A historical map of Belfast, Ireland, showing the city's layout, including the Lagan River, the city walls, and various streets and buildings. The map is titled 'Belfast, trade and slavery, 1613-1866'. The text 'TOWN PARKS' is visible at the top and bottom of the map. The map shows a grid of streets and a central area with a large building, possibly a government or military installation. The Lagan River is shown flowing through the city, and the city walls are clearly marked. The map is a detailed representation of the city's urban structure during the period of the slave trade.

# Belfast, trade and slavery, 1613-1866

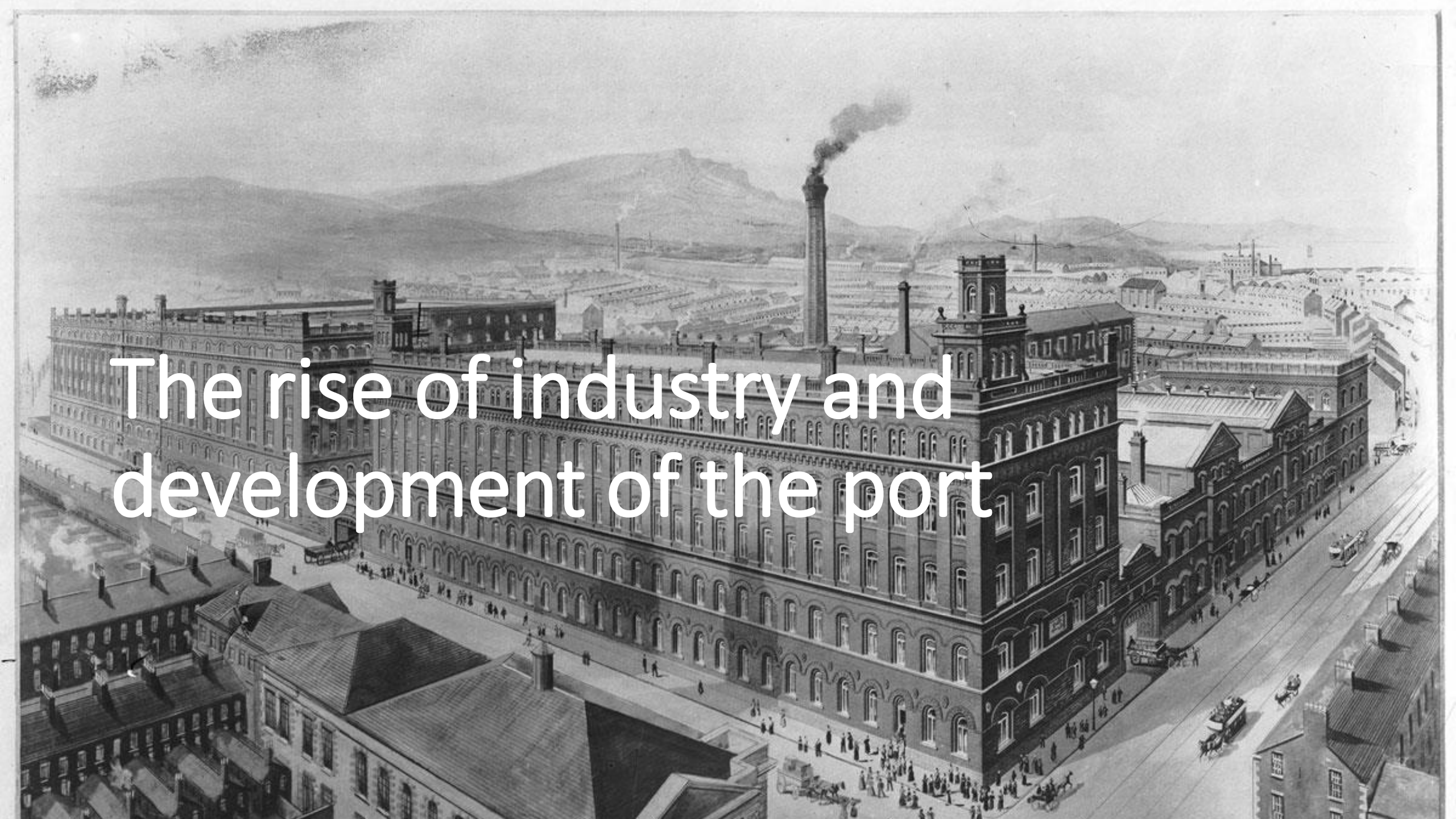
OLE3245 - Belfast and Slavery, 1613-1866

Dr Tom Thorpe

# Objectives

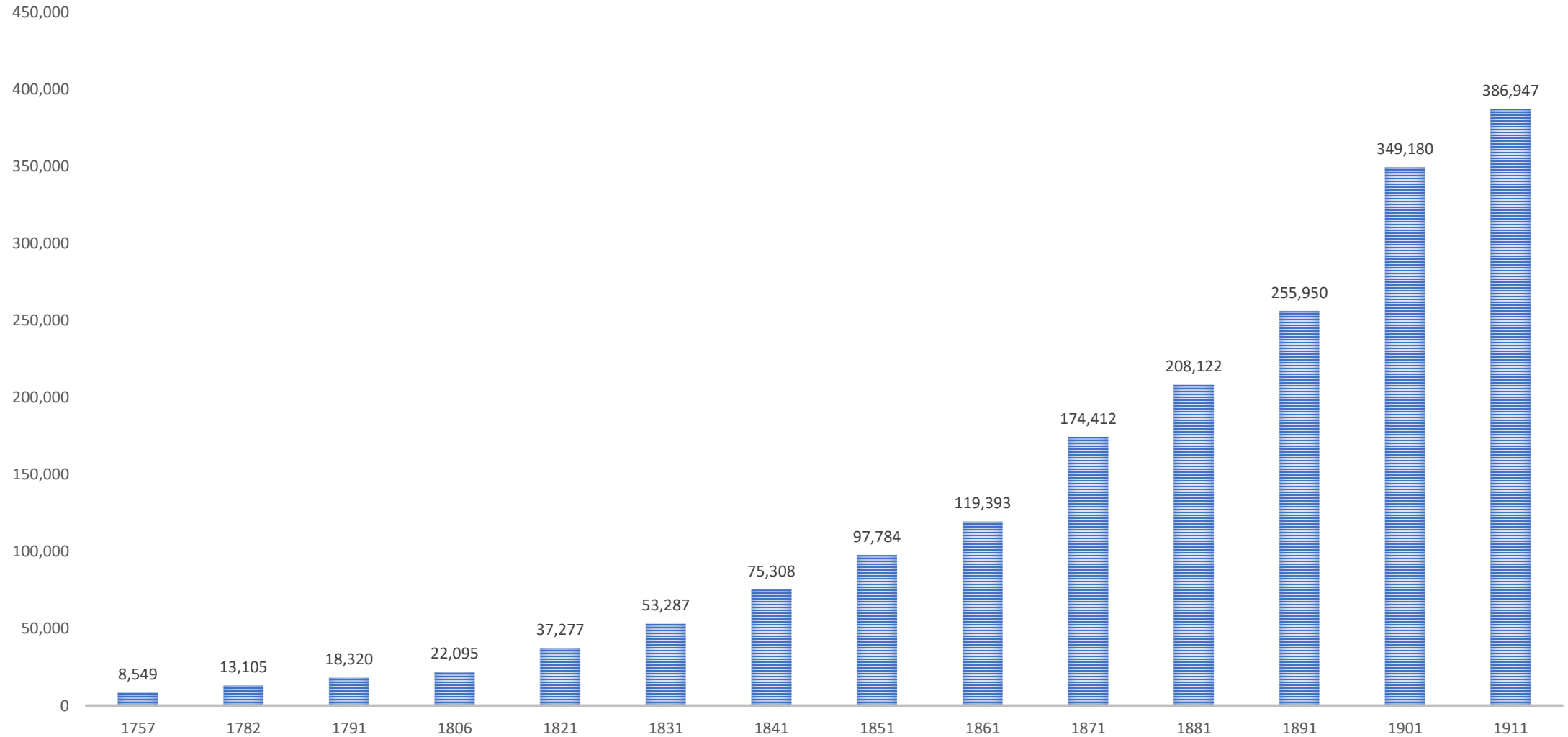
- Provide social, political and economic background to Belfast in the 18<sup>th</sup> century and early 19<sup>th</sup> century.
- Set the context for abolitionist activity.
- Scope out Belfast's trade with the West Indies
- Highlight some Belfast citizens who owned and profited from Slaves.
- Consider Belfast's status as a slave owning/trading centre with other UK towns.





