaveholding community of Georgia? Or was Molyneux a foreign national stationed in Savannah, Georgia, simply working within a new community to which he made adjustments as situations arose? Alternatively, was Molyneux just a good businessman who seized an opportunity to make a great deal of money, so he simply used the community and his position to create wealth? Or, is it that he was not an abolitionist at all? On the other hand, would he have been an abolitionist, but for the fact of circumstances and timing? Whatever the conclusion, being stationed in one location for thirty-two years certainly affected Molyneux. He could not help being influenced by his surroundings. Marrying into the local plantation elite and raising his children there, made for a natural transformation over time as Molyneux began to take on the identity and personification of the wealthy landed class surrounding him. His life teaches us that why merely examining the official correspondence of British consuls stationed in the South never tells the complete or complicated story of what exactly these men were doing.

In short, Molyneux had many "identities," and none of them necessarily excluded the other. For example, he could be one person when working and corresponding as the official British consul, and yet another person when making a living. He could be still another person when with his family and in-laws; and

perhaps, another person with the local plantation elites. His private life and public duties were at times contradictory, at least as this researcher views it. Perhaps *he* never saw *any* contradictions.

Maintaining self-created and multiple identities, which at times were at odds with each other, requires some skill. Imagining one's community, when one has so many communities, takes some juggling or shape shifting. Consistently demonstrating the "appearance" of abolition to his superiors necessitated certain deception. Examining the private lives of consuls such as Molyneux proves that all was not as it seemed in British abolition. However, not all his actions resulted from a desire to perform trickery, deception, or artifice. People such as Molyneux represent what a nineteenth-century British merchant *could* achieve in the Atlantic World. It was a world where there was neither government oversight or performance investigation nor vetting for job position, where words were taken literally to convey action and understanding, where the powerful members of a society could receive insulation, protection, and anonymity that are clearly not obtainable today. While Molyneux clearly did not live a quiet life unnoticed by those around him, he carefully obscured or concealed from the British Foreign Office the depth of his involvement in Southern slavery. Therefore, in his mind, some acknowledgement of wrongdoing surely existed.

Molyneux emerges as a complex and complicated individual caught between two worlds – the British policy of abolition and Southern slavery. He manipulated both his superiors and the situation for his personal gain. He can be considered as an opportunist with the cunning ability to be at the right place at

the right time, to marry into plantation wealth and privilege, and to have the luck and fortune to receive British Foreign Office protection and power. But most importantly, Molyneux is an example of a privileged man of his time who made his fortune and fame at the expense of the enslaved from the British empire's periphery. To do so, he lived on the edge of so many communities.

Sadly, the general effects of his actions left repercussions on both sides of the Atlantic because running through all of his life were the issues of slavery and the question of abolition. His homeland had abolished slavery in 1833. For much of the nineteenth-century, Britain was the Great Emancipator. Caught in two worlds, Molyneux chose to live and thrive on the periphery. His Southern families and friends embraced slavery. Perhaps with the exception of his insurance business, most of his economic enterprises depended upon slavery, both directly and indirectly. Additionally, the Southern plantation system had a useful, helpful, reliable, and powerful friend it could depend upon to execute their wills, buy their cotton, offer them mortgages, and then, when in default, to sell their slaves back to the slaveholding communities in which they lived. All these activities were the result of personal choices. Molyneux negotiated his assigned port, culture, and society, and chose to participate in slavery economics. As proven by his example, not all British people became ideologically opposed to slavery. Some actively participated in it and made their fortunes from it long after 1833.

CHAPTER 5

THE BRITISH FOREIGN OFFICE: MAINTAINING BRITISH PREEMINENCE

His Man: offered Canning to heed as partly caused or supposed to have been: "The Treasury should deal with this case if anything is to be done."⁵⁶⁹

Lord Aberdeen

The Foreign Office could often function as a system of hypocrisy when, after 1833, it came to combating slave ownership against its own citizens. Ignoring the old adage that actions speak louder than words, policymakers continued a loud public profession of reform and humanitarianism, but they failed to break the cycle of abuse committed by some members of the Foreign Office and other individual British subjects living at home and abroad. After 1833, the official position of the Foreign Office and the reality of what was going on demonstrated that British legal policies against slavery, the slave trade, and involvement in slavery in the U.S. South were grand and ambitious, but not always practical nor realistic. The Foreign Office had to maintain British preeminence or at least the appearance of British hegemony in the Atlantic world. Ultimately, Britain's abolitionist identity depended upon its confrontations against slaveholding nations.

⁵⁶⁹ This record is in manuscript form in the British National Archives, Kew, classified under Foreign Office Records, Slave Trade (hereinafter cited as F.O.S.T.), 12 December 1845, F.O.S.T., 597: 116.

Several forces shaped British foreign policy. There were, for example, the official players such as Parliament, the prime minister, and the secretary of state. Parliament passed legislative acts and bills, the prime minister and sovereign defined foreign relations, and the secretary of state acted as the spokesperson for British foreign policy. The secretary's job was to influence other nations to adopt British policies regarding abolition through either agreements or treaties with Great Britain. There were, secondly, non-governmental shapers of foreign policy. Certain non-official individuals and groups, such as abolitionist societies, also influenced foreign policy. However, the degree of influence often depended upon the party in power, and how the officials and non-officials goals worked together, and whether their respective goals intertwined or corresponded.

The British government had several tools to help shape and implement foreign policy. These included diplomacy, trade, economic incentives, and the military. The preferred method was diplomacy. The art of diplomacy involved international relations, particularly when it came to negotiating treaties or agreements with other countries. The prime minister and the secretary of state conducted most of the diplomatic relations with foreign countries. The Foreign Office required British diplomats stationed in foreign capitals and cities update London on any matters of interest regarding foreign policy. The consuls had the least important relationship with the Foreign Office on foreign policy matters. Nevertheless, they were to inform and report anything they witnessed that might

be important to the Foreign Office, including information about the slave trade and slavery.

As this study has shown, most British consuls stationed in the South failed to exert Britain's "moral influence" of abolition within their slaveholding communities. While Parliament and the Foreign Office Secretary publicly enunciated noble ideas for British citizens, the consuls and some British subjects consistently rejected, modified, or suspended the application of those ideals when it best suited their own interests, needs, or convenience. Distant enforcement of an ethic such as abolition on an unwilling or at least a reluctant British subject proved difficult at best and exceedingly hard on most occasions.

5.1 Proof of the Foreign Office's Culpability

A surprising explanation for why the Foreign Office failed to enforce British laws against its own citizens in the South was that the office lacked enforcement power against British citizens in foreign places. Take, for instance, the case of Fanny Davidson. In December 1845, Francis Waring, British Consul at Norfolk, Virginia, informed the Foreign Office that Mrs. Fanny Davidson had recently died in London.⁵⁷⁰ Normally, consuls did not spend their time informing the Foreign Secretary about recent deaths, especially one that took place in London, but Davidson's unique case became special in that Fanny owned property in Virginia and her sons wanted to probate her will there. There was a problem with her will and that was why Waring contacted his superior. Waring

⁵⁷⁰ Ibid., 115.

found himself in an uncomfortable position. On one hand, he had to be the dutiful government servant and legal enforcer, and on the other, informant to the Foreign Secretary about a matter so sensitive that exposure would cause diplomatic embarrassment. Waring naturally sought advice on how to proceed from the only person who could help him, the British Foreign Secretary, the Earl of Aberdeen.

Probating a will was not a new or unfamiliar task for a consul; it was one of his many duties. What was mysterious about Waring's situation is that he never disclosed Mrs. Davidson's nationality. Because Waring pointed out quickly that her sons, acting as their mother's agent and lawyer, were British subjects, one can infer that Mrs. Davidson may have been American. Waring never verified this fact, making this letter even more peculiar. However, what happened next could be even more troubling if Mrs. Davidson had, in fact, been a British subject.

Waring informed the Foreign Secretary that the sons had hired an U.S. agent, Mr. Vincent, to inquire about their mother's Virginia property. Here was the legal and moral problem: a shocking amount of Mrs. Davidson's U.S. property consisted of "Slaves of both sexes, nineteen in number and said to be bequeathed to her two sons...."⁵⁷¹ Waring went on to emphasize that her sons were "at present holding situations under the British Government."⁵⁷² His use of

⁵⁷¹ Ibid., 115

⁵⁷² F.O.S.T. 597: 115.

the term “situations” was rather odd. Perhaps Waring referred to their position as their mother’s agent and lawyer and not to any employment in the British government. If the British government employed the sons, then this case would have been even more embarrassing to the Foreign Office and the prime minister. Nevertheless, it is puzzling that Waring never revealed the sons’ first names. Fanny appears to be a common first name and Davidson a common surname.⁵⁷³ This letter is as strange as it is mysterious.

Because of Waring’s inexplicable behavior, it is impossible to know exactly who the sons really were. Therefore one has to accept Waring’s limited and brief description of their identity. Waring only revealed that the men were sons of Mrs. Davidson, a woman recently deceased in London. Based on Waring’s letter and nothing else, the Foreign Office knew only that the sons lived in England, their addresses never disclosed, and that they wanted to rid themselves of their mother’s Virginia property, specifically nineteen enslaved men and women. Quite remarkably, the letter listed the mother’s last known address in London and this information may be useful to identify who exactly she was. Therefore, in an alert to future researchers, a record of how to locate her sons might also exist. If the sons had inherited any British property, then an address or their solicitor’s address would be on any deeds or wills probated in Great Britain. However, if the sons did not inherit any British property, then

⁵⁷³ Without knowing the county of probate, the researcher was unable to find a will for Fanny Davidson. Furthermore, she could not find a Fanny Davidson living in London in England’s 1841 Census. So, more information about Fanny Davidson’s residence and probate is needed.

locating them would be extremely difficult. This is impossible because Waring never mentions there being a British will or any British property. However, it can be argued that the American probate was probably an ancillary administration. Therefore, there may yet be another will. That will would clearly identify the sons and then one could investigate whether or not they held any British government position.

Waring next informed the Foreign Secretary that it was the sons' desire to sell the slaves "as he knew by Act of Parliament British Subjects could not hold or claim property of that nature."⁵⁷⁴ Waring's admission of the son's knowledge of the law was extremely important because Waring was specifically referring to the 1841 parliamentary act that prohibited British subjects from owning slaves. Not only does Waring know and understand the 1841 law, the sons do as well. The year was 1845, four years after the act had passed. The sons knew that if they kept their mother's slaves they could be subject to the British legal punishment of transportation to Australia. Nevertheless, during all the slaveowning years that Mrs. Davidson lived in defiance of the law, she secretly owned and kept controlling enslaved men and women.

This case is troubling in another respect. Neither the sons nor Mrs. Davidson ever freed their family's slaves in Virginia. Even at her death, the sons auctioned off the chained men and women. Never was there any discussion of freeing the slaves, only that they wanted to sell them. Most likely, the motive to make a profit from their mother's estate caused the sons to sell the slaves

⁵⁷⁴ F.O.S.T., 597: 115.

instead of taking the higher moral ground and freeing them. Altogether, this family continued owning slaves and participating in Southern slavery for twelve years after Britain had ended its own British West Indian slavery. Only when the sons faced the impossibility of continuing their actions undetected, did they immediately want out of the slaveholding business.

Perhaps an explanation for the oddity of the son's full names not being supplied was an attempt to reduce their risk and exposure to the British government. Most likely, they sought to protect not only their reputations, but perhaps their family's as well. They may have been married and had children. As fathers, they did not want their children to know family secrets or their family's illegal activities in the South. Alternatively, maybe they were abolitionists. Perhaps they were secret abolitionists or abolitionists in their hearts and afraid or unable to take control of their mother's estate before her death. Still again, maybe they were born in Britain and simply never knew their mother was a slave owner until her death, when the will was read. Her solicitor certainly knew of her illegal ownership, for he wrote the will. But perhaps she wrote her will before 1833. Conceivably, the sons may have concealed their full identity to maintain their anonymity from public reprisals from abolitionist societies, their neighbors, and others in their homeland who were against slave ownership. Nevertheless, they do appear to be the "convenient" abolitionists - abolitionists only after their mother's death.

