

Irish Slave Owners

From the 1838 Compensation lists

In 1838 slavery was abolished in the UK colonies following the 1807 legislation that abolished the trade. There were about 46,000 slave owners throughout the UK that were eligible for compensation and received an estimated £20 million – roughly worth £1.6 billion now according to the Guardian newspaper.

Ongoing research by the University College London has uncovered a wealth of useful historical and genealogical information on slave owners which is accessible via the Legacies of British Slave-ownership website <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/>. It has an easily used database search engine that links to what is currently known about slave owners and other interested parties that applied for compensation with associated documentary evidence and references.

For a useful newspaper article see <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jul/12/british-history-slavery-buried-scale-revealed>, which discusses the above research as an introduction to the BBC documentary *Britain's Forgotten Slave Owners* <http://www.bbc.co.uk/mediacentre/proginfo/2015/28/britains-forgotten-slave-owners/>

Taking the island of Ireland as a whole there were 108 claimants who made 191 claims. While most were of Irish origin some were only born on the island but spent most of their lives elsewhere in the empire and Europe while others were only temporarily resident in Ireland at the time of making the claim.

The total number of slaves for which compensation was sought was 16,184 valued at £462,475 – about 2.5% of UK total. Not all slaves were directly owned, but, because they were property, were subject to English Common and Colonial property law. Thus claimants had claims via mortgages, probates, marriage settlements, etc. Overall about 75% of claimants were successful, the balance being refused due to various legal reasons.

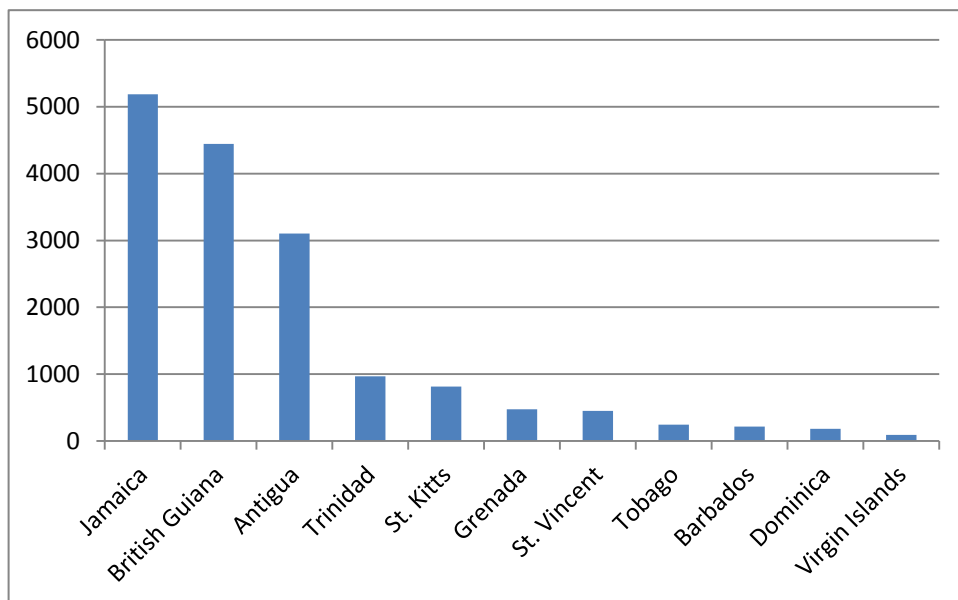
A cursory look at the sources used for compiling the biographies indicates the UCL's strongest suit is the study of English sources. If Irish historians got involved they could probably double the amount of information and provide further evidence of the dense networking that went on throughout the empire's elite. It is also highly likely that further Irish connections would be found since 2.5% of the total seems low even taking into account the transfers of wealth from the island as a result of the Act of Union and subsequent recession.

There is very little known about the presence of slaves in Ireland in the late 18th and early 19th centuries; it is likely they were not very common; mostly to be found as servants to aristocrats brought over from a colonial estate. It is also possible that a few were passed on via family, social or economic networks. If they died in service they were usually buried by their owners in a family plot or the family's servant plot. There are occasional references to unnamed black servants, possibly slaves or ex-slaves, in Dublin's Church of Ireland burial registers. I have not seen any references to children of mixed parentage in Ireland from that

time; whether they left any ‘genetic footprints’ in the Irish population that have survived till now is an unexplored question.

The number of slaves per colony is as follows: Jamaica is highest with 32% followed by British Guiana, 27%, and Antigua, 19%.