The rise of industry and  
development of the port

# Belfast population, 1757 to 1911



# Overview: religious composition

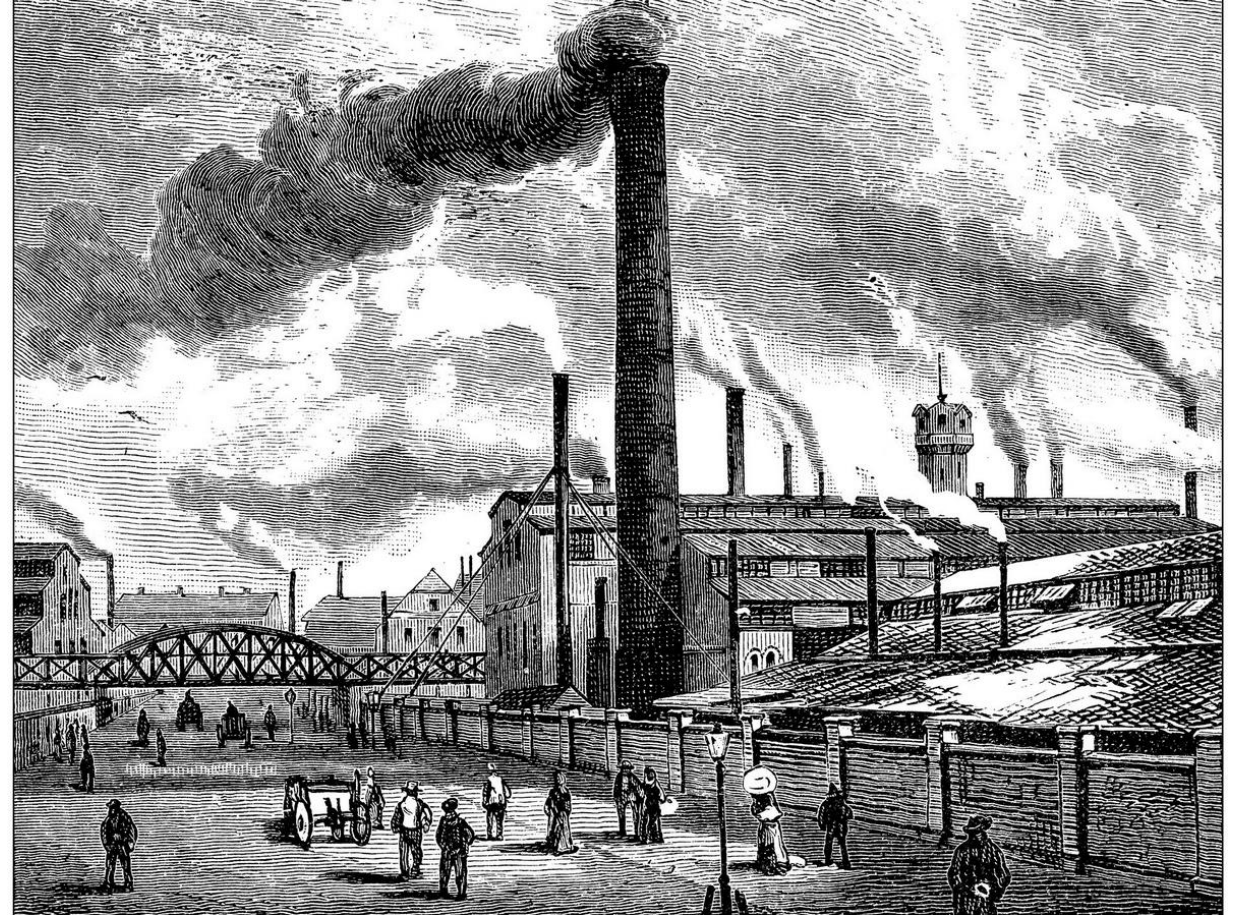
**Table 3: Religious Composition of Belfast Population, 1757-1891**

Year	Total Population	No. of Catholics	% of Total
1757	8,549	556	6%
1784	13,000	1,092	8%
1808	25,000	4,000	16%
1834	60,803	19,712	32.4%
1861	119,444	41,237	34.1%
1871	174,412	55,575	28.8%
1881	208,122	59,975	28.8%
1891	255,950	67,378	26.8%

**Source:** I. Budge and C. O'Leary, *Belfast: Approach to Crisis*, (London, 1973), p. 28, p. 32.

# Factors that shape the industrial revolution

- Agrarian Reforms: Enclosure movements and innovations in agriculture boosted food production and freed up labour for industrial work.
- Rising Population: A growing and increasingly urbanized population provided a larger labour force and consumer base.
- New Ideas and Inventions: Intellectual movements of the Enlightenment and the development of new technologies spurred innovation.



# Factors that shape the industrial revolution

- Access to Capital: Accumulation of wealth, capital investment, and access to credit supported industrial ventures.
- Natural Resources: Abundant reserves of coal, iron, and other raw materials fuelled industrial growth.
- Transportation Improvements: The development of canals, roads, and later, railways, facilitated the movement of goods and people.
- Political Stability: A stable government and legal system encouraged entrepreneurship and protected property rights.



# Cotton industry

- Cotton is a soft, fluffy staple fiber that grows in a boll, or protective case, around the seeds of the cotton plants of the genus *Gossypium*.
- The fibre is almost pure cellulose.
- The fiber is most often spun into yarn or thread and used to make a soft, breathable textile.





# Birth of the cotton industry

- The Poor House introduced cotton spinning for inmates as 'productive labour' in 1777.
- Mills started to be erected in Belfast, both water and steam powered.
- In 1782, 25 looms, 1791, 229, 1806, 600.



# Decline of the cotton industry

By 1836, cotton manufacture had almost ceased in the city. Reasons were:

- Belfast manufacturers had no incentive to cut labour costs as wages were very low. Cotton mills in Lancashire could produce cheaper and higher quality cotton than Belfast.
- Parliament had removed the cotton tariff between England/Ireland trade which made imports into Ireland cheaper.
- Belfast mills had increased costs by importing coal, cotton and other raw materials.
- Linen was much more lucrative than producing cotton.



# Linen

- Linen is made from Flax (*Linum usitatissimum*), also known as common flax or linseed, is a member of the genus *Linum* in the family *Linaceae*. It is a food and fiber crop cultivated in cooler regions of the world.
- Linen is very strong and absorbent, and dries faster than cotton. Because of these properties, linen is comfortable to wear in hot weather and is valued for use in garments.



# Origins of the linen industry

- In 1699, William III sent Louis Crommelin, a Huguenot to Ireland to stimulate the linen trade. He was based in Lurgan and helped spread the trade to Lurgan and Portadown. Belfast became the main outlet for the finished product.
- 1st Linen Hall was opened in 1739.
- 2nd Linen Hall was opened in 1754 in Linenhall Street (now Donegall street). This was known as the Brown Linenhall.
- 3rd Linen Hall was opened on the site of City Hall in 1785 and was known as the White Linen Hall.
- By the end of the 18th Century, bleach greens were found on the outskirts of Belfast. These were open areas used for spreading cloth on the ground to be purified and whitened by the action of the sunlight.



# Linen in the 18<sup>th</sup> century

- Belfast was one point of the production triangle for linen (Lurgan, Armagh, Lisburn) and it became increasingly important as a market place and export hub. Disputes with linen merchants in Dublin meant Belfast merchants sought to set up their own markets and distribution networks. The Brown Linen Hall was built in 1740s (for unbleached linen) and the White Line Hall set up in 1785).
- The city also became know with innovation in the industry. 1763, Belfast doctor, James Ferguson was awarded £300 by the Linen Board in Dublin for his discovery of the addition of lime into the bleaching process.
- First ideas of mass production were in 1776 when the Belfast Newsletter advertised linen made by Nicolas Grimshaw. Grimshaw brought ideas of mass production through the use of Arkwright's water-frame and carding machine to Belfast. Robert Joy set up the first mill in Belfast in 1784 at Whitehouse.