In any case, the sons attempted to hide their family's immoral activities as best they could. Through a third party they contacted the British consul at

Norfolk. It appeared that out of embarrassment or greed, the sons continued to conceal as best they could their family's identity in transatlantic slavery ownership. Their family's reputation meant a great deal to them. It was not until the mother's will had to be probated in Virginia that the two unnamed sons admitted knowledge of British law and sought third-party guidance from the Foreign Secretary as to the legality of what they should do. This admission also became important because it demonstrated that these men were not ignorant of legal or governmental affairs. They knew exactly whom to turn to for guidance: the Foreign Secretary. But how they did reveals just how legally astute they were. They used a U.S. agent, Mr. Vincent, to inquire by way of the British consul in Virginia. The fact they went to the trouble and expense to make a transatlantic hire is also interesting since the sons lived in England. They could have personally visited the Foreign Secretary at his home or office in London. The Earl of Aberdeen or one of his under secretaries would surely have met them. But the sons never chose this option. They were specific and particular in how they dealt with their mother's property. But their attention appears to center more on the legal end, not the personal side of the inheritance. It remains unknown if the sons visited Virginia to oversee personally the probate and accounting of their mother's estate. Instead, the letter simply states that the sons hired Vincent to be their agent in Virginia. Furthermore, the sons hired Vincent not only to be their agent and make inquiries with the local British consul, but also to sell their mother's slaves. Vincent appears to be a slave dealer.

The mystery of this letter continues. Not only is the content of the letter surprising, but its outside contents are puzzling. On the outside of this letter, in addition to the required interoffice Foreign Office personnel correspondence information, such as date, author, and place of destination - there was a riveting two sentence handwritten comment. It reads in full:

His Man: offered Canning to heed as partly caused or supposed to have been. "The Treasury should deal with this case if anything is to be done."⁵⁷⁵

That was it. It stopped there. The Secretary of State's quoted words revealed that he believed that there was a legal or practical limit to the British government's authority when it came to property owned by British subjects in foreign countries. As best as can be found at the National Archives, the Foreign Office did not write anything further on Mrs. Davidson, her sons, what happened to their family's slaves in Virginia, or what the Treasury Department decided to do. The term "His Man" referred to the Earl of Aberdeen's personal secretary, whose job it was to write out the Foreign Secretary's decision.

Lord Aberdeen's quoted response implies anger and rightly so. It appears at least from the first sentence, that the private secretary passed the blame on to the Earl's predecessor, George Canning. The private secretary infers that Canning never went far enough in dealing with the issue of British subjects owning slaves overseas. The private secretary believed Canning, not Aberdeen, was to blame for the current situation. The way the private secretary

⁵⁷⁵ Ibid, 116.

and the Earl's response were written imply that a more serious discussion occurred between these two men.

Aberdeen, for some curious reason, stated that the Treasury Department should deal with the problem. The underlined word "done" exposed what Aberdeen really thought about the matter. Even though his anger spills out from the brief reply, he believed that nothing could be done. The Foreign Secretary knew it was impossible to enforce British laws against a deceased citizen. Moreover, if the sons wanted to sell the Virginia slaves, then according to Aberdeen, it tied the Earl's hands in the matter. Therefore, it became easiest to do nothing. This family owned slaves in violation of British law and would sell them. Nothing the Earl did would stop the sale. The Foreign Office was powerless, at least in terms as Aberdeen and his private secretary perceived it. Aberdeen, in effect, as his words demonstrate, conceded his department's defeat. Therefore, what could he really do, but look the other way or pass the problem along to another department?

But Aberdeen could have responded. He could have gone to a judge and issued a pick-up order for the sons. He could have ordered the sons to come to his office and offer a more detailed explanation. He could have requested a judge to order a cease-and-desist order for the intended sale. He could have required the British solicitor who wrote Mrs. Davidson's will to appear before the British court system and offer an explanation. He could have informed the British and American Abolition Societies about the matter and asked for their advice or help in the matter. But the problem, with all these possibilities, meant public

exposure of the problem. So long as the matter remained secret, no one could learn of it. Aberdeen probably did not want his tenure as Foreign Secretary marred by such unpleasant and unseemingly behavior. He had his professional and public reputation to consider. His career would certainly have been blemished if the public knew that *British* subjects owned slaves in the United States. Perhaps he believed that it was better – for all concerned - that the public, the courts, Parliament, and the sovereign never learned about what was really going on.

While we will never know the fate of the enslaved persons in this case, one is tempted to speculate that they quickly wound up on the auction block. Their revenue would make up a part of Mrs. Davidson's southern U.S. estate. Most likely, that was why the British Treasury Department is important. The Treasury could impose either estate taxes or capital gain taxes or perhaps some other tax penalty or revenue, against the family. If Aberdeen could not seek a judicial ending to the situation, at least the British government could receive some monies in the form of a tax penalty. With the opinion that something was better than nothing, the matter passed and was never reported again in the Foreign Office records.

Probating a will correctly in Virginia so that they could inherit their mother's assets was the main motive for the sons seeking the Foreign Office's guidance. According to historian Walter Johnson in *Soul by Soul: Life Inside the Antebellum Slave Market*, Norfolk contained permanent slave-selling firms. Johnson explains that slaves in the decades leading up to the Civil War were

collected and held in pens in Norfolk before being sold further South.⁵⁷⁶ One traveler who stayed in a Norfolk hotel in 1839 described the slave pens as being very close to the hotel. While he was there, he occasionally heard “the shouting and cries of the negroes whom the traders were collecting for distant markets.”⁵⁷⁷ While we do not know the precise fate of Mrs. Davidson’s slaves, most Virginia slaves were transported to further southern markets in chains overland or by steamships along the Mississippi or by coastal sailing ships to the markets of Charleston, Savannah, Mobile, Natchez, and New Orleans.

Because Waring did not attach the will to the letter sent to the Foreign Secretary, it is difficult to know what else Mrs. Davidson owned. It is unclear where the slaves lived in Virginia. Waring was the British consul for the state. The slaves could have been anywhere in Virginia, not necessarily in Norfolk. Norfolk was where Waring lived. However, the British Consul could have asked for a copy of the will and the slaves’ location would have been clarified. Waring could have forwarded the will to the Foreign Office; it is interesting that he chose not to. Waring’s actions are doubly foreign. Perhaps Waring had already read the will and for some reason decided not to forward it. Perhaps he knew this family and therefore chose to go beyond his call of official duty to maintain a personal duty to protect this family from governmental, judicial, and public

⁵⁷⁶ Walter Johnson, *Soul to Soul: Life Inside the Antebellum Slave Market* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1999), 7.

⁵⁷⁷ Frederic Bancroft, *Slave Trading in the Old South* (Columbia: University of South Carolina, 1996), 94.

embarrassment. On the other hand, perhaps he wanted to protect his government from exposure of this “unfitting” matter. If somehow Mrs. Davidson’s will had been exposed to the British press or abolitionist societies on either side of the Atlantic, there could have been outrage, petition drives, government investigations and, most of all, unwanted embarrassment to the government.

The ideal of British preeminence in slaveholding communities had to be maintained. The fates of nineteen human beings in chains were an unfortunate but minor inconvenience as compared to the British policy of maintaining British preeminence in the Atlantic World. It was as if the Secretary was afraid to deal with the matter, or at worst, did not want to be bothered with it. He wanted to treat the case as a minor affair or maybe a onetime happenstance; either way, he viewed the Davidson case as something to be disposed of as quickly and quietly as possible. To do otherwise might turn the incident into a significant affair, one that had the potential of embarrassing the government and exposing the hypocrisy of his official position, and that of the 1833 British Emancipation Act as well as the 1841 British Subjects’ Slaveholding Restriction Act.

No doubt, the Foreign Secretary was a busy man and had many other bureaucratic, diplomatic, and personal issues requiring his attention. Nevertheless, to do nothing insults all the hard work of famous British abolitionists such as William Wilberforce, Thomas Clarkson, and many others. In the 1840s, the British abolitionist society was still petitioning Parliament to do more in the transatlantic world to combat and stop the slave trade and slavery wherever it existed. The Secretary certainly had the power to order the British

subjects to his office. Alternatively, he could have turned them over to Parliament or the courts for adjudication. But he did not. It is not only curious but dissatisfying that he did not. Most of all, it was disastrous to the wretched people enslaved who were once again sold into bondage, persons whose fates could have been changed forever at that moment. The Foreign Office could have had the slaves brought to Britain or a British protectorate and then freed them. However, as far as this researcher has found, Aberdeen never discussed these options. Nor did Aberdeen ever feel compelled to write about the matter again.

For his own reasons, Waring never submitted the will to the Foreign Office and its contents remain a mystery. Interestingly, Waring never offered his own personal opinion of slavery or abolition to the Foreign Secretary. That in and of itself is also significant, because this was an excellent opportunity for Waring to demonstrate to the Foreign Office his personal viewpoints on the slavery issue. He had a prime chance to condemn southern slavery and demonstrate at the same time that he was an abolitionist. One can only guess that he was not a conscientious abolitionist, but at best a “convenient abolitionist” as perhaps this case demonstrates.

Waring arrived at Norfolk in 1845. Freshly arrived, he had to deal with Mrs. Davidson’s activities. However, it did not seem to affect his career, or at least at Norfolk. In 1849, he received a raise to £500 yearly “in consideration of

[his] long consular service."⁵⁷⁸ Waring remained at his post until 1853 when G.P.R. James succeeded him as consul at Norfolk. Waring lived for eight years among Virginia's slaveholding community and the Davidson case was his only mentioning of British subjects owning slaves in Virginia.

Mrs. Davidson's sons missed a rare opportunity to become heroes. They could have proclaimed their shock and innocence at their mother's holdings in Virginia and immediately petitioned Parliament to free these slaves. But they did not. Instead, they participated in the continued extortion of the enslaved in the antebellum South. They held onto their mother's nineteen slaves to make money from their sale. In 1845, nineteen slaves could have been sold for between \$10,000 and \$20,000 dollars depending upon age, gender, and skills.⁵⁷⁹ This was a large sum of money. Perhaps the sons needed this revenue. Alternatively, perhaps the sons, or one of them, wanted to cleanse their souls and rid themselves of an unpleasant illegal activity that might shame them. Certain London societies in 1845 would frown upon lawbreakers, especially slave-owners. Furthermore, owning slaves might have kept the sons from obtaining certain political or governmental positions they may have desired. In

⁵⁷⁸ F.O. 5/503, 117. Before coming to Norfolk, Waring had served as a vice consul in Spain for eighteen years so that by 1849, Waring had a combined 22 years of service in the Foreign Office.

⁵⁷⁹ Steven Deyle, *Carry Me Back, The Domestic Slave Trade in American Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 140. While the numbers present in Deyle's Table 4.1 represent the lowest average price of slaves sold in New Orleans for the same years, a reasonable comparable rate for Virginia slaves is argued here.

the end, it is clear that the sons knew exactly what they were doing. They disassociated themselves quickly from the discomfort of southern slave ownership in exchange for money, something the Foreign Office inadvertently helped them to achieve. This surprising episode clearly demonstrates the Foreign Office's culpability in British subjects' ownership of slaves in the U.S. and of the Office's lack of enforcement power to prevent British subjects from owning and selling slaves in the South long after 1833.

Mrs. Davidson's case was not the only forced probate sale of slaves in the South in which a British Consul became involved. In 1843, the Foreign Office asked William Ogibly, the Charleston consul, to inquire into the estate of Scotsman Donald Stewart on behalf of his sister. Ogibly discovered that Stewart had died; however, a date of death or date of his estate sale is unavailable. Nevertheless, what became important is Stewart's 1830 will where he left his farm, personal belongings, and ten named slaves and their children to his wife for her lifetime; then his estate was to be sold and the proceeds sent to his sister and her children in Scotland. Unfortunately, for Stewart's Scottish relations, he was such a poor farmer that when he died he left more debt than his wife could pay. Therefore, his estate, including the ten named slaves and their children were sold to new owners to repay his debts. He left only a balance of \$257.77 for inheritance purposes.⁵⁸⁰ What makes Stewart's case interesting for historians of the Foreign Office is that Ogilby included a copy of Stewart's will. This is

⁵⁸⁰ F.O. 5/395.: 206-213.

further evidence that the Foreign Office knew that British subjects owned slaves in the southern states.