Jamaica	5185
British Guiana	4443
Antigua	3105
Trinidad	970
St. Kitts	814
Grenada	476
St. Vincent	451
Tobago	248
Barbados	216
Dominica	182
Virgin Islands	91



Number of claims and slaves by county of main residence

County	Number of claims	Number of slaves
Antrim	12	4956
Armagh	5	172
Carlow	1	161
Cork	12	1750
Donegal	1	257
Down	1	1
Dublin	36	4984
Galway	10	1121
Kildare	2	321
Londonderry	3	114
Louth	2	244
Mayo	5	691
Meath	1	235
Queen's Co.	2	94
Sligo	1	91
Tipperary	4	468
Tyrone	2	21
Waterford	1	44
Wicklow	1	45

A general conclusion is that there are four main nexus, viz. Dublin, Cork, Belfast and Galway/Mayo. Dublin, as capital, has about 35% though if the neighbouring counties are included it comes to 45%. The claimants are a mix of the capital's elite, government, landed aristocracy, clerics and merchants. Cork at 10% is similar with landed aristocracy, clerics and merchants. The Galway/Mayo group, 15%, is primarily landed aristocracy whose family connections can be found throughout the empire as civilian and military representatives and holders of colonial estates. The Belfast set are a mix of traditional landed aristocracy and the rising entrepreneurial merchant class that are epitomised by the McGarels whose background and road to monetary wealth is quite unique.

A list of slave compensation claimants by slave numbers; the reasons for the disparate valuations per slave is not covered here. Note that the McGarel cluster, from Larne, comes to 18.5% of the total number of slaves and 31% of valuation – which they were allowed.ⁱ

Surname	Number of slaves	Amount claimed
McGarel	2759	135078
Hoare	998	19402
Wilson	451	23324
Hyndman	432	5519
Fullerton	415	9325
LaTouche	396	6816

Austin	369	19154
Tierney	357	6460
Thompson	339	6059
Kelly	316	6141
Browne	286	5525
Forsyth	272	14690
Bagot	261	13823
Massy- Dawson	260	4922
Batty	258	4892
Hamilton	258	5368
Chambers	257	6525
Brooke	253	4084
Jameson	252	3465
Coddington	235	4533
Kirwan	225	2855
Shannon	225	2855
Nelson	224	3810
Pakenham	217	2920
Lindsay	206	6212
Massy	201	3601
Cunningham	198	3074
McDowall	197	5140
McGarel	195	9903
Hamilton	189	10556
Blake	188	5053
Brumskile ⁱⁱ	188	9257
Rhoades	182	3017
Nagle	177	4002
Moore	171	2399
O'Connor	171	2399
Gray	166	3148
Bedlow	161	3136
Simms	158	2572
Hynes	150	2929
Taafe	148	2743
McCalmont	139	7244
Hunt	131	2216
Prentergast ⁱⁱⁱ	131	2399
Owens	127	1740
Browne	125	2067
Gibbons	125	2372
Lees	125	2067
Daly	113	2319
Thompson	112	2136
Burke	104	2241

Delap	96	1934
Martyn	92	1674
Wynne	91	1307
Lynch	85	1940
Busby	84	1638
Welch	84	1638
Elliott	76	1242
Brice	74	1359
Bushe	65	351
Walsh	60	3277
Ellice	58	1684
Seward	53	2539
Gray	51	1108
Kelly	46	929
Broomfield	45	2411
Dumoulin	44	1977
Foley	44	903
Lowe	44	903
Burke	43	701
Cunningham	40	502
Graham	39	900
Greer	35	1609
Nolan	33	600
Fraser	28	631
Fennell	27	592
Moore	20	563
Mathews	18	1001
Crookes	15	330
Otway	15	461
Sherlock	15	796
Hardy	13	270
Rochfort	12	178
Gray	11	244
Hornsby	10	172
Hughes	6	151
Shaw	6	139
Prentice	4	54
Burke	2	62
Prentice	2	15
Beville	1	29
Glenn	1	64
Hill	1	64
Kennedy	1	27
Prentice	1	19

A useful introductory website on the Irish victims of a precursor to the slave trade is REDEMPTIONERS and INDENTURED SERVANTS: Links to Further Information, see <http://www.irelandoldnews.com/History/runaways.htm>

ⁱ Using the Guardian's calculation ratio (multiply by 80), implied by their article mentioned above, the McGarel claim comes to £11.5 million (€16 million or \$17.8 million) at today's value out of nearly £40 million (current price of top quality London property, €55.5 million for a top quality football player or \$62 million for a top quality corporate jet). In the 1830s high status property and political power were the main items of serious expenditure while aristocrats and wealthy gentry found the London Season and Grand Tour congenial. Comparing relative aesthetic and commercial values between then and now is, perhaps, of dubious value, with the exception of elite status symbols such as luxury yachts.

ⁱⁱ Probably Brunskill

ⁱⁱⁱ Possibly Prendergast