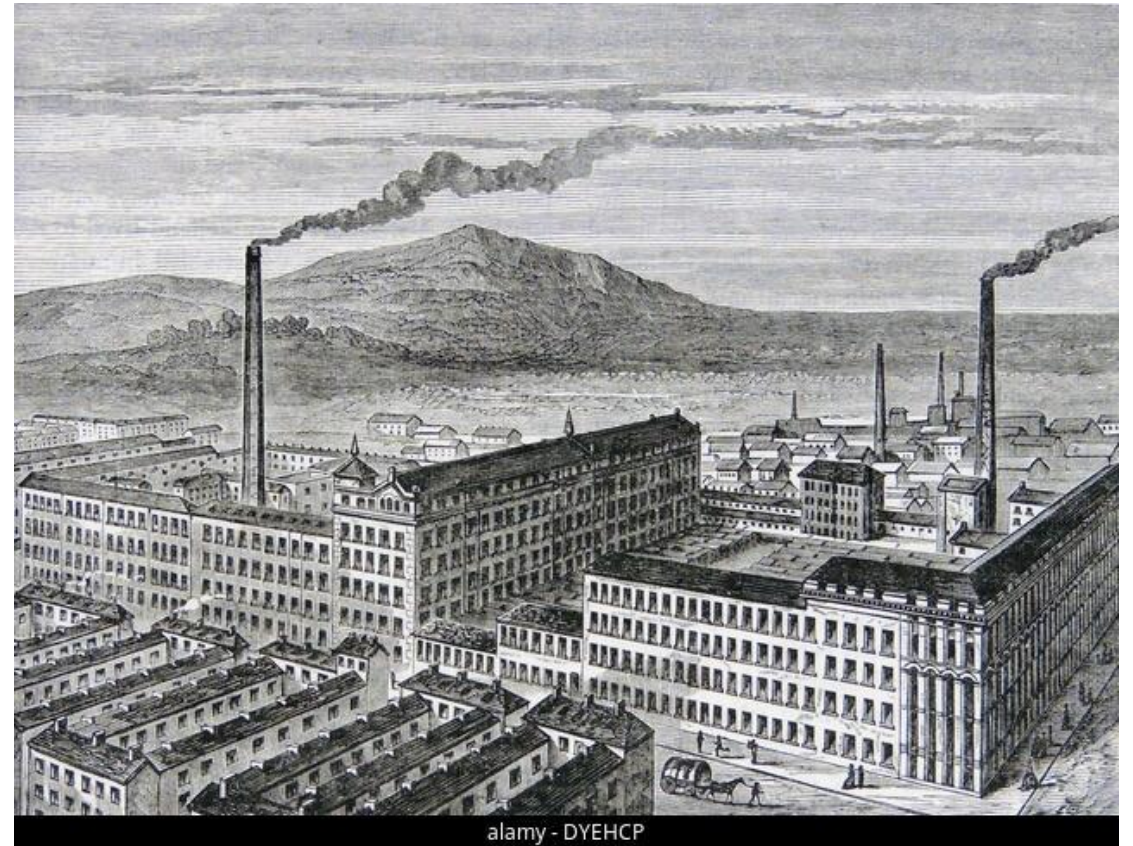
# The linen breakthrough

- The success of cotton spinning inspired inventors to think of ways in which mechanisation could speed up linen production. The brittleness of the flax fibre meant that a new machine had to be invented - the cotton machines simply couldn't be converted.
- In 1825, James Kay of Preston invented a method of "wet spinning" which passed the flax through warm water and enabled a much finer yarn to be spun.
- By the late 1820s several "wet" spinning mills using water-power had been built in Ulster.



# Mulholland York Street

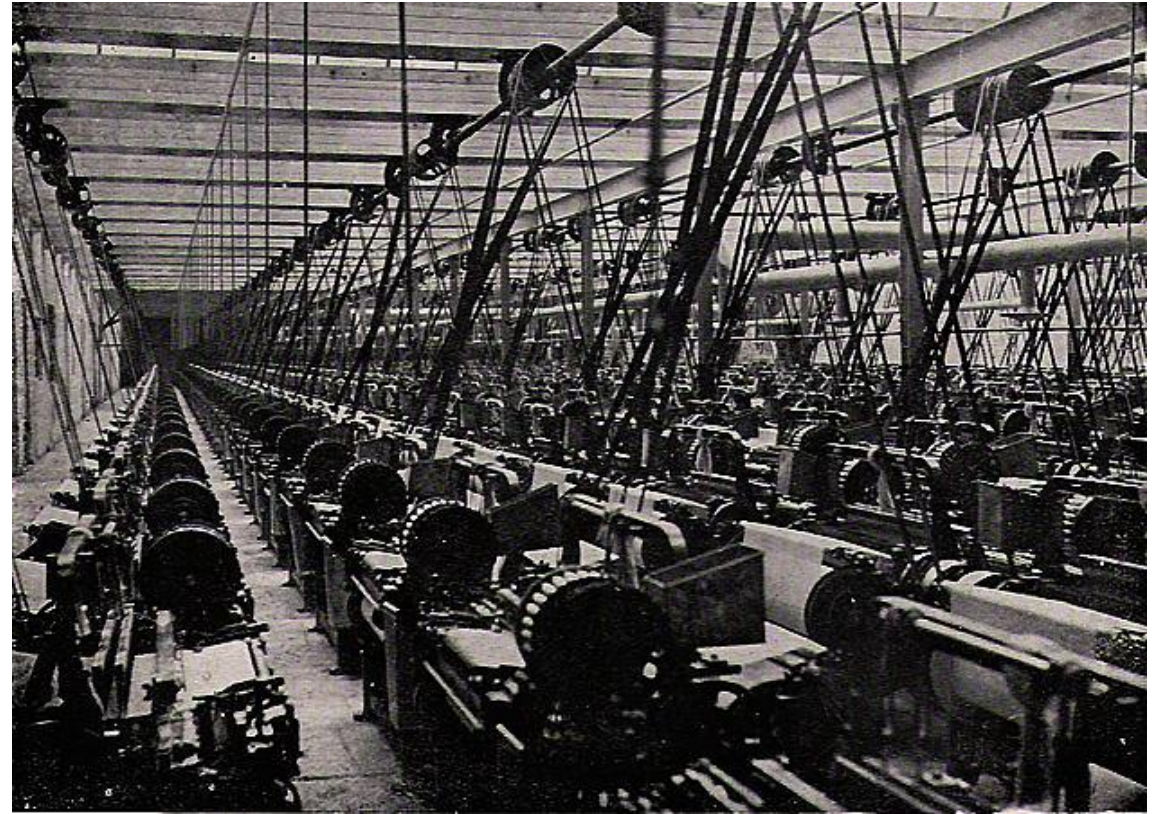
- In 1828, the Mulholland York Street cotton mill burnt down.
- It was rebuilt as a linen mill and the first linen spun in a Belfast Mill by mechanical power in 1830.
- It started with 1,000 spindles in 1830 and had 17,000 by 1846 and 1,000 employees. In 1856, it had 25,000 spindles and was probably the biggest mill in the world.
- In 1830, there were 2 mills making power spun linen yarn, by 1846, there were 24.



alamy - DYEHC

# Mid century boost to Linen

- In 1862, Belfast linen industry saw a massive boom. The US civil war had disrupted the US cotton supply and linen was the nearest substitute.
- Power looms had increased from 218 in 1853 to 4,900 in 1861.
- By 1867 it was 12,000 looms.
- In 1868, there was a major depression in the industry and 4,000 looms were idle.
- Linen industry remained the biggest employer. In 1871, there were 55k spindles and 69k by 1896.
- Belfast had over 80% of the spindles in the world in 1870.