The trend did not end. In 1847, two branches of the same family, one residing in South Carolina and the other residing in London, sued in equity court to force an estate sale of what they believed to be an unprofitable South Carolinian plantation. John Harth, owner of Hollow Creek plantation, died in 1836, leaving his estate holdings to be owned equally between the children of his business partner William Harth and the children of William's brother Barnard Harth. Barnard's children who lived in London sued in 1847 to force a sale of the plantation including real estate, miscellaneous property, and 150 enslaved men and women. Charles D. Wake, the British consul for Charleston at the time, signed the certificate of authenticity that he sent to the London heirs.⁵⁸¹ The land sold for \$3500 and miscellaneous items including utensils, horses, provisions, etc. sold for \$1910.29. The enslaved men and women sold to named individuals amounted to \$46,174, making them the most valuable commodity of John Harth's estate.

In 1849, Waring found himself in an uncomfortable position when the Foreign Office asked him to find out what had happened to a British subject, James Dean. Oddly, a Mr. R.W. Grey asked the Foreign Office to find out what had happened to Dean. No specific information was given as to why Grey

⁵⁸¹ John Harth Equity Papers, 1846-1847, South Caroliniana Special Collections Library, South Carolina. The certificate of authenticity verified James W. Gray's signature as the Master in Equity for the District of Charleston that oversaw the estate sell.

wanted this inquiry to be made. Nevertheless, two months later, Waring informed Lord Palmerston that Dean had in fact died either in 1805 or 1806. Waring had a copy of his will. It stated that he wanted four slaves sold to satisfy his debts. Again, this shows that some British subjects did own slaves in the South. But why did Grey make this inquiry over 40 years after Dean's death? Apparently, interested parties in Britain continued fighting over the Dean estate many years later.

There was another chilling announcement in Dean's will. He specifically mentioned that he owned another slave, a child "Rhoda" and that he wanted her freed when she reached the age of sixteen. This meant that Dean had fathered a child with a slave. His daughter would be an adult by 1849. He must have cared deeply for her because in addition to her freedom by will, she was also to receive fifteen acres of land bought by Thomas Huffington and called "Huffington's Mill."⁵⁸² Nothing further exists on the matter. No further correspondence could be found from the Foreign Office or Waring on the subject, nor is there any mention of notifying the Treasury department. As late as 1850, the Foreign Office asked Waring to inquire into the Virginia holdings of deceased persons where slaves formed part of the estate.⁵⁸³ What this demonstrates is

⁵⁸² F.O. 5/503, 120-121 and 163-165.

⁵⁸³ F.O. 5/517, 218-219, 243, 247-248. In this incident, Lord Palmerston asked Waring to find out the value of the estate of Robert Smith, a British subject, and tobacco planter. His niece in England, Janet Alexander, believed that her uncle owned an estate near Little River, Virginia. After two months of searching, Waring responded that because there were over twenty "Little Rivers" in Virginia, he was unable to find any information about her uncle's estate.

that the Foreign Office understood that some British subjects still sought revenues in which slaves formed part of an estate. Records could not be found answering whether any British subjects were prosecuted.

Finally, another Norfolk consul addressed the matter in a completely different manner. This consul used literature as a medium to express his opposition to British subjects owning slaves. The famous British novelist G.P.R. James wrote a Southern novel *The Old Dominion*, published in 1856. The hero, Sir Richard Conway, a Baronet, arrives from England to claim his estate inheritance from his beloved Aunt Barbara. Aunt Barbara owned lands and tenements in Virginia. Most importantly, a portion of Aunt Barbara's estate included enslaved men and women. In the first few pages, James sets out the moral plot. Conway writes to his sister, understanding that she would want him to emancipate the slaves. However, upon arriving in Virginia he suddenly found himself torn. Family obligations and (perhaps even though James does not mention it) British laws, and uncertainty about his future, bothered Conway. Nevertheless, he assured his sister that, after reflection, he would "judge" for himself what was best.

In true romantic form the hero meets a distant female American cousin, falls in love, fights a series of obstacles for them to be together including family duels, family courts cases, and a terrifying night on the run avoiding Nat Turner's slave insurrection. Even though James never revealed the date of the novel, because he set the story during the time of Nat Turner's insurrection at Southampton, Virginia, it would place the story in 1831. It was a time when

British slave ownership was still legal. But the catch is that James was writing his novel in 1856, twenty-four years later. A twist in the Virginia inheritance laws meant that Sir Richard as an alien (British subject and not American) could not own land in Virginia. This meant that he and his soon-to-be wife would have to begin their marriage impoverished. Happily for the couple, at the end a mysterious box appears that contained a codicil to Aunt Barbara's will recognizing that Virginia law forbade Conway from inheriting, so instead Aunt Barbara named Bessy, the heroine and a relative of Aunt Barbara, as her sole heir. In a final postscript at the story's end, Conway informs readers that he and Bessy emancipated their slaves.⁵⁸⁴

Why did James write the novel? Where did he come up with the plot involving the will? Had he heard about Fanny Davidson's case or at least had read about it in the consulate papers? James never revealed the source for his story. The reasons are clear. James was an abolitionist and a skilled storyteller. Perhaps in his mind, literature became an effective device to combat slavery. Furthermore, because he told the moral story in fiction format, albeit romantic genre, the message may have appealed to more readers, especially females. Women were the social conscience of the nineteenth-century British world and were very active in abolitionist campaigns.

⁵⁸⁴ This incorporates a summary of the entire book by G.P.R. James, *The Old Dominion*.

5.2 Other Examples Demonstrating the Foreign Office's Culpability

As in the case of Edmund Molyneux and the other British consuls for most of the nineteenth century, the Foreign Office ignored a great deal of what its consuls were doing. As long as the consuls adhered to proper behavior and did not embarrass the office, it ignored their activities. The Foreign Office, on occasion, did find itself having to deal with wayward and unruly consuls. For example, British consuls in Asia became notorious for all kinds of illegal activities including involvement in prostitution and opium. The Vyse Affair in Japan demonstrated not only Britain's arrogant misunderstandings of foreign peoples and their customs, traditions, and beliefs, but also the Foreign Office's culpability and lack of enforcement power to maintain proper British behavior by its overseas consuls.

In 1865, British consul F. Howard Vyse, who was stationed in Japan, received transoceanic fame when he presided over a "mock" trial of three British defendants accused of grave-robbing fourteen aboriginal graves. Three men, all British, embarked on a "scientific expedition" to uncover the "Lost Tribe of Israel" or discover what they believed to be the "missing link" between man and beast.⁵⁸⁵ Their curiosity involved a Japanese aboriginal tribe known as the Ainu,

⁵⁸⁵ Louis G. Perez, "An Incident of Extraterritoriality in Japan: The Vyse Affair," *Asian-Pacific Cultural Center* 18, no. 4 (1990): 66-67. The British government had previously signed an Extraterritoriality Agreement with Japan that stated in part that if any British subject broke a Japanese law they would be tried by a British court in Japan, not a Japanese court. In effect, this meant that what was against the law in Japan might not have been against the law in Britain. As often happened, most often under this type of agreements with foreign countries British subjects were usually sent home instead of standing trial.

a Caucasoid aboriginal race in the northernmost Japanese island of Hokkaido. Seeking a complete skeleton to study, the three British subjects robbed several graves and locals caught the men. Just as quickly, the consul Vyse tried them. Judging the men not guilty for a lack of evidence, Vyse released the men only to anger the Japanese governor who would not let the matter die. The governor was certainly angry about the graves being robbed. In 1865, Japan did not have a navy that compared to the British, so a military campaign was not an option the Japanese wanted. Consequently, Governor Yamatono continued through diplomatic channels to fight his cause for ten months. Diplomacy in this case became effective because once the Foreign Office took notice, the Foreign Secretary instructed Vyse to settle the matter quickly, which he did. However, immediately thereafter, the Foreign Secretary relieved Vyse of duty.⁵⁸⁶

Short of firing their agents, the Foreign Office did not have any real enforcement power to compel their foreign officials to act morally or legally. It took almost another year for the Foreign Office to discover that Consul Vyse was involved in the endeavor from beginning to end; however, the Foreign Office never informed the Japanese government of Vyse's illegal activities.⁵⁸⁷ Such behavior revealed the Office's culpability in hiding the truth from a foreign

⁵⁸⁶ Perez, 71. It was important to the British government that they get along with the Japanese. The British were trying to gain trade contracts with the Japanese government. The British eventually did gain contacts to sell naval ships, steel, and wooden ships to the Japanese (Meiji) government. The British would also become involved in helping the Japanese build railroads and textile industries.

⁵⁸⁷ Perez, 71-81. Eventually one of the men implicated Vyse in the affair.

government about its own British subjects' illegal activities within that country. Whereas the Vyse case demonstrates an incident of a British subject's disregard for a foreign country's laws, this study exposes incidents of British subjects' disregard for their laws when overseas.

Mysterious graves did not tempt the British consuls in the South, but slavery did. The consuls faced unique temptations in the South where slavery existed and prospered. By 1833, consuls were surrounded by what the British government had proclaimed an illegal activity in the Atlantic World: holding another person in bondage. The temptation of wealth through the power of illegal bondage, which consisted of the physical and mental control of one human by another, corrupted some British subjects. These citizens possessed the ability to restrict, by movement and word, another human being. They had the ability to sell, trade, or dispose of another human without interference from the Foreign Office. Moreover, unlike the desecration of ancient graves in Japan, bondage was legal in the U.S. South. These individuals had no one in their local region who would hold them accountable. Just as the consul in Japan sought wealth, another temptation that Molyneux encountered was the money, wealth, and power that the slave trade created. The arrogant stance that he took, knowing full well that he could turn his back upon his country's laws in foreign ports, as a government representative, undoubtedly tempted Molyneux. Lawbreakers not only concerned themselves with what was important to them at that moment, but ignored what their country had expected from them. Just as

the consul judge in Japan clearly demonstrates, the British consuls in the South could never use ignorance of the law as an excuse for illegal actions.

The continued slave trade in East Africa is another incident that exposes the Foreign Office's capability. In 1842, British East African consuls were not suppressing the exportation of slaves from their region to India. For example, William Sunley, a retired naval officer, merchant, and British consul at Johanna, reported that the slave trade was not going on "in any part of the Mozambique Channel."⁵⁸⁸ According to one historian, he was "either deaf, dumb, and blind"; or, perhaps, was up to his eyebrows in the trade because the Portuguese reported that the volume of the trade in the region increased.⁵⁸⁹

Not only were British consuls stationed in the Portuguese East Africa region ignorant, or at least feigned ignorance, of the trade that went on around them, but one British consul stationed at Mozambique in 1858, Lyons McLeod, went so far as to own personal slaves himself. According to McLeod, he was not used to the harsh conditions of living in Africa and purchased enslaved men and women to serve as domestic servants. The slaves performed housework, cooked the family meals, and washed the family's clothes. The irony was that McLeod campaigned openly against the Portuguese and French slave trade in the region, but owned slaves himself. He appeared to be the convenient abolitionist for the Foreign Office's reports. Nevertheless, he resembled those in

⁵⁸⁸ Moses D.E. Nwulia, *Britain and Slavery in East Africa* (Washington: Three Continents Press, 1975), 26.

⁵⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 26-27.

his community. However, the hypocrisy of his position eventually caught up with him.

Not able to withstand the hypocrisy any longer, just ten months after the McLeod's arrival, the Portuguese in the region ordered their slaves to stone McLeod's rented house. Then his landlord served McLeod an eviction notice. The local Portuguese issued one final assault. They took away McLeod's slaves. Left without slaves, McLeod and his wife had to endure the many "hardships" of taking care of their own needs and then fled from Mozambique. Once back in Britain, McLeod's bad luck did not end. The Foreign Office, embarrassed and offended about what had happened in Africa, offered no sympathy to McLeod. Instead, they reprimanded him for "his flight and precipitate return to Britain, and refused to allow him to return to his post as consul, though he was permitted to draw his full pay up to the end of the December 1858."⁵⁹⁰

Perhaps most fascinating about this incident is the fact that there is no mention of slave ownership as a reason *for* his reprimand. Instead, it appears from the Foreign Office's reaction that McLeod exhibited "unfitting" behavior. He embarrassed the office by his departure. What this meant, as with all political offices, was that embarrassing the Foreign Office meant a quick career death for a wayward consul. Prosecution for owning or selling slaves did not necessarily become a prosecutorial offense. The Foreign Office once again lacked enforcement power to make British subjects act properly and follow British laws

⁵⁹⁰ Ibid., 35-36.

overseas. Embarrassment meant more than upholding British policies against owning slaves in a foreign country, at least to the Foreign Secretary in power at the time. Raymond Howell acknowledges in *The Royal Navy and the Slave Trade* that as late as the 1880s the British consuls were ineffective in stopping the East African Slave Trade in Zanzibar, East Africa.⁵⁹¹

5. 3 *Abolition Petitions and Slavery Laws in the 1840s*

While there is no direct proof that the Foreign Office or Parliament knew of any British consul involved in the slave trade or slave ownership in the U.S. South, some inferences can be made. The condemning proof is that the government knew that enough British citizens were involved in slavery and the slave trade or else it would not have passed legislation in the 1841 act restricting British subjects from these activities. The British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society's knowledge of these devastating and illegal activities resulted in these entities petitioning Parliament for much of the nineteenth century until some type of bill, resolution, or act was passed to stop these continued violations. The fact that the government became aware of British subjects' involvement from the abolitionist societies resulted in new parliamentary legislation and Foreign Office policies.