# Belfast workforce in 1790

**Table 1: Occupational Structure of Belfast, c. 1790**

<i>Employing 15-39 workers:</i>		<i>Employing 40-99 workers:</i>		<i>Employing over 100 workers:</i>	
Staymakers	15	Nailors	41	Tailors	100
Hosiers	16	Cabinetmakers	40	Coopers	115
Painters	17	Tanners	45	Carpenters	169
Saddlers	22	Bakers	67	Shoemakers	312
Watchmakers	22	Masons	68	Weavers	679
Chandlers	29	Smiths	69	Total	1,375
Barbers	30	Total	330		
Ropers	35				
Sawyers	37				
Hatters	38				
Butchers	39				
Total	300				

**Source:** Adapted from D. J. Owen, *History of Belfast*, (Belfast, 1921), p. 152.

# Workforce in 1850

**Table 2: Occupations Employing Over 100 Workers (over 15 years of age), Belfast 1851**

Occupation	Male Workers	Female Workers		
<i>Ministering to Food:</i>			<i>Ministering to Lodging, Furniture, Machinery, etc:</i>	
Farmers' Labourers and Servants	897	73	Stonecutters	200
Gardners	100	-	Stonemasons	194
Bakers	334	-	Potter, Tile and Brick Makers	149
Tobacco Twisters	121	-	Bricklayers	261
Huxters and Provision Dealers	105	21	Sawyers	248
Butchers	216	-	Carpenters	939
Grocers	339	83	Cabinetmakers	208
Tavern Keepers and Vintners	274	67	Coopers	264
Total (including occupations with less than 100 workers)	3,280	454	Shipwrights	239
			Miners	460
<i>Ministering to Clothing:</i>			Iron Founders and Moulders	135
Flax Dressers	537	16	Blacksmiths	390
Spinners of Flax	32	532	Nailers	140
Spinners (unspecified)	-	243	Whitesmiths	140
Factory Workers and Overseers	639	2,901	Braziers and Cooper Smiths	102
Weavers of Muslin and Cotton	936	298	Tinplate Workers	119
Weavers of Damask and Linen	655	219	Copperplate Printers	311
Weavers (unspecified)	461	926	Painters and Glaziers	349
Bleachers	123	18	Rope and Twine Makers	203
Linen, Muslin and Cotton Lappers	119	9	Total (including occupations with less than 100 workers)	7,621
Boot and Shoe Makers	1,139	-		241
Tailors and Vestmakers	616	11		
Dressmakers	-	1,316		
Milliners	-	317		
Embroiderers	2	989		
Sempstresses	-	1,461		
Bonnet Makers	-	153		
Drapers	147	5		
Total (including occupations with less than 100 workers)	6,286	10,491		

Source: Census of Ireland for the Year 1851, pp. 414-416

# Development of Belfast's Harbour

- George Benn's 1877 "History of the Town of Belfast" describes the 17th-century harbor as 'a poor little harbour.'

- Records from 1663 note 29 vessels in Belfast, boasting a total tonnage of 1,100 tonnes.

- In the early 18th century, Belfast supplanted Carrickfergus as Ulster's primary port, leading to the construction of privately owned wharves on reclaimed land to accommodate the port's growth.



# Ballast Board

- In 1785, the Irish Parliament enacted legislation to address the expanding port of Belfast.
- This led to the establishment of a new entity, known as 'the Ballast Board' or formally, The Corporation for Preserving and Improving the Port and Harbour of Belfast.
- The Ballast Board assumed control of the port, superseding the Belfast Corporation.
- The Ballast Office, established in the premises of the present Customs House, became the operational center for port management.



# Names on the Ballast Board's first meeting

Exchange of Belfast 25<sup>th</sup> October 1785

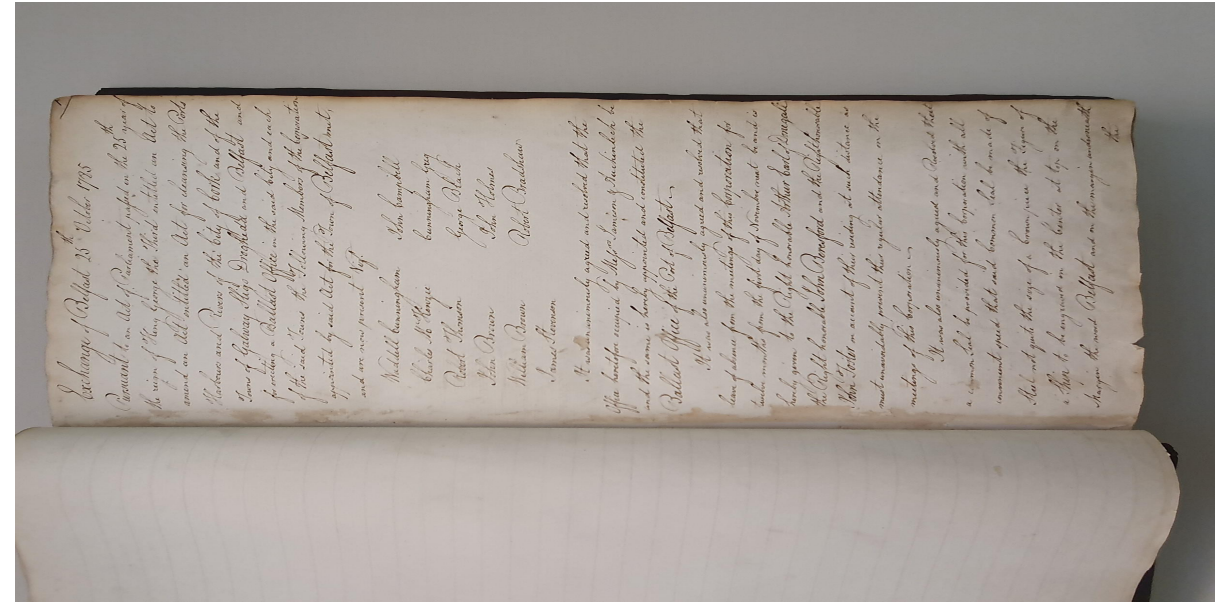
Pursuant to an Act of Parliament passed in the 25<sup>th</sup> year of the reign of King George the Third entitled an Act to amend an Act entitled an Act for cleansing the Ports Harbours and Rivers of the City of Cork and of the Towns of Galway Sligo Drogheda and Belfast and for erecting a Ballast Office in the said City and each of the said Towns the Following Members of the Corporation appointed by said Act for the Town of Belfast met, and are now present Viz.

Waddell Cunningham	John Campbell
Charles Mc Kenzie	Cunningham Greg
Robert Thomson	George Black
John Brown	John Holmes
William Brown	Robert Bradshaw
James Stevenson	

It was unanimously agreed and resolved that the

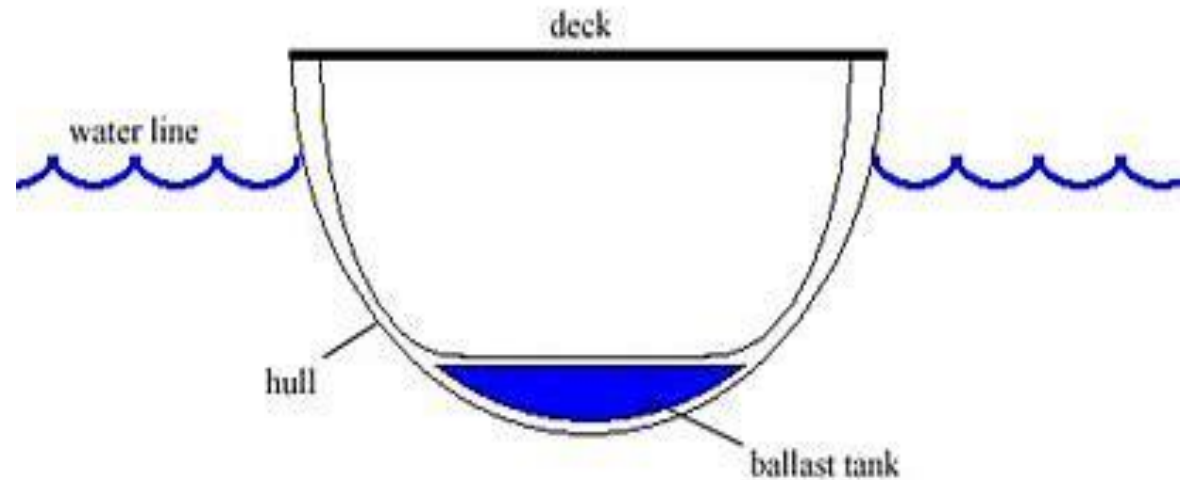
# Why the ballast board?

The Ballast Board was named for its key responsibility of managing ballast in the port, overseeing the proper distribution and handling of heavy materials for ship stability.



# Activities

- The organisation sought to preserve and improve the port of Belfast
- One of their major projects was to straighten the meandering River Lagan and build new quays
- The contractor for this project was William Dargan, a famous Irish engineer
- The material that was removed from the river bed was deposited on the shore, forming a new island that was named after Dargan
- This island later became known as Queen's Island in honour of Queen Victoria's visit in 1849
- The island was the site of many shipbuilding activities, including the construction of the RMS Titanic.

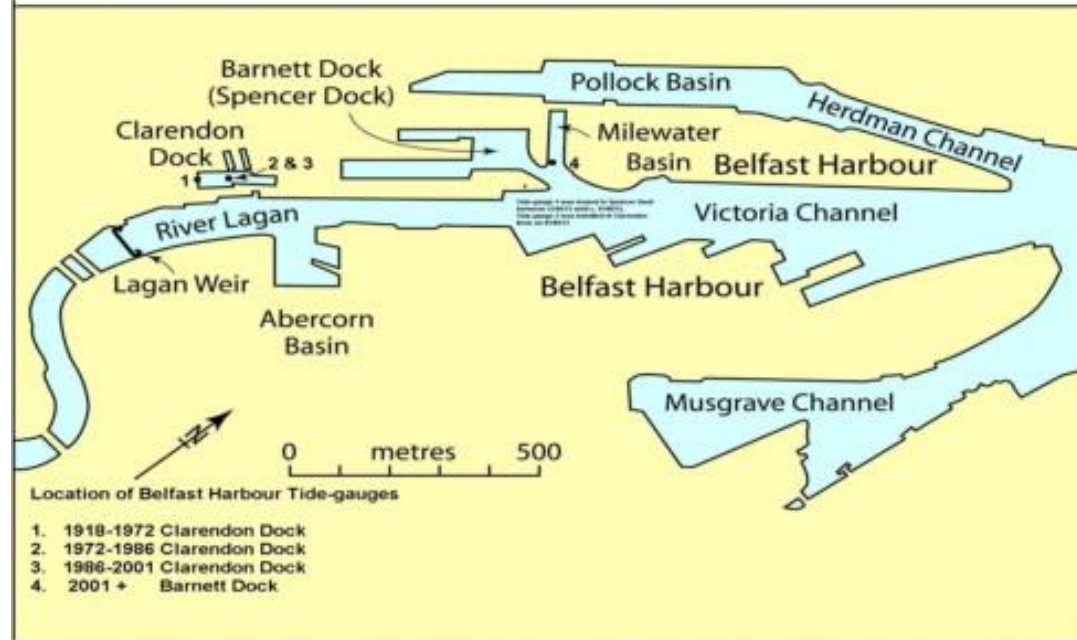




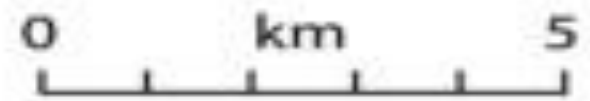


1839

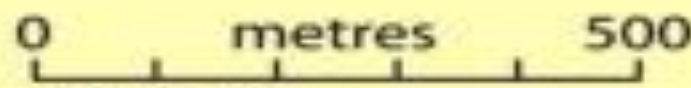
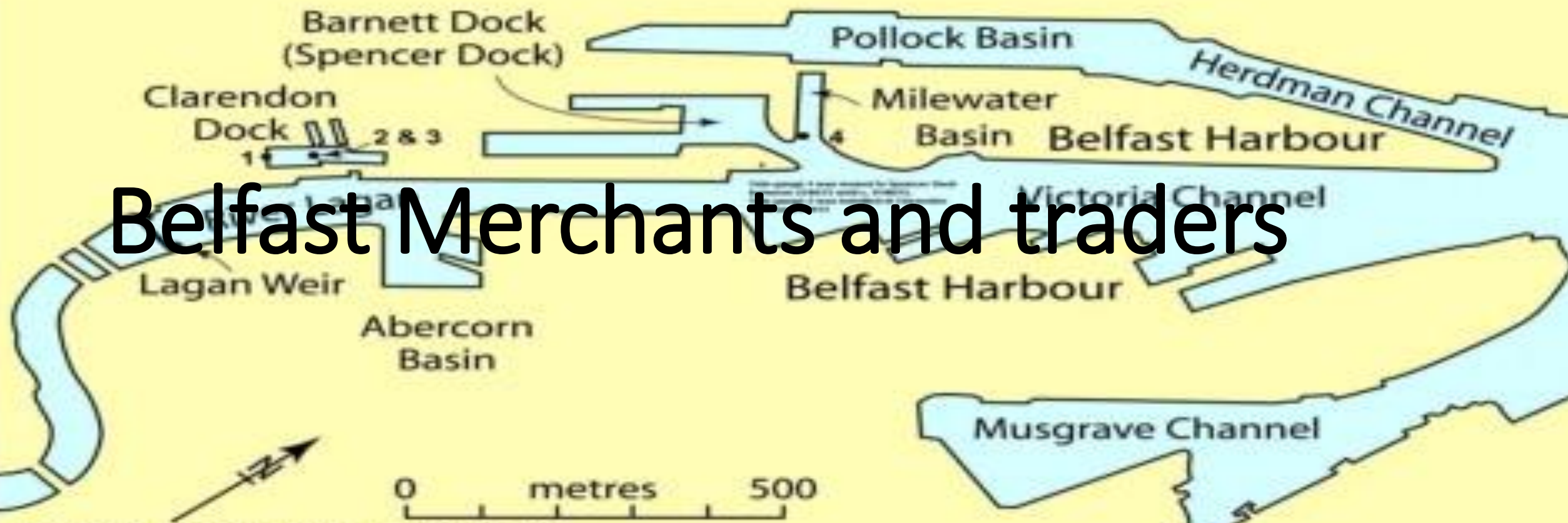




BELFAST



# Belfast Merchants and traders



Location of Belfast Harbour Tide-gauges

1. 1918-1973 Clarendon Dock



# Sugar refining

- In the late 1600s, Belfast boasted two sugar refineries.
- One was situated in Rosemary Lane, now a street, while the other was located in an entry off High Street, later named Sugarhouse Entry.
- The prosperous merchant George McCartney owned the Sugarhouse Entry refinery and, in 1678, expanded his operations by leasing the adjacent Wilkins tenement.

## Ships belonging to Belfast, 1792

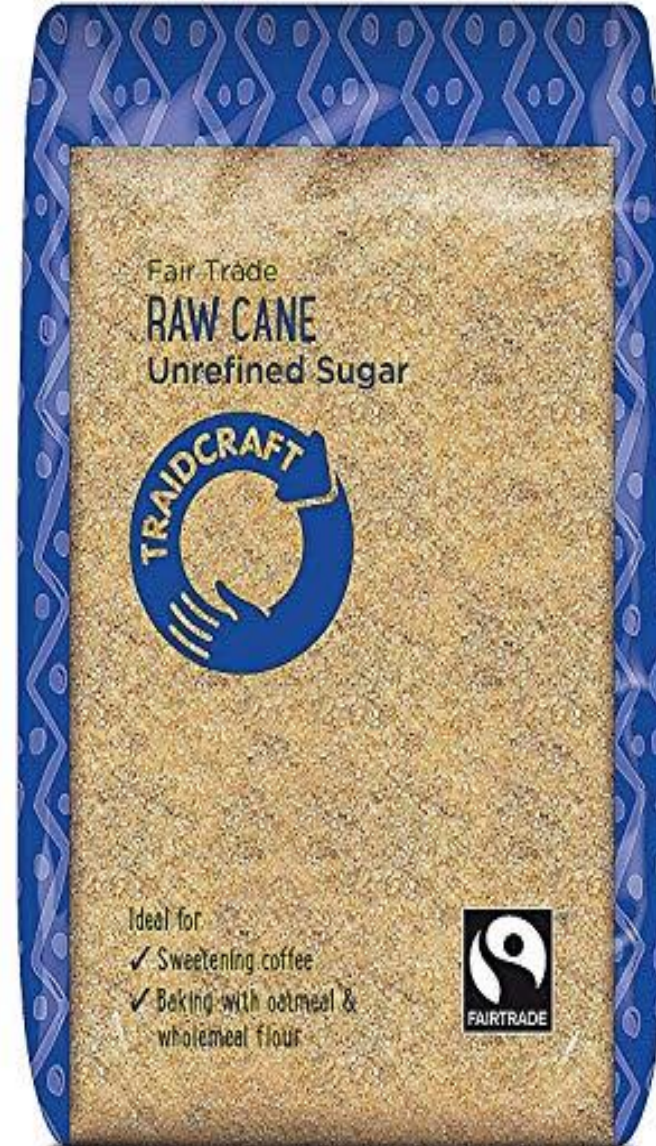
Trade to	Ships	Tonnage
West Indies	25	4,630
Liverpool	8	720
London	8	1,235
Streights	4	800
Miscellaneous	4	1,350
America	4	700
France and Holland	1	120
Coasters	4	200
Total	58 ships	9,765 Tons

## Ships belonging to Belfast, 1819

104 Ships - 10,429 Registered Tons - 755 Sea

# Expansion

- In 1683, according to Benn's History of Belfast (1823), Belfast received 60 tons of raw or brown sugar and 2 tons of white sugar.
- By 1700, the annual sugar import into Britain and Ireland had surged to 10,000 tons.
- Sugar was considered a luxury item during this time, limited to the wealthier segments of society.