As a result of the Anti-Slavery Society's continued activities in Parliament, in 1841, Foreign Secretary Lord Palmerston sent a circular to all British consuls

⁵⁹¹ Raymond C. Howell, *The Royal Navy and the Slave Trade* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1987), 181-190.

stationed in slaveholding communities instructing them that “it would be unfitting that any officer holding an appointment under the British crown should, either directly or indirectly, hold or be interested in slave-property.”⁵⁹² The term “unfitting” begs the question of what then was “fitting” behavior for British subjects overseas. Arguably, they were expected by their government to be good British officers and gentlemen, whatever that meant. Most likely, the term meant a version of *do not embarrass your senior officers or the government at whatever cost and follow the laws of your country*. Consuls were expected to be quiet, never complain about money or assignments, and be dutiful clerks. Instead, what resulted from their constantly being overlooked by the Foreign Office, were individuals whom the Foreign Office neither valued nor made them feel important. The service praised those men who held their tongues and never complained. The service endorsed men that used basic clerical, commercial, and occasional diplomatic skills to perform their jobs. Furthermore, these men lived with the expectation that they were likely to be criticized by a superior at any time telling them that they did something wrong and had to redo it in a different way. The key was to just take the abuse and not speak up.

According to the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society, the purpose of Lord Palmerston’s circular was to be “a beneficial influence on the minds of Englishmen residing” overseas and to “operate as a severe check to their holding

⁵⁹² British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society, *The Eight Annual Report of the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society* (London: J. Haddon, 1847), 90.

and in any other way mixing themselves up with the odious system of slavery.”⁵⁹³ One is not sure how the Foreign Secretary’s order could create a beneficial influence “on the *minds* of” English men and women living overseas. Because the Anti-Slavery Society had a religious origin, their statement meant that British Christians had their government’s moral or religious support for choosing not to participate in foreign slavery. While the term “unfitting” meant improper conduct, the term “severe” is a quandary. Perhaps the committee meant, “take a look at or check on” because the Foreign Secretary, as has been demonstrated, failed to exert any “severe” powers to check the conduct of British subjects abroad. However, the Foreign Office did have ultimate control over British consuls. At worst, if a consul embarrassed the Foreign Office, he could be reassigned or fired altogether. The punishment depended upon the severity of how much shame and embarrassment the consul’s actions inflicted upon the Foreign Office. The offense was embarrassment, not the actual crime.

Next, the Anti-Slavery Society organized and submitted petitions to the House of Lords in 1842 asking Parliament to restrict British citizens from certain activities. The Anti-Slavery Society informed Parliament that British subjects residing in foreign countries continued to defy British laws by continuing to buy and sell slaves. The society warned Parliament that “the purchase of, and holding slaves, by British subjects, if permitted to pass with impunity, is calculated to prejudice the vast efforts made by Great Britain for the suppression

⁵⁹³ Ibid.

of the slave-trade and the abolition of slavery.”⁵⁹⁴ Finally, the Society asked Parliament to “bring to just punishment, all the subjects of this country who may be guilty of such a crime.”⁵⁹⁵ Parliament responded by passing the 1843 Act that forbade all British subjects from owning slaves. But, as far as can be determined no one was ever prosecuted, as Mrs. Davidson’s case illustrates.

In 1843, the Anti-Slavery Society reported to Parliament that British subjects were still supporting slavery by “their mercantile transactions, and by investment of capital in mines and plantations, worked by slaves, in foreign countries...”⁵⁹⁶ The British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society condemned British subjects’ continued involvement in the trade and slavery. Society members believed that British citizens still supplied materials for the trade such as outfitting ships, making guns and manacles, and in other less direct ways such as banking practices that involved supplying money for the trade and slavery in the Atlantic world.⁵⁹⁷ According to circulars from the Foreign Secretary, they expected British consuls to display the latest anti-slavery acts. But there is no mention of the consuls themselves being expected to inform the office of any British subject

⁵⁹⁴ British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society, *The Fourth Annual Report of the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society* (London: Thomas Ward and Co., 1843), 102.

⁵⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 113.

⁵⁹⁷ Sherwood, *After Abolition*, 25.

living abroad who owned slaves. The consuls were only instructed to report their suspicions of persons involved in the Atlantic oceanic trade.⁵⁹⁸

Finally, in 1843 Parliament responded by passing an “Act for the More Effectual Suppression of the Slave Trade” to bring *all* British subjects, regardless of where they resided, under the same British law. The Act stipulated that “British subjects in foreign countries and settlements not belonging to the British crown, in the like manner and to all intents and purposes as if the same were done or committed by such persons within the British dominions, colonies, or settlements....”⁵⁹⁹ For example, the 1843 Act made it illegal for any British citizen to own slaves or participate in the trade, either directly or indirectly.⁶⁰⁰ Specifically, the act instructed British subjects *wherever residing* that it was unlawful:

For any person to deal or trade in, purchase, sale, barter, or transfer, of slaves, or persons intended to be dealt with as slaves; or to carry away or remove, or to contract for the carrying away or removing of slaves or other persons as or in order to their being dealt with as slaves; or to import or bring, or to contract for the importing or bringing, into any place whatsoever, slaves or other persons, as or in order to their being dealt with as slaves; or to ship, transship, embark, receive, detain, or confine on board, or to contract for the shipping, transshipping, embarking, receiving, detaining, or confining on board of any ship, vessel, or boat, slaves or other persons for the purpose of their being carried away or removed as or in order to their being dealt with as slaves; or to ship, transship, embark, receive, detain, or confine on board, or to

⁵⁹⁸ Ibid., 25-26.

⁵⁹⁹ British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society, *The Fourth Annual Report*, 115.

⁶⁰⁰ Sherwood, *After Abolition*, 165-166.

contract for the shipping, transshipping, embarking, receiving, detaining, or confining on board of any ship, vessel, or boat slaves or other persons for the purpose of their being imported or brought into any place whatsoever as or in order to their being dealt with as slaves....⁶⁰¹

Furthermore, the Act restricted British subjects from investing or lending monies for the slave trade. The passage of the measure in Parliament elated the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Societies. However, a grandfather clause in the act allowed joint stock companies established before the Act to continue to sell or own slaves and “those who may inherit them.”⁶⁰² This clause may have allowed Fanny Davidson and her sons and others like them to own slaves after 1833. But without a copy of their wills, it is impossible to know if the slaves were part of any joint-stock company ventures.

In the end, the British government succeeded in passing laws. Enforcing was something else again. The campaign by the Anti-Slavery Societies continued throughout the nineteenth century. As late as 1873, Parliament issued an Act forbidding British subjects in East Africa from owning slaves and this time the legislation made it a criminal offence. But the act did not provide any means of punishment and with no deterrents lax oversight continued.

⁶⁰¹ British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society, *The Fourth Annual Report*, 114-5.

⁶⁰² Sherwood, *After Abolition*, 182.

5.4 Rationale for the Foreign Office's Failure

The Foreign Office failed to make its members adhere to British abolitionist policies. This failure may have been because the Foreign Office was a homogenous network. Its kind of institutional culture understood that no one should expose others' illegal activities. A network system of close and friendly ties between elite friends and families from the top schools and other similar networking opportunities enforced the professional habit of the Foreign Office of taking care of their own quietly and discreetly far beyond the prying eyes of the British public. Moreover, the Foreign Office never wanted any of its consuls' illegal activities exposed to the governments of other countries. While it was not an illegal, collusive, or organized system, it was a continuous system that allowed the consuls in the South to break British laws with little or no punishment expected. Perhaps, it was a simple problem of enforcement. Maybe the British Foreign Office never possessed the means to enforce effectively the British consulates' obligation to adhere to their country's laws, at least those laws related to slavery and the trade in foreign places.

Britain's nineteenth-century efforts to eliminate the African slave trade were, if nothing else, grand and ambitious. For most of the century, Britain took the lead in the crusade. British treaties with foreign countries and the Royal Navy's efforts were time-consuming, expensive, and frustrating. Every Foreign Office Secretary pursued this policy because after 1808 British public opinion supported it. According to Middleton, no one in government had "much faith in succeeding" to end the trade and slavery wherever it existed, but "all were

committed to seeing it through.”⁶⁰³ Due to the efforts of the abolitionists, public opinion against the trade continued to influence foreign policy. Parliament reacted and Britain attempted every conceivable program. Those plans included establishing free colonies in Africa for former slaves, treaties allowing the Royal Navy to search foreign vessels looking for slaves, and attempts to limit British trade with foreign countries that refused to sign treaties promising to suppress or end their slave trade. British abolitionist identity depended upon the British Empire’s hegemony over slaveholding nations.

The government created laws that it could never conceivably enforce against its own citizenry. Policymakers continued a loud public profession of reform and humanitarianism, but failed to end the vicious cycle of abuse committed by some British subjects at home and abroad. The first of such laws was the 1811 Act making it a felony to trade in slaves. The only punishment listed was transportation.⁶⁰⁴ The 1811 Act sentenced citizens to overseas exile for 14 years. Exile would have been to the penal colony in New South Wales, Australia. The mandatory transportation language remained a part of the 1824

⁶⁰³ Middleton, *The Administration of British Foreign Policy*, 39-40.

⁶⁰⁴ For a history of British convict transportation, see Bruce Kercher, “Perish or Prosper: The Law and Convict Transportation in the British Empire, 1700 – 1850,” *Law and History Review* vol. 21, no. 3 (Fall 2003): 527-584. Beginning in 1788 after the loss of the American colonies, Britain began sending convicts to New South Wales.

and 1842 Consolidated Slave Trade Acts. However, one historian notes that no one was ever sentenced to “transportation.”⁶⁰⁵

The public profession of concern continued. In 1814, Parliament passed an act to prohibit British subjects from lending money to individuals or business that participated in the slave trade overseas. This act was also never enforced. The third legislative act was the 1824 consolidation of the 1807, 1814-15, 1818, 1822, and 1823 Slave Trade Acts that made slave trading a form of piracy punishable by death. However, no British subject was ever prosecuted under these Acts. In 1837, the death penalty clause was replaced with “transportation for life.”⁶⁰⁶

The extent to what commercial trade influenced Parliament’s political decisions on the slave trade during the first half of the nineteenth century remains to be determined. Middleton believes that trading and commercial considerations had a limited influence on British foreign policy decisions.⁶⁰⁷ However, it must have created a quandary for consuls in foreign ports because they had to live within the same local slave community where British policies should be enforced. For example, starting in 1815 as part of their overseas duties, Foreign Secretary Viscount Castlereagh charged the consuls with being

⁶⁰⁵ Sherwood, *After Abolition*, 172, 182

⁶⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 181.

⁶⁰⁷ Middleton, *The Administration of British Foreign Policy*, 41.

“vigilant against the slave trade.”⁶⁰⁸ However, that was all he said. He never went any further to explain exactly what he meant. This was just another public profession of what dutiful consuls should do, but without any practical direction. Furthermore, British consuls only had limited jurisdiction in overseas ports. They lacked enforcement power in foreign lands to control or combat the trade against anyone but British subjects. At best, they could report what they saw British subjects and foreign peoples were doing to the Foreign Office. As far as can be found, the Foreign Secretaries never issued enforcement commissions to the consuls for use against British subjects in the South. Nor did the Foreign Secretaries create any uniform method for consuls to share information about the slave trade with each other or the Foreign Office. Other than stating their political and perhaps personal beliefs, the Secretaries never articulated instructions explaining the procedures or processes the consuls were to use *to be vigilant against the slave trade*. Providing a general policy pronouncement of what the Secretaries wanted the consuls’ job description to include differed greatly from the practical or legal enforcement of that position’s description.