# Sugarhouse Entry, off Waring Street





# An incident...

- According to Cathal O'Byrne's book "As I Roved Out" (1946), a tale is recounted highlighting the damaging effects of rumor-spreading on businesses.
- In this anecdote, Belfast streets were filled with gossip claiming that an employee had tragically fallen into a sugar vat and suffered a horrific fate of being boiled alive.
- Compounding the situation, the rumor suggested that the contaminated sugar had been processed and sold to the public without any disclosure of the incident.
- The Sugarhouse Company was forced to offer a reward of 50 guineas to anyone revealing the identity of the person spreading the false rumour. The reward was never claimed



# Rum importation

- Origins: 17th-century Caribbean, born from sugarcane byproduct.
- Composition: Derived from molasses or sugarcane juice.
- Fermentation: Yeast transforms sugars into alcohol.
- Distillation: Process refines and extracts alcohol.
- Evolution: Boomed during the Colonial era, pivotal in the Triangular Trade, and linked with piracy.
- Modern Varieties: White, dark, spiced, and aged rums.

Conclusion: Rum's rich history, diverse composition, and cultural significance make it more than a beverage—it's a liquid legacy.



# Valentine Jones (Snr) (1711–1805)

- Born in Belfast; ancestral roots traced back to Wales c.1640. Notable ancestors involved in timber trade in Co. Londonderry.
- Married Mary Close (m. 1715), high sheriff's widow. Son of Valentine Jones (d. 1761), had a brother, Dr. Conway Jones.
- Second marriage to Eleanor Agnew, widow of business partner James Ross.
- Partnered with Thomas Bateson in West Indies trade.



# Valentine's work

- Wealthy wine merchant, extensive business in Winecellar Entry, Belfast.
- Supported projects: Linen Hall, Poor House, and Donegall Place houses.
- Sociable and popular; lively behaviour remembered.
- First wife: Mary Rochet, had five children. Second marriage to Eleanor Agnew, two children: Margaret and Edward.
- His son was based in Barbados and owned a 167 acre plantation.



# A legacy...?

- Naval muzzle loading cannon in Winecellar Entry.



# Thomas Bateson and Family

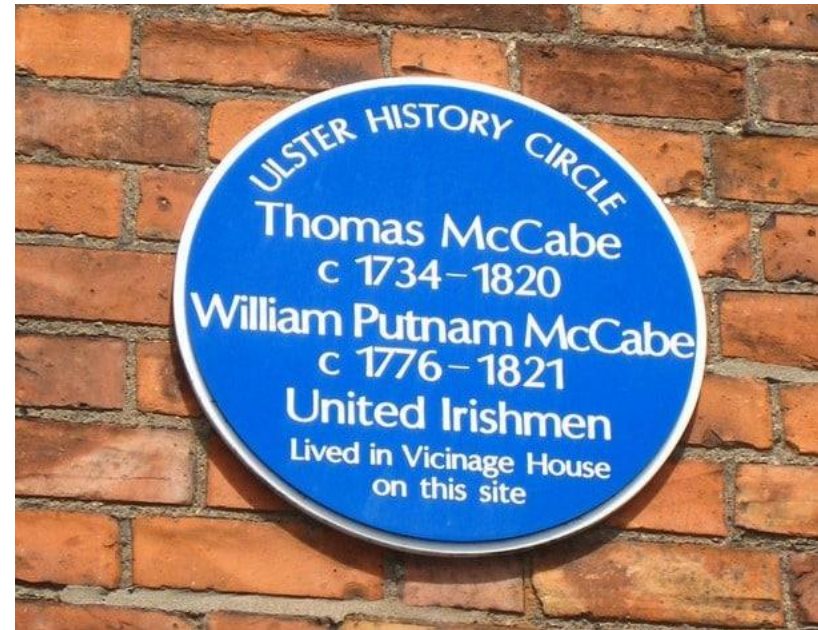
- Business partner of Valentine Jones, frequently mentioned in West Indian produce advertisements.
- Partner in Mussenden, Bateson and Co, wine merchants, Winecellar Court, Belfast.
- Collaboration with James Adair to establish Belfast's first bank.
- Thomas Bateson resided at Orangefield House, Knockbreda.
- Son, Robert Bateson, lived at Belvoir Estate.
- Thomas Bateson's philanthropic efforts. - Robert Bateson continued philanthropy, providing beds to the poor in Knockbreda.



The Family of Thomas Bateson, Esq. (1705–1791) by Strickland Lowry

# Thomas McCabe

- Born: 1740?, Lurgan, Co. Armagh
- Professions: Watchmaker, businessman, United Irishman
- Co-founded watchmaking business in Donegall Street, Belfast (1762).
- Introduced cotton industry to Belfast with Robert Joy (1779).
- Robert Joy, Captain John McCracken, and Thomas McCabe explored new manufacturing possibilities.



# Pioneered Cotton in Belfast

- Discovered pioneering cotton spinning and carding technology during travels in Britain.
- Imported machinery set up in the Poor House basement, generating income and providing employment training.
- Partnered with Joy, Henry Joy, and John McCracken (1783).
- Expanded operations to Rosemary Lane (1784).
- Built Ireland's first water-powered mill at the Falls (1787).





# Active citizen

- Invented improved loom for weaving cotton and linen with William Pearce (1791).
- Flourishing horological business in the 1780s.
- Freemason and Volunteer; Captain in the Belfast regiment.
- Known for liberal political opinions, involved in planning Belfast Society of United Irishmen (1791).
- Faced financial difficulties by 1796, withdrew from political activities.
- 229 cotton Spinning Jennies in 1791, employing 13,500 people within a 16km radius by 1800.





Slave ownership by Belfast citizens

**R**UN away from the service of Mrs. Fullerton of Carrickfergus, on Sunday last, a negro slave boy, aged about 18 years, tall and well looking, known by the name Jacob, the property of the said Mrs. Fullerton: He wore when he went off a grey surtout coat faced with green. It is hoped that no gentleman will entertain him, in that he will be taken up and notice sent to Mrs. Fullerton, which favour will be gratefully acknowledged.

Sept. 13, 1763.

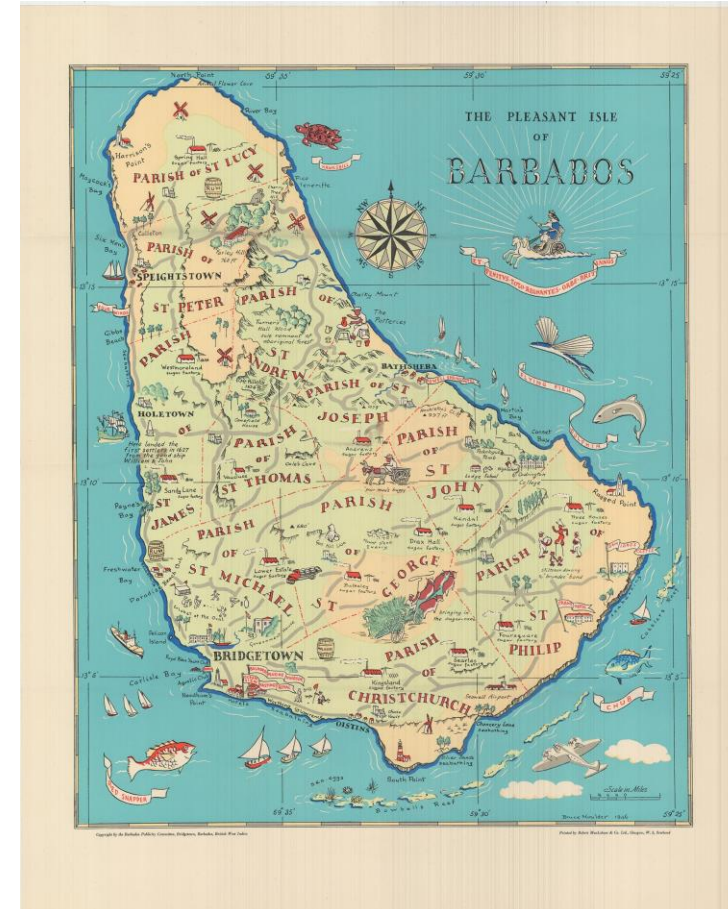
# BELFAST NEWSLETTER (19 OCTOBER 1765)

“Runaway from John Cawden, Princes Street, Belfast. A young negro manservant named John Moore. A reward of three guineas. Straight and well made has two remarkably broad teeth in upper jaw.”

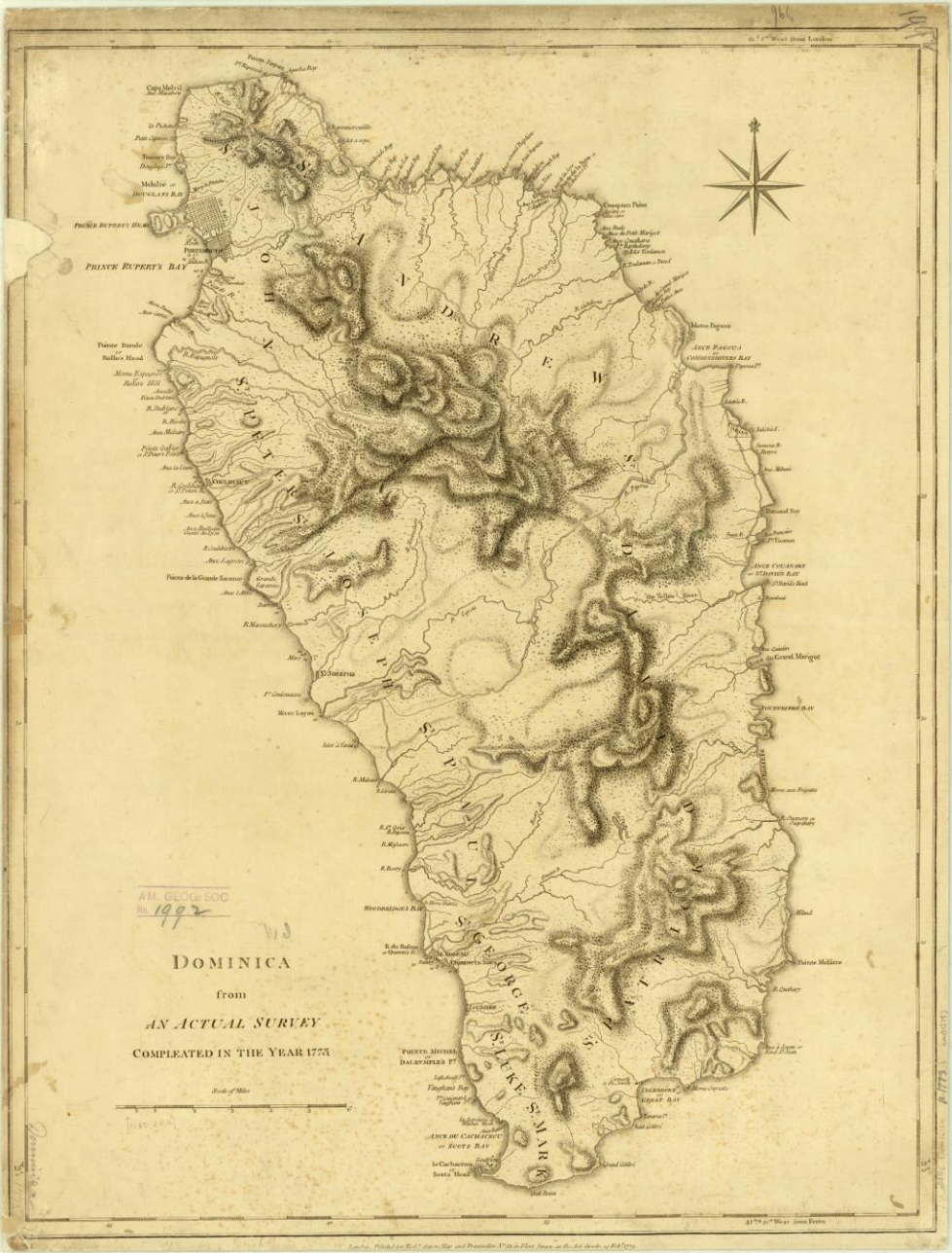


# Valentine Jones (Jr), 1729 - 1808

- Son of Valentine Jones (d. 1805) of Belfast, a West India merchant, and wine and rum dealer.
- Online sources suggest Valentine Jones (d. 1808) as the probable owner of Providence estate in Christ Church, Barbados, in 1777.
- Merchant of Barbados for 33 years.
- Bequeathed 6 guineas and an annuity of 4 guineas p.a. to 'my black female servant named Bamba.'
- His son, also known, Valentine Jones (son) convicted of embezzlement as Commissary-General of the West Indies in 1809.



# Dominica



# Background: Dominica, 1700-1763

- French and British Rivalry: Dominica, a lush Caribbean island, attracted European powers. The French and the British struggled for control over the island.
- Indigenous Kalinago People: The Kalinago (Carib) people, the island's indigenous inhabitants, resisted European colonization but faced encroachment.
- 1761-1763: Treaty of Paris. British Control: Following the Seven Years' War, Dominica was formally ceded to the British



# Dominica, 1763-1796

- Later 18<sup>th</sup> Century: Dominica's economy became centered around sugar plantations, with enslaved Africans providing the labour force. Maroon Communities: Escaped slaves formed Maroon communities in the mountainous interior, resisting plantation slavery.
- 1783: Treaty of Paris (1783)
- British Confirmation: The Treaty of Paris (1783) reaffirmed British control over Dominica.
- 1795-1796: Maroon War. The Maroons, led by Joseph Chatoyer, rebelled against British rule, seeking to establish an independent state. The rebellion was quelled, and Chatoyer was killed.





# Dominica, 1805-1838

- 1805-1815: Napoleonic Wars. French Occupation: Dominica briefly fell under French control during the Napoleonic Wars but was restored to British rule in 1815.
- 1831: Emancipation. Slavery was officially abolished in the British Empire in 1833, and slaves in Dominica were emancipated in 1834.
- 1838: Apprenticeship Period. Transition Period: The Apprenticeship period followed emancipation, during which former slaves were required to work for their former masters for a set number of years.