The British Foreign Office failed to do many things to address the issue of slavery. No longer can one believe that all British consuls stationed in the South supported their country’s anti-slavery laws. Nevertheless, perhaps there were other reasons for their lapses. One such reason might be that they felt overwhelmed by insurmountable challenges that limited their ability to defend

⁶⁰⁸ Ibid., 248.

effectively or promote their country's anti-slavery policies and beliefs. They felt hopeless taking up a crusade against the slaveholding society in which they lived. There was usually only one full-time British consul for the entire state. This person operated in a small temporary office without guards or protection. Even though the Foreign Office charged the consul with enforcing British laws, customs, and traditions, he acted alone. The Foreign Office did not send support, but it issued job responsibilities and obligations. Because there were large numbers of slaveholders surrounding the British consuls in the South, some consuls made friends with those around them. Possibly, they liked each other on a personal level. Conceivably some of those friendships were important to them as fathers, church members, civic leaders, bank board members, and regional traders. Within these boundaries, they found common ground, creating and cultivating lifelong friendships together on issues separate and apart from slavery.

Another reason the consuls failed was that they felt that the local community viewed them as outsiders, since they were not born in the United States and specifically were not from the South. While their social position gained them some entrance into the best homes and oldest families, it would be a limited entrance and often at arms' length. This usually meant the consul had ready access to transact business with the prominent local men. But to go beyond the occasional dinner invitation required some form of marriage eligibility. An unmarried and charming consul certainly had much to offer and received invitations to visit the slaveholding class as a suitable and potential mate for the

local plantation daughters. A married consul might arrive with children of marrying age. Social and family networks defined the southern classes. Doors opened to those who joined their ranks through marriage. The “outsider” label would over time lessen as the consul and his family assimilated into the local elite and that community. Furthermore, having friends who socialized every week may have meant more than losing those close connections to a distant homeland’s moral or ethical convictions. Friends became valuable commodities for outsiders in a foreign land. The Foreign Office was a remote bureaucratic entity across the Atlantic, while neighbors and friends lived just down the street. Perhaps, for some consuls, it did not matter if those friends were involved in immoral or illegal activities as defined in Britain. Friendships conceivably, for some consuls, meant a more familiar connection than did their homeland.

Possibly, some community members viewed the consuls as meddlesome interlopers from the British government sent to judge them. The pro-slavery members of the local hierarchy would immediately distrust any foreign national criticizing slavery. Besides, for the handful of surviving Revolutionary patriots, British arrogance was all too familiar. For those survivors and their immediate families, a newly arrived British consul might not be a welcome guest greeted with open arms. If the consul remained, at least to those sharing patriotic feelings, then he had to know his place and stay within his realm of influence. As long as the consul limited his authority to engaging in commercial relations, he would be tolerated or endured. Some locals would never accept British consuls

that recited British laws to slave owners and then judged them for the “wrongs” they committed on Southern soil.

5.5 The Inability to Carry Out the Acts

This discussion demonstrates that the Foreign Office knew that not all British citizens were abolitionists. The problem was that the government as a whole was extremely slow to implement its antislavery policies. Parliament failed on many occasions. Parliament failed to deal effectively with the issue of Britons supplying slaving vessels and slave traders with trade goods. Parliament failed to deal with the issue of British capital funding vessels and traders. Parliament failed to confront issues of British companies and officials on the East Coast of Africa engaged in illegal slave activities. Parliament failed to halt British companies and officials in the Americas when they participated in slavery or the trade.

After 1833, British policymakers believed that they had achieved British moral preeminence by ending slavery in the British West Indies. Therefore, they focused on ending the Atlantic trade. That effort, though, ebbed and flowed in the Foreign Office depending upon who was the Foreign Secretary. For example, during the 1830s, Lord Palmerston only occasionally discussed with the Lord of the Admiralty, Sir James Graham, the effectiveness of the British Royal Navy’s efforts in combating the Atlantic slave trade.⁶⁰⁹ After Queen Victoria assumed the crown at the age of eighteen in 1837, her ministers created and

⁶⁰⁹ Ibid., 5.

wrote British foreign policy, often not asking for her confidence or advice. Increasing their power each year while in office, the Cabinet and Parliament established the foreign policy rules and regulations without fear of interference from the Crown. Therefore, foreign policy for much of the nineteenth century reflected the personal tastes, idiosyncrasies, and attitudes of the British prime ministers and his cabinets.

Parliament reflected the political atmosphere and environment of the time. Its actions were reactionary, seldom proactive. One reason why Parliament refused to act on occasions was because of changes within government leadership. Changes in leadership affected the campaign for abolition. In 1841 a new Tory Foreign Secretary, Lord Aberdeen, and a new Colonial Secretary, Lord Stanley, came to power. Aberdeen was most interested in promoting British commercial interests in the Atlantic world, not wars, or even a war against slavery. According to one historian, these men were not the fervent abolitionists that their predecessors had been, and in 1841 they stopped the introduction of a report detailing and naming certain British subjects' involvement in the West African slave trade.⁶¹⁰ This demonstrates that the British government was intensely interested in maintaining the appearance of British preeminence. Lord Stanley justified his refusal to produce the highly damaging document because of its "sensitive" nature.⁶¹¹ Embarrassment to the Foreign Office and the

⁶¹⁰ Sherwood, *After Abolition*, 168.

⁶¹¹ *Ibid.*

government in power meant more than combating the trade against its own citizens, people sometimes known to be involved in the trade. In the end, Foreign Secretary Lord Aberdeen in December 1843 acquiesced to protests and issued a memorandum prohibiting British subjects residing in foreign countries from owning slaves.

In 1847, Foreign Secretary Lord Palmerston sent another circular to consuls informing them that no British subjects could own slaves as payment received from debts due.⁶¹² Apparently, Palmerston and the government understood that British subjects loaned money to borrowers secured by slaves. When the slave owners defaulted on the loans, British subjects were selling the slaves for monies due. Edmund Molyneux was one of those actively doing this up to the Civil War.

The government found itself in a dubious position when it had to deal with individual cases of British slave ownership. Each situation became unique, and the Foreign Office's answer depended upon the idiosyncratic, the peculiar cases, the personalities, the locations, and not whole groups of British subjects in any one foreign location. Britain simply could not stop individual cases of British ownership of slaves in the American South. Perhaps government leaders and policymakers ignored its citizens in the U.S. because there was little point in doing otherwise. What could the Foreign Secretary and Parliament really do

⁶¹² Lord Palmerston to Edmund Molyneux Her Majesty's Consul in Savannah, 19 March 1847, Great Britain. Consulate, Savannah Papers, 1816-1875, Duke Special Collections Library, Duke University, North Carolina.

when the principle, the image, of British preeminence had to be maintained? To expose its failure meant British hegemony over slaveholding communities would certainly be damaged.

British consuls were required to recognize, according to the circular distributed, that they could be held subject to “legal penalties.” However, the circulars never stipulated exactly what the legal penalties were: fines, jail time, or loss of position? Nevertheless, the circulars made clear that the government’s opinion also applied to slaves seized in probate. This meant that no British subjects could own slaves by will or an estate payment of debts.⁶¹³

On 19 March 1847, Palmerston issued a dispatch to his consuls stationed in all foreign ports informing them of the illegality of British subjects owning slaves in foreign countries. Molyneux certainly ignored the circular and so too did Atkins Hamerton, the British consul stationed in Zanzibar. India had already become a British protectorate and since several hundred Indians owned an estimated 20,000 slaves in Zanzibar, Hamerton felt that his hands were tied. Hamerton believed that he could not act on the order because he did not believe that the Indians understood Great Britain’s opposition to slavery.⁶¹⁴ As a result, Hamerton did not interfere with Indian ownership of slaves in his region. The previous year, Hamerton had informed Lord Aberdeen that he was limited in

⁶¹³ Lord Palmerston to Edmund Molyneux Her Majesty’s Consul in Savannah, 19 March 1847, Great Britain. Consulate, Savannah Papers, 1816-1875, Duke Special Collections Library, Duke University, North Carolina.

⁶¹⁴ Nwulia, *Britain and Slavery*, 66-67.

terms of what he could do to enforce British laws against the slave trade in Zanzibar.

[The consul] does not possess the means of enforcing the suppression of the export of slaves from his dominions further than giving orders to that effect. He has not a single ship in what is called 'commission': he has neither officers nor seamen, only five empty ships. But even if he had ships in commission with proper equipment, they would not enforce his orders. Indeed, the probability is that, notwithstanding what orders they might receive from the Imam, his officers would certainly be bribed and most likely do a little business in the Slave Trade on their own account.⁶¹⁵

The exact number of British subjects, either native or from India, who lived in the region and owned slaves is unknown. Whatever the number, Britain's consuls stationed in slave communities in any part of the world did not prohibit British subjects, however defined, from owning slaves or being involved in the slave trade. In short, Britain's abolitionist identity problem became global, not just transatlantic.

Furthermore, a review of the Foreign Office records confirms confusion among the consuls because their orders from the Foreign Office left them with many more questions than answers. Consuls felt divided between carrying out their official duties and living amidst the remainder of their British community abroad. Therefore, in a sense they became alienated from both. They were doubly foreign.

⁶¹⁵ Ibid., 65. Quoting Hamerton's dispatch to the Foreign Secretary dated September 28, 1846.

Sometimes the consuls failed to reply to the Slave Trade circulars. For example in America's South, Molyneux failed to reply to the Foreign Office's 17 February 1854 Slave Trade Circular regarding the status of the repeal of the Negro Seaman's Act in Georgia. The consul explained that it was an "extraordinary oversight" on his part. In his delayed reply on 5 April 1855, Molyneux acknowledged receiving a copy of a Georgia law relating to "colored" seamen who arrived in port. The act he refers to was Georgia's recent repeal of the Negro Seamen's Act that required colored seamen to be quarantined for 40 days upon arrival in port. Molyneux declared

Her Majesty's Government as you are aware, have carefully abstained from interference in this matter, and have never doubted that in time the liberal spirit which animates the legislature of Georgia would bring about the desired reforms.⁶¹⁶

While he appeased the Foreign Office by convincing them of Georgia's "liberal spirit" of reform, he really was just telling the Foreign Office what they wanted to hear. Oddly, he spent a year neglecting the circular. Not once did he inform the Foreign Office about Georgia's legislative actions or inactions. Nor did he inform the Foreign Office of any of his own actions for its repeal. Was the correspondence not important? He appeared to have recently found the circular, perhaps missed in the volume of paperwork on his desk. He responded to the other numerous papers he received, so why was he late to respond to this one? There seemed a sense of urgency to respond in 1855 that did not exist in 1854.

⁶¹⁶ Edmund Molyneux to Foreign Office, 5 April 1855, Great Britain. Consulate, Savannah Papers, 1816-1875, Duke Special Collections Library, Duke University, North Carolina.

His words go on to appear to state an abolitionist's interest in Parliament's efforts to repeal the Negro Seamen's Act. He wrote,

That expectation has not been disappointed, and as the lively interest taken by Her Majesty's Government in this subject is notorious, they think it will not be displeasing to the speaker of the House and the President of the Senate to be informed of the satisfaction which the Act in question has caused to her Majesty's Government, and you will therefore take a fitting opportunity of making that communication to those Honorable Gentlemen.⁶¹⁷

What was he hoping to accomplish with this correspondence? Was he really praising British efforts to protect black seamen or was there an underlying irony in his tone? What did he mean by "Her Majesty's Government (interests) in this subject is notorious"? Was this sarcasm? Did he really believe that the Foreign Secretary would relay a message on to the United States Speaker of the House and the President of the Senate? Oddly, he went on to sign the correspondence with "your most obedient humble servant, Edmund."⁶¹⁸ The manner in which he signed his name indicates that something was definitely wrong. Of the numerous official and nonofficial communications written and signed by Molyneux, he never once signed documents with his first name. Instead, he always signed them with E. Molyneux. So, what was Molyneux really attempting to imply in this letter? There appeared to be more underlying implications than the words written. In the

⁶¹⁷ Edmund Molyneux to Foreign Office, 5 April 1855, Great Britain. Consulate, Savannah Papers, 1816-1875, Duke Special Collections Library, Duke University, North Carolina.

⁶¹⁸ Edmund Molyneux to Foreign Office, 5 April 1855, Great Britain. Consulate, Savannah Papers, 1816-1875, Duke Special Collections Library, Duke University, North Carolina.

letter is there another conversation going on between Molyneux and the Foreign Office?

Did any of the consuls' relatives, business contacts, or business organizations interfere with British foreign policy of abolition? Yes, but perhaps only indirectly. For example, Molyneux's family had long and close relations with at least one Liverpool slaver, Thomas Leyland. Thomas Leyland lived from 1752 to 1827 and made his fortune from being a privateer, slave trader, and merchant. He was also active in local government as a member of the Liverpool Chamber of Commerce, city bailiff, town councilor, and even served as mayor three times in 1798, 1814, and 1820. Furthermore, he became interested in finance and created his own banking partnership, Leyland and Bullin, which operated until 1901. Granted, his slave-trading activities took place during the time when participation was legal. However, even more importantly, he was a close business associate of Thomas Molyneux, Edmund's uncle. Perhaps this contact led Molyneux along that same path.

5.6 Conclusion

The Foreign Office could have tried to use trade or economic policies against the South to influence abolition, which would have included giving trade advantages to the region. Another option would have been trade incentives, in an attempt to get the South to conform to the British government's desire to end slavery. Or the government could have used trade penalties as a form of

punishment. But none of these would have worked against the southern states because English factories needed the South's cotton.

The last option in the tools of Foreign Policy was military intervention. A war with the U.S. would most likely have involved a multi-front war that was as unfeasible as it was exceedingly expensive. Neither the prime minister nor Parliament wanted to use this option. Naval patrols to end the Atlantic trade were expensive enough. After the outbreak of the Civil War, Britain sought cotton from India and Egypt. War with the U.S. was truly not an option, no matter how much the Confederacy wanted it.⁶¹⁹

British policies towards the slave trade, slave ownership, and involvement in slavery economics continued to exhibit the odd phenomenon of, on the one hand, Britain publicly attacking these crimes as defined by Parliament and, on the other, abetting these crimes at the same time. British leaders had convinced themselves that humanitarian motivations and actions were more effective as language and rhetoric than as actual deeds. Policy leaders knew British citizens owned slaves and were involved in the slave trade. This study documents that in the South some consuls and British subjects continued to own slaves in violation of British laws. The Foreign Office should have known from the curious replies sent by its consuls that, to an extent, the trade continued unabated. The consuls

⁶¹⁹ However in the 1840s, British abolitionists were interested in creating a free Texas Republic without slavery. For a discussion of British interest in Texas, see Sam Haynes, "Manifest Destiny's Filibusters" in *Manifest Destiny and Empire: American Antebellum Expansionism* ed. Sam W. Haynes and Christopher Morris (College Station: Texas A & M University Press, 1997), 146-79.

never effectively influenced Southern slaveholding communities with their “moral authority” or their “moral influences.” Some consuls and subjects studied here violated their own country’s laws in foreign places. Surprisingly, no British subject was ever charged, tried, sentenced, or jailed. Whatever the reasons, long after 1833, the Foreign Office failed to enforce abolition on unwilling or at least reluctant British subjects in the antebellum South.

CHAPTER 6
CONCLUSION

Illusions commend themselves to us because they save us pain and allow us to enjoy pleasure instead. We must therefore accept it without complaint when they sometimes collide with a bit of reality against which they are dashed to pieces.⁶²⁰

Sigmund Freud

This study has shown that the British government faced numerous difficulties when attempting to enforce British political and moral ethics on foreign nationals and, at times, on her own reluctant subjects. British consuls in the South served Britain for a plethora of reasons, personal and economic. Not the least of these included financial opportunities that would otherwise not have been available. What made these consular positions unique and desirable was their ability to bring wealth and prestige to those holding such posts. Consular positions also might bring wealth and prestige to their families back in Britain. But maintaining one's post was not a simple matter. As the leadership of Britain changed, so too did the British Foreign Service. Loyalty to the national government over all else was the expected norm from consuls in all locations. However, the single most important challenge for any British consul was the test in maintaining his British identity on foreign soil.

⁶²⁰ Sigmund Freud, *Reflections on War and Death* (New York: Moffat, Yard, and Co., 1918), 16-17.

The southern port cities of Charleston, Mobile, Norfolk, New Orleans, and Savannah held a particular importance to Britain from the early nineteenth century until the Civil War. These cities were the largest exporters of cotton not only to the world but also specifically to British manufacturing facilities. The rise of industrialization in Britain led to the need for more cotton from the South; therefore, the significance of British consuls rose.

Loyalty to the Foreign Service above one's own city became a requirement for any consular position. While Foreign Secretaries came and went, a professional clerical staff remained at the Foreign Office and performed the bulk of the day-to-day work. That is not to say that each secretary did not place his own distinct brand on his term. For example, each secretary made small changes on how the Foreign Service was run. But it was the Prime Minister who established what were to be the important foreign policies during his tenure and it was up to the Foreign Secretary to implement those policies. One revelation from this research was that the Foreign Office failed to enforce certain parliamentary acts and laws abroad on British subjects. Perhaps the office at the time lacked enforcement power, or the Foreign Secretary for his *own* reasons refused to enforce legislative acts as they pertained to British subjects who owned slaves. Nevertheless, there were no fewer than seven individuals who rose to power through the patronage system and served as Foreign Secretary from 1830 to 1866, and none of them enforced the 1841 British subjects' slaveholding restriction act on any British subject in the South.

By all accounts, Lord Palmerston was the hardest-working Foreign Secretary during his several terms and was also a defender of British abolitionist principles. His work ethic set the standard by which all other Foreign Secretaries were gauged. For example, he never delegated tasks to under-secretaries when he could do it himself, laboring long hours into the night to complete the day's workload. With the abolition of slavery in 1833, a new era entered the Foreign Service. The reputation of British preeminence had to be maintained in the Atlantic world and the British Foreign Service was just one of the branches of government that could be used to maintain that position. Britain would try to halt the expansion and even growth of slavery wherever it could in the Atlantic world. The interruption and stoppage of the Atlantic Slave Trade became a primary feature of the Foreign Service. While Palmerston had a zeal to destroy slavery, several of his successors did not. Policymakers would try to stem the Atlantic slave trade using a two-pronged attack. First, they used British naval dominance to patrol the Atlantic Ocean in search of slave ships. Second, they negotiated treaties and created economic incentives with slaveowning countries to the end that slavery would cease in those communities.

At home, the government revised some of the duty requirements of their consuls and diplomats around the world to include informing the Office about slavery and the slave trade. All evidence suggests that the British Foreign Office ran as effectively and efficiently as the person in charge and that the Foreign Secretary set the tone for the office and the direction of attempts to end the Atlantic slave trade and British involvement in slavery. While the British navy

carried out their duties to the best of its abilities in the Atlantic Ocean and along the coastlines of Africa and the Americas, consuls at the Southern port cities were left to their own devices on most occasions. The patronage system permeated and characterized the Foreign Office until the end of World War II. While the patronage system remained in effect, it often allowed men of dubious distinction to obtain positions that they would not otherwise have had. Consular positions did not necessarily go to those with the best qualifications, but to those with the closest ties to powerful and important people. This often led to consuls being stationed in locations where their knowledge of the culture, traditions, and sometimes language was lacking. This caused problems in living and in conducting business arrangements in the foreign regions. Most often, consuls flourished in areas where they understood the customs and culture, while they wilted in regions where they did not understand these societies. Consuls abroad were usually out of place and lacked instruction regarding their duties, and could do more harm than good for British trade. A change was needed to reflect the demands upon those in the consular service and a stronger method to control consuls located on foreign soil.

The final change did not occur until after World War II, when the consular service became a professional service. One early change, however, came during the tenure of George Canning. Canning passed the reformatory Consular Act in 1825, which made the consular service a more respected and esteemed vocation. Still, the consular service never had the political influence, recognition, or power that the diplomatic service had. Even after passage of Canning's act,

some British individuals continued to seek these posts to increase their personal wealth, and other influential individuals later began to seek the position because of its *perceived* importance. One unexpected gain from Canning's reform was that more people began to seek the position, which allowed for more diversity to the service. Persons who were not merchants, for example, began to apply for the position. Therefore, in effect Canning's changes added new demography to those seeking consulships. While specific duties were required of all consuls, there remained no specific qualification expected of consuls. As long as consuls performed the many duties expected of them in a timely manner, they could expect to maintain their positions. Embarrassments to the Foreign Service or too many complaints about their service, or pay, or requests for privileges were the main causes for removal.

One of the major problems faced daily by these consuls was the fact that they lived on the empire's periphery. They were expected to remain British, but at the same time they had to blend in with the local populations. Every community's society has a social stratification that could cause potential problems for the consuls upon arrival and during their tenure. Class is an entity that is constantly shifting and changing based upon the transformation within the culture, customs, and traditions. Identities and communities do not remain static: they are constantly undergoing alteration.

Britain during the nineteenth century had a clear class structure, which defined job placement and advancement. This class delineation also limited those who could serve as either a diplomat or a consul. Members of the British

aristocracy joined the diplomatic corps, while members of the merchant class or retired military officers could join the consular service. The Foreign Office was permeated with class-oriented prejudices that strictly limited opportunities for advancement of consuls. Transferring from the consular service to the diplomatic corps never became an option. One of the worst features of the consular service was the shortage of promotions and low pay. To the leaders of the British Foreign Office, consuls lacked the appropriate lineage or patronage for advancement. Even though consuls were members of the merchant class, they did have one advantage at their duty locations. They could usually set up or extend their businesses, whose income could augment their own poor consular salaries.

Those consuls stationed in the South had another advantage; they had the opportunity to gain wealth and move into the upper southern class structure. However, maintaining an upper-class lifestyle carried with it many financial burdens. Consuls were expected to live in a certain manner with the appropriate staff, which was expensive. The Foreign Office paid little attention to the consuls and their private lives so long as no embarrassments to the Foreign Office took place. While being a consul was a lower government position in Britain, in most cases American southerners perceived consuls as having a higher-class status. Since most consuls were insulated in foreign communities, far away from their family and friends in Britain, they began upon arrival to seek out their *perceived* social equals for business contacts, camaraderie, and socialization. They relied on these individuals to introduce them into the proper social circles and help

them through the local customs, traditions, and language barriers, if required. Rejection or indifference by the Foreign Office to the consuls usually meant that the consuls sought out a means of fulfillment in the community in which they worked. The lack of advancement within the Foreign Office often led to attempts at economic and social improvement at their duty location. Involvement in the local economy, such as the cotton trade, fulfilled their aspirations within the local British and merchant community. This involvement brought them community recognition, because the consular service came with very few rewards. Consular service in a foreign community was a way to feel important even if that recognition was only within a foreign community.

Interestingly, despite few rewards and low pay, merchants aspired increasingly to become consuls. Many merchants applied for consular positions and continued to apply after Canning's reformatory legislation. However, with Canning's reform many persons other than merchants began to apply for service as well. Although many applied for these low-level government positions, they had no idea what awaited them upon their acceptance into the service. From the beginning, they were unprepared. For example, travel to a foreign community was not always easy. There were multitudes of problems associated with travel, such as logistics, costs, and timing.

British consuls who traveled to their new duty stations in the early-to-mid nineteenth century became the eyes and ears of the British empire and the Foreign Office. They often recorded their travels using diaries and other correspondence, both official and unofficial to the Foreign Office. Even while

most consuls sent to the South came with the intention of promoting British commercial relations, their correspondences, interpretations, and the documentation during their tenure are fascinating and reveal what these individuals encountered. The consuls lived a conflicted existence, trying desperately to maintain their British identities, but with their identities ultimately being defined by *each* consul. For consuls such as James, Ogilby, and Waring, they reported that they found themselves in conflict with upholding the policies of the British Foreign Office on abolition, yet knowing they had to live within the slaveholding community where they were stationed. In order to survive and thrive within their new communities, the consuls quickly learned to become “doubly foreign.”

By being doubly foreign, this study contends that the consuls became transatlantic nationals living at a foreign duty station, not truly belonging to their new surroundings, and far from their comfortable and acknowledged homeland. While in essence they were paid volunteers that worked for the Foreign Office, they did not intentionally migrate to the South; they were told where their assignments would be. Individuals stationed in remote or foreign locations more often than not encounter the inevitable clash of cultures, customs, traditions, and ideologies. When difficulties arose at these locations, the consuls sought out those connections that were familiar to them—connections that emphasized British culture and community. Comfort was important as these consuls worked to blend into these British communities in southern port cities. Because most southern communities viewed these consuls as foreign nationals, the locals had

a propensity to be reticent in their immediate acceptance of the consuls into their social circles and community. However, what stands out as being the largest issue causing these consuls to be doubly foreign in the South was their government's and their own individual stances on slavery and abolition. Once stationed in the South, consuls needed to create a new transnational persona, one neither truly British nor southern. This self-created hybrid identity had to be acceptable to both the British communities abroad and the local slaveholders with whom they lived and with whom they had economic and personal contacts.