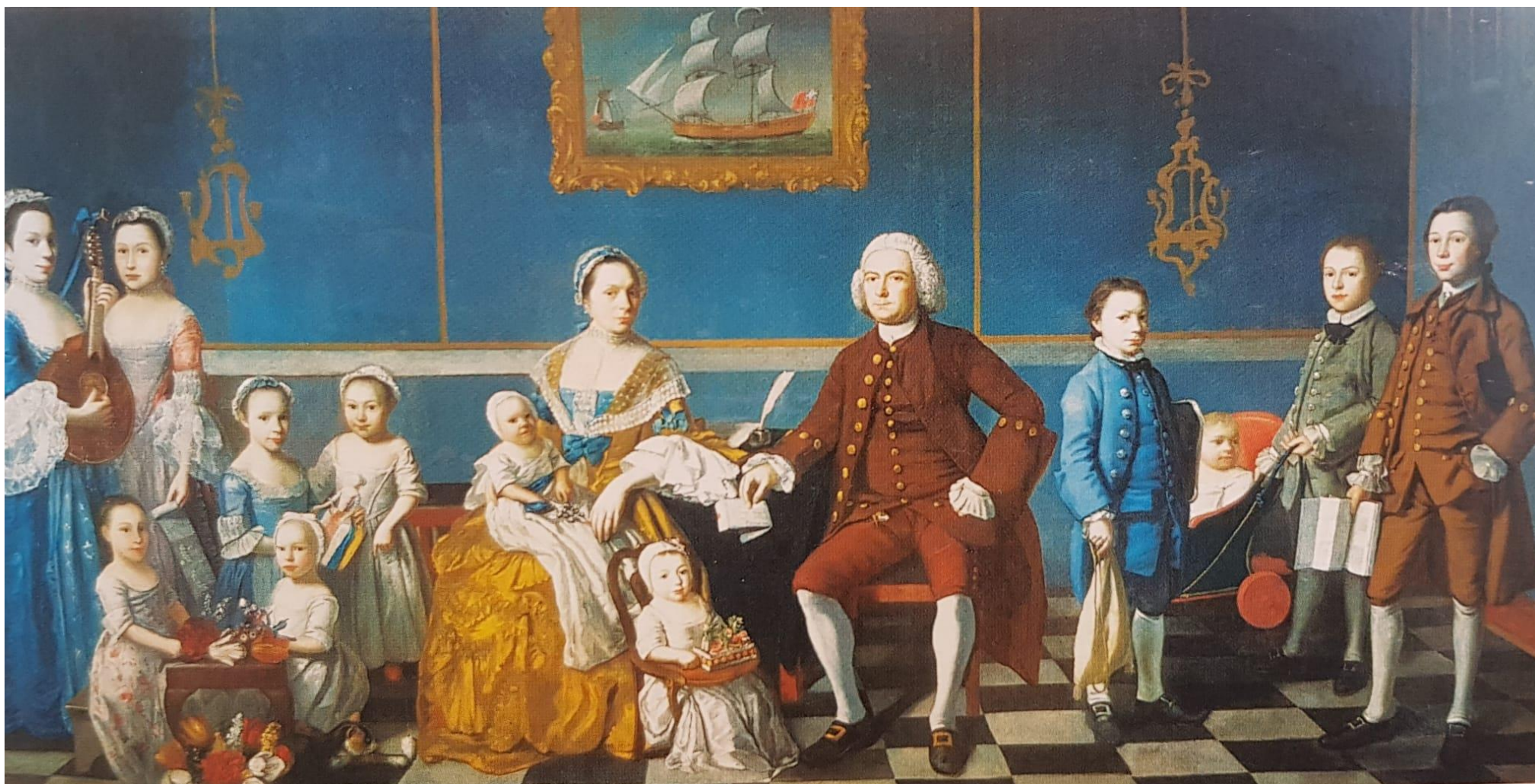


# Thomas Greg (1721–1780)

- Born to Elizabeth and Thomas Greg, part of a prominent Belfast family.
- Partnered with brother-in-law, Waddell Cunningham, forming a successful mercantile business.
- Established a thriving shipping company in New York, benefiting from war and trade.
- Invested in a sugar plantation called "Belfast" on Dominica, supplied with slaves by Greg's brother.
- Improved Belfast's commercial infrastructure, including the Lagan navigation canal and White Linen Hall.
- Played a significant role in the Volunteers, advocating for free commerce and Irish legislative independence.



# Thomas Greg and family



# John Greg (1716-1795)

- Went to the West Indies in 1765, became the first Government Commissioner for the sale of land
- Owned two estates in Dominica (Hertford and Hillsborough)
- His wife, Catharine (née Henderson), inherited Cane Garden in St. Vincent in 1773
- Thomas Greg, John's brother, also owned an estate in Dominica with Waddell Cunningham
- John Greg's Will proved on 25/06/1795. Left leasehold houses in Stratford Place, London, and Spring Grove, Hampton to his wife Catharine



St Mary's Church Hampton  
Hampton, London Borough of Richmond  
upon Thames, Greater London, England

# Death and legacy

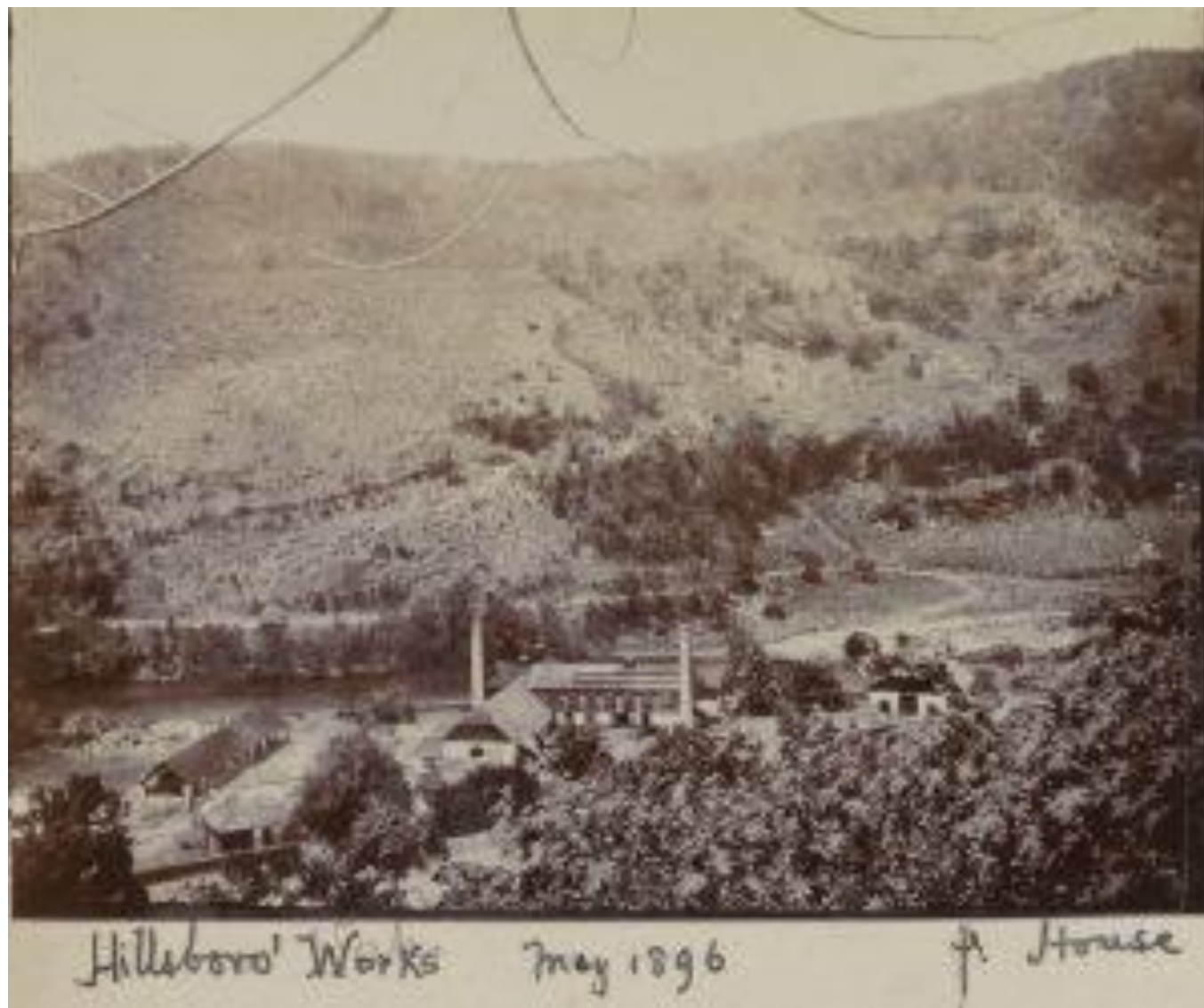
- Left monetary legacies to family members  
Left a life interest in his West India estates to his wife Catharine, then to nephews Thomas Greg and Samuel Greg
- In Dominica, John Greg was the original purchaser of St Joseph Lot 37 (86 acres) and Lots 87-89
- John Greg was the original purchaser of St Paul Lots 14-15 (33 acres each), Lots 18-20 (16, 45, and 133 acres), Lot 75
- John Greg, along with Thomas Jemmit, purchased Lots 76-78 (40, 15, and 34 acres)
- John Greg and Thomas Jemmit were present possessors of St Joseph Lands on Lease Lot 26 (58 acres) and St Paul Lands on Lease Lot 1 (60 acres)



# Hillsborough Estate, St Joseph's Parish



# The estate