After accepting their positions, the consuls were legally bound to promote the British abolitionist policies wherever in the world that they were stationed. However, there were certain locations that these policies caused an abundance of problems for the consuls, since they often found themselves not only living but also marrying and working in ports or cities where the local laws conflicted with British policies. It is the examination of these consuls' lives, specifically those assigned to the South that offers a distinctive perspective into U.S. slavery, its people, and culture prior to the Civil War. Several different types of correspondences - such as a diary, official and unofficial correspondences - support the concept that British consuls assigned to the South became conflicted both ethically and morally between following the abolitionist policies of the Foreign Office or potentially going native and openly participating in the system that they were obligated to help hasten its extinction—slavery. Of special interest is whether any of these consuls, overtly or covertly, participated in the Atlantic slave trade or slavery itself. Did any of these consuls knowingly and willingly

become members of the American slaveholding class in which they lived and worked for most of their lives? Did they become doubly foreign by splitting their identities between two communities, or just live in one and put on a façade for the other community?

Apart from each consul's moral stance on slavery, most of those who lived within the South from 1830 to 1860 created a transnational or transatlantic identity that was neither completely British nor Southern, but a combination of both. This led them to build a public yet shadowy life on the empire's periphery. This study has attempted to discover the true progression of a consul's transnational identity or community assimilation, being a systematic examination of their migration as recorded by them over the course of their careers in the South. This examination of the migration processes provides a construct for understanding transatlantic identity-building.

Migration scholars have divided it into a three-step process. Migration requires a physical movement of people from one country to another. This first phase is followed by the settlement phase, which requires the new immigrant to adjust to his new surroundings and community. Last comes the consolidation phase where immigrants in some manner are assimilated into the local community. Each of the British Foreign Office consuls went through at least one, if not two of these phases, and for one, all three.

The British Foreign Office was responsible for the establishment of consulates in foreign capitals and other ports and cities where there was either a large contingent of British subjects or a potential for significant amounts of trade.

British consuls living in these locations fulfilled two distinct requirements: procuring trade and acting on behalf of the local British community. Applicants acquired consular positions through the patronage system. Once they obtained their posts, though, they were at the whim of the Foreign Office. Usually there were no avenues open for promotion, even if one did manage to get the assignment of their choice. Only the attributes of persistence or familiarity with the Foreign Secretary might reassign a consul to a better duty station. There were no guarantees within the consular service. Once assigned to a duty location, the new consul could normally expect to remain there for the tenure of his term in the Foreign Office or until the Foreign Secretary changed his location. The evidence examined in this study points to the conclusion that the majority of consuls were ill-prepared for their assignments and duty stations.

This dissertation has examined several consuls with the aim of trying to determine whether their identities within their imagined community abroad changed during any of the migration phases. One such consul was William Ogilby, who was a newly appointed consul for Charleston. Historians get a rare understanding through the eyes of Ogilby, at least for the first year of his appointment, based upon his diary. Once he obtained his credentials and posting to Charleston, Ogilby hesitated to take his post. Quickly after the posting, he felt the upcoming loneliness that would arise from traveling for his career thousands of miles away from home. He even managed to delay his departure by requesting a three-month furlough to visit several relatives in Ireland.

Upon his arrival in New York on his way to Charleston, Ogilby found that he had not been doomed to “durance vile,” as he had originally assumed. He found New York to be a picturesque place as far as the scenery went, but complained when he was detained at the quarantine station. However, his detention was short-lived and Ogilby continued his journey toward Charleston. Before he left, Ogilby enjoyed the city life of New York in more than one way; his brother, Leonard, lived there and he was able to meet him. As compared to other consuls, Ogilby was not completely alone, for he had at least one family member connection living there. Unlike other consuls, Ogilby had a migratory connection to his destination whereas many others had no ties in America or to the South once they arrived.

Ogilby is a prime example of a consul who only managed to progress through two phases of the migration process during his tenure of office. While he physically moved to his new duty station in Charleston and eventually settled into his surroundings and adjusted to the local community, he never truly assimilated himself into the community to become one of the locals. Ogilby continued to miss Britain and wanted to retain his British identity. However, Ogilby became the “accepted outsider” within the South community. While in Charleston, he purposely limited his participation in slavery by hiring slaves as domestics, but otherwise he sought to follow the policies of the British Foreign Office. An examination of consuls such as Ogilby stationed in the South reveals not only a candid and usually unpleasant reality of what they thought of their transatlantic brethren, but also their views of antebellum slavery. Ogilby’s words and actions

reveal that within his *own definition* of what it meant to be British, he retained his British identity.

To Ogilby, being Her Majesty's consul meant never giving up or denying his Britishness. During his tenure in Charleston, he came across writings where authors tended to apologize for being from Scotland or of other places. Ogilby thought that there was no excuse or reason for a man to express being ashamed of his country. He was fiercely loyal to Britain and his post as consul. He never fully moved into the third migration phase of assimilation. After fourteen years of living among southerners, Ogilby asked to retire due to ill health and the feelings of mistrust that had arisen in his opinion between the South and Great Britain. He went on to express his inability to carry out his duties based upon his declining influence in the local community. Without knowing it, Ogilby had assimilated to a small degree within Charleston. He had created a transatlantic identity that existed somewhere between being truly British and fully accepting the southern way of life. Ogilby was a man who had become "doubly foreign" in his loyalties to his beloved England and the friendships that he had acquired over the last fourteen years in the South. He now sought a way out by returning to his home country that he so dearly loved.

The settlement phase was most often the hardest to complete. Settlement or assimilation was not a rapid or an easy process for most transnational travelers. One of the largest problems with assimilation during the nineteenth century for an Englishman was his perceived lowering of his British cultural standards to the more informal southern standards. American standards

were simply too casual for most British consuls. Another settlement problem was that the wages paid by the Foreign Office were far too low to defray completely the cost of living. Most consuls supplemented their incomes through business transactions or by forming their own merchant or shipping businesses in the port cities. In other words, the Foreign Office allowed these men to function as merchants as well as government representatives. The modern concept of a conflict of interest simply did not exist in the nineteenth-century world. To most consuls, taking a post in the South meant leaving the finer aspects of British civilization, such as theater and arts, that could only be found at home or in the larger American northern cities. Another problem with assimilation was the physical separation from home. Physical separation took on many forms. Consuls felt separated from not only family and friends but also from the Foreign Office and their supervisors, which had the unintended potential to cause emotional and family problems. For example, transatlantic travel to visit family in Britain was rare for consuls due to its prohibitive cost and distance, as well as the time limits that the Foreign Office placed on consuls wanting to return home for visits.

While the majority of the consuls sent to their duty stations in the South remained for the most part followers of abolition, one clearly and certainly went native. Edmund Molyneux, the consul in Savannah, Georgia, went completely native and assimilated fully into the slaveholding classes. Consuls such as William Ogilby, James Baker, and G.P.R. James did not completely assimilate into Southern society and stayed the course in most instances to uphold the

Foreign Office's policies. However, the opportunities available for a consul in the South were immense, if he were only willing to set aside his British morals and ethics. Operating on the empire's periphery allowed men such as Edmund Molyneux to participate openly in the Southern plantation and slave trading businesses. His family's background as merchants in Savannah provided him an advantage other consuls lacked. This circumstance had been one of the main reasons that Molyneux sought out and obtained the consular position at an important Southern cotton-exporting port such as Savannah.

Molyneux's desire to become an important merchant at the port sped up his migration process. However, having a family member already present who knew the local community well greatly helped move that process. Edmund Molyneux's younger brother, Anthony, had preceded Edmund as Savannah's consul. The Molyneux family had a long and prosperous past as merchants in Liverpool, England. It was his past, culminating with his greed or the desire to make money, that led Edmund Molyneux to seek out and obtain a consular position in Savannah. Once there, he became intensely determined to succeed as a merchant as well as a consul. Without implemented restrictions on his outside work, Molyneux was free to pursue his ambition as a cotton merchant. It was the most profitable of businesses in the antebellum period.

While other consuls who wanted to retain their British identity took their migration processes more slowly, Molyneux assimilated fast due to his financial desires or perhaps due to his larger than life personality. If he wanted to become a respected and accepted Savannah cotton merchant, he quickly learned that he

would have to become a member of the local elite. He began by opening his business, a cotton merchant house at 70 Bay Street by the river. During his tenure as Savannah's consul, Molyneux continually attempted to increase his wealth through a multitude of means, such as owning or helping to operate several cotton merchant establishments. He went so far as to sell fire insurance in the United States through a London-based company to supplement his income, which was already being increased by the fees that he could charge as a consul. Molyneux began as a British foreign national and then completely assimilated into the local community, becoming doubly foreign.

Molyneux was more of the exception than the rule when it came to British consuls in the South. His actions, however, called into question the work and actions of the other consuls. Molyneux was the consummate politician during his long tenure at Savannah that ran from 1831 to 1863. He was the only consul to serve at one location for 32 years. A detailed examination of his tenure in office proved him to be a merchant, consul, and illusionist. His consular duties were the same as many of the other Southern port consuls; however, what made Molyneux stand out was his financial acumen. His greatest financial gains occurred mainly after his marriage. Molyneux became truly doubly foreign and better assimilated into the local Savannah community by 1834 when he married Eliza Harriet Johnston, a member of the local slaveholding class. He was now one with the locals and his identity further blurred when his new wife and her family were plantation owners. She brought nineteen slaves with her into the marriage as part of her dowry.

In 1841, the British government made it illegal for British citizens anywhere in the world to participate in slavery in any manner. After this law was passed, Molyneux did not change the manner in which he operated. He was already firmly entrenched into the Southern way of life that included owning and trading in slaves. To further his wealth, Molyneux not only actively participated in slavery economics as a cotton merchant, but also as a private moneylender. He began loaning money to important individuals in the Savannah area and they in turn, would provide him with collateral against their loans. Early in this business phase, the collateral was usually land, but soon it included slaves. Molyneux fully assimilated himself into the local community and made money along with other slave owners. However, this local persona was not the one that he revealed to the Foreign Office or Secretary when answering correspondence or questionnaires that he received. His responses to the 1843 slave trade questionnaire, sent to all consuls in the U.S. South, show an astounding knowledge of the plantation and slave trading businesses. Molyneux had truly become doubly foreign in his actions with the Foreign Office.

A highly profitable slave trade business continued between the two port cities of Savannah and Charleston. Records indicate that Molyneux shipped slaves or participated in the slave trade business no less than *twenty* times during his tenure as consul in Savannah. Couple this revelation with the fact that his wife brought nineteen slaves to their marriage with no indication of manumission for them. Upon the death of one of Molyneux's closest friends, Patrick Gibson, Molyneux became executor and benefactor of thirty-four slaves.

His correspondence shows that four of these slaves were being educated in the North; when the consul took over as executor, he continued this practice for only an additional year, and later demanded their return. Their freedom was eventually guaranteed, but not without a fight that involved Molyneux's superiors at the Foreign Office.

When Molyneux's ownership of these slaves became known to the Foreign Office, his public stance to the Foreign Office on the issue of emancipation versus slavery changed. He did not wish to embarrass the British Foreign Office and potentially lose his lucrative post at Savannah. Molyneux knew that losing his consular position meant possibly losing his cotton merchant business plus lending opportunities in the U.S. South and Savannah. Therefore, he became the master of illusion and made the pretext to the Foreign Office of ensuring the emancipation of these slaves to Trinidad. It was only the threat of exposure as a slaveholder and owner that caused Molyneux to take this course of action; otherwise, he intended to sell the men and women and keep the profits. Molyneux was a consummate civil servant and a most capable illusionist. He had completely changed his identity and assimilated into the Southern way of life in Savannah. Close examination of his actions shows that he was entirely *doubly foreign* in his actions and deeds with the Foreign Office.

Britain's desire to maintain her preeminence, or at least the appearance of such in the Atlantic World, could quickly become undone through any embarrassing situation dealing with slavery and a British citizen's involvement with it. However, Molyneux was not the only British citizen who disregarded the

1841 Act that prohibited the owning or trading in slaves. Take the curious case of Fanny Davidson, who bequeathed slaves located in Virginia to her sons living in London. What is even more interesting is that she lived in London when she died. She, too, appeared to have been living a double life. Fanny's will may have been probated in both locations, London and Virginia. However, it was the British consul in Norfolk, Francis Waring, who notified the Foreign Office of this potential embarrassment. What is even more astounding was the Foreign Secretary's eventual determination to do nothing and allow her two sons to sell the slaves and be done with the issue before either British or American abolitionists found out and caused problems. Fanny Davidson's case and those of others demonstrate that British citizens continued to own slaves in the South.⁶²¹ However, Britain's abolitionist identity depended upon its hegemony over other slaveholding communities around the world. An occasional case popping up here or there in the South of British involvement was not going to derail Britain's status as the "Great Emancipator."

Britain was a world leader in emancipating its slaves in 1833. Afterwards, Britain attempted to take control and dictate foreign policy in the Atlantic World, with the hope that ethical British laws would expand to other regions. Maintaining this hegemony or preeminence was a great undertaking that would require Britain to not only exercise great diplomatic skills but also the ability to back up its words with actions. This was done by having the British navy patrol

⁶²¹ Other researchers might wish to do a follow up inquiry to this study: in how many other countries did Britons continue to own slaves in violation of the 1841 Act.

the Atlantic Ocean intercepting suspected slave ships from any country on the high seas. However, other methods would also be needed in the South. British consuls originally used as liaisons for British trade between the cotton-producing South and Great Britain at times became part of Britain's attempt to dissuade the South's policy of slave trade and ownership by becoming the eyes and ears of Southern slavery and the Atlantic trade, and reporting relevant information back to the Foreign Office.

However, many of these consuls were just ordinary merchants and not abolitionists. They were never chosen because of their individual stance regarding slavery. They did not have to take an oath or swear their allegiance to abolitionist principles as did the 1832 politicians running for office in that year. Only one consul ventured to meet with abolitionists in the South and even then, the Foreign Office directed the man to quit the group for reasons of politics and personal safety.

At the same time, those consuls who stayed on at their assigned Southern port cities for any length of time could not help but undergo a change of identities. Transatlantic migration and exposure to a different culture, tradition, or custom for an extended period caused at least one individual to "go native." But perhaps, he would have done so anyway and it was not the Southern system that changed Molyneux; perhaps Molyneux sought out the consul position knowing full well that he *could* make money in slavery. One never knows with certainty because Molyneux never wrote about his true intentions.

This study has addressed the question whether exposure to the customs, traditions, and culture of the South caused a transformation in Britain's consuls stationed in Charleston, Savannah, Mobile, Norfolk, and New Orleans. While the majority of the consuls remained true to their British identities, all consuls underwent at least two of the migration processes, physical migration and some assimilation in order to live there for any serious length of time. However, it is *how* they settled into their new surroundings that is the central question of this inquiry. Several consuls worked hard to maintain their British identities and fought assimilation, while others not only retained their British identities but took on the persona of the local community-making them doubly foreign. However, none were more doubly foreign in their actions, works, and deeds than Molyneux who not only married into the local community but became completely and fully immersed in virtually everything that it meant to be Southern.

The nineteenth-century British Foreign Service would never turn one of their own into the courts, the abolitionists, or the public in general. To do so meant potential political suicide and most certainly loss of British preeminence in the Atlantic World. The unrelenting drive and long-range plans for British imperial dominance in the nineteenth-century Atlantic World became more important than unfortunate, isolated cases of individual British slave ownership. It was better to create the illusion that Great Britain was "the Great Emancipator" than reveal the difficulties of that position and allow the rest of the world to chip away at the carefully crafted image. Whether it by design or accident, the Foreign Office helped in the promulgation of that vision and therefore could not

reveal what was actually going on, or that the British Foreign Office knew what the truth sometimes was. Not only were British subjects such as Molyneux illusionists, so too in this way was the Foreign Office.

APPENDIX A
CHART OF CONSULS IN THE ANTEBELLUM SOUTH
1830-1863

The author created this chart to help other researchers of the British Foreign Office. It is only as complete as the researcher could locate records in America and Britain. It is mainly limited to the years 1830 to 1860, the subject matter of this dissertation and only covers those British consuls assigned to the U.S. South.

Baltimore

John Crawford	? -1834 (left Baltimore for New Orleans consulship)
John McTavish	1834-1852 (£500 salary)
Edward Walker Mark	1857
William Morton Dyer	1858-1860 (granted leave of absence for 4 months from July to Oct. 30 1858)
H.W. Ovenden	1860-1863

Charleston

William Ogilby	1829-1845 (previously been the consul for Caen; £500 salary; 1834 received three months leave; 1838 received 9 month leave to return to England for his health; 1838 granted nine month leave to return to England for health reasons; 1840 granted seven month leave for his health (lung concerns); 1843 received 6 months leave to visit England;)
Charles Dunkin Wake	1845-1849 (Previously, vice consul at Copenhagen 1838 – 1845. Made consul at Charleston in 1845. Climate did not agree with him. Obtained leave to go home in 1847. Absent for two years from Charleston. Asked for transfer to Tenerife. Foreign Office declined request. Wake resigned in 1849.)
George B. Matthews	1850-1853 (£500 salary; transferred to Philadelphia in 1853)
Robert Bunch	1853-186? (in 1843 sent to New Orleans to replace Crawford)

Fredericksburg

Peter Goodrich	1860-1863
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Galveston

Arthur T. Lynn	1850-1863
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Mobile

James Baker

1827-1841 (he briefly resided in St. Augustine before moving to Mobile in 1831; his time in St. Augustine was not examined because it was before 1830; received 6 months leave to England in 1834 to attend to private affairs; 1837 received leave to go to England for a surgery in London; threatened to resign in 1839 rather than stay in Mobile, F.O. reassigned him to Riga; 1843 he still lived in Riga)

Charles Wilingham Turner

1841 (served one month and then transferred to Carthenga)

Charles Lionel Fitzgerald

1841-1845 (died in Mobile, office at 22 St. Michael)

Robert Grigg

1845-1848

W. Gippard Nicolas

1848-1853 (gets to Mobile and just as quickly asks for leave, it's granted, then immediately asks for reassignment; granted four months leave in 1851)

William Morton Dyer

1853-1858 (office 48 St. Michael)

Charles Tulin

1858-1861 (office 37 St. Michael)

New Orleans

George Salkeld

1826-1834 (owned a country home in the South, location unknown, his son, George Barclay Salkeld, briefly took over the consulate when his father fell ill in January 1834, the son left the consulate not long after his father's death in April that same year)

John Crawford

1834-1842 (£500, before serving at New Orleans, Crawford was the consul for Baltimore, however, once he heard about the low salary for N.O., he asked for a transfer to New York, but it was not granted; F.O. in 1843 reprimanded and fired him from N.O.; twenty-four years in total service)

Robert Bunch

1843 (Bunch was referred to F.O. as a British resident merchant in N.O. to take over for Crawford; however Mure quickly takes over as Acting consul)
(John George Lingham – acting vice consul, 1843)

William Mure 1843-1861 (1844 granted five-month leave)

Norfolk

William Gray

1836-1845 (£300 salary; retired after twenty-six years of total service)

Francis Waring

1845-1852 (previously was the vice-consul at Alicante; £500 reflects pay increase in 1849; consulate located in his home that he paid about \$61.00 a year to rent; died in 1852.)

Frederick Cridland

1852-1852 (acting consul until James appointed)

George Payne Rainsford James

1853-1858 (in 1858 transferred to Venice, notified by the Duke of Wellington before the Foreign Secretary, the Earl of Malmesbury, told him)

Richmond

L.J. Barbar

August 1858-1859 (transferred from Naples to Richmond to replace James, £500 a year salary with £112 for expenses)

George Moore

1859-1863

Savannah

Edmund Molyneux

1833-1863 (in 1856 his salary was increased from £300 to £500 by his requested; 1834 granted two-month leave to return to England; 1836 three-month leave granted to go to Liverpool for "urgent private business"; six-month leave granted in 1838 for health reasons; 1839 granted three-month leave; 1851 granted leave to see his doctor – Ben Brodie; 1853 granted leave to England; 1855 visited family in Europe during malaria season; 1857 on leave for four months for sick leave to visit Europe for health)

APPENDIX B

LIST OF BRITISH FOREIGN SECRETARIES THAT SERVED FROM
1830 - 1863

Henry John Temple Service as Foreign Secretary: Prime Minister :	Third Viscount Palmerston 1830-1834, 1835-1841, 1846-1851 1855-1858, 1859-1865
Arthur Wellesley Service as Foreign Secretary:	Duke of Wellington 1834-1835
George Hamilton Gordon Service as Foreign Secretary:	Fourth Earl of Aberdeen 1841-1846
George Leveson Gower Service as Foreign Secretary:	Second Lord Granville 1851-1852
James Harris Service as Foreign Secretary:	Third Earl of Malmesbury 1852, 1858-1859
John Russell Service as Foreign Secretary:	First Earl Russell 1852-1853, 1859-1865
George Villiers Service as Foreign Secretary:	Fourth Earl of Clarendon 1853-1858, 1865-1866

APPENDIX C

“GENERAL ANTI-SLAVERY CONVENTION LETTER” SENT FROM THE
FOREIGN OFFICE TO EDMUND MOLYNEUX

General Anti-Slavery Convention called by the Committee of the British and foreign Anti-Slavery Society, held in London, on the 12th of June, 1840, and continued, by adjournments, to the 23rd of the same month.

To the right Honourable Viscount Palmerston, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

The Memorial of the undersigned, the Chairman on behalf of the General Anti-Slavery Convention, held in London on the 20th of June, 1840.

Respectfully sheweth,

That this Convention has learnt with feelings of surprise and regret, that British functionaries in the Brazils and Cuba, and other Slave-holding countries, hold slaves – that they purchase them in the public Slave market and elsewhere – work them in mines and on sugar plantations – employ them as domestic Slave and sell them, or dispose of them, as necessity or caprice may dictate.

The Convention, under a strong impression of the utter injustice of Slavery in all its forms, and of the evil it inflicts upon its miserable victims, and of the necessity of employing every means, moral, religious, and pacific, for its complete abolition feels it to be no less than in imperative duty to submit to the principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, that the British Parliament – having declared it “just and expedient that all persons held in Slavery in the colonies of Great Britain should be manumitted and set free, and that Slavery should be utterly and forever abolished and declared unlawful throughout the British possessions abroad” – that functionaries of the British government holding, hiring, buying, or selling Slaves in foreign countries, is not only an open violation of these just and equitable principles, but that it is an example which gives countenance to the perpetuation of Slavery, and to the continuance of the clandestine importation of Slaves, and that it does materially contribute to prevent the extinction of Slavery in those countries, and throughout the world at large, an object most dear to the members of this Convention, and for the consummation of which they are especially assembled.

This Convention, therefore, earnestly solicits the early attention of Viscount Palmerston to the subject, and that he will be pleased to issue a declaration that the holding or hiring of Slaves, directly or indirectly, is incompatible with the functions of any individual officially engaged in the service of the British Government.

On behalf of the Convention
(signed) Thomas Clarkson,
President⁶²²

⁶²² F.O.S.T. 377: 156. This researcher could not find any other *specific* “letter of declaration” other than a letter from the Foreign Office to each of the British consuls in the U.S. South informing them that slave holding was illegal under British law. The above letter was attached to Molyneux’s correspondence from the Foreign Office making him doubly aware of what British laws were and what behavior would be expected of him by the Foreign Office. At the time of the letter, the Foreign Office was probably unaware of Molyneux’s slave holding interests because they sent the same letter to every British consul stationed in the South.

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Michele Anders Kinney earned a Master's in History from the University of Alabama at Huntsville in 2005. Immediately, after the completion of her Master's degree and thesis, "The Consequences of Slave Emancipation in the British West Indies, 1833-1858," Kinney began her doctoral work in Transatlantic History at the University of Texas at Arlington. Upon the completion of this dissertation, Kinney has been asked to author a WCIV Web Asset Project on-line instructional manual for a forthcoming Western Civilization textbook to be published in 2010 by Cengage Learning. Her next projects will be to publish two articles within the next year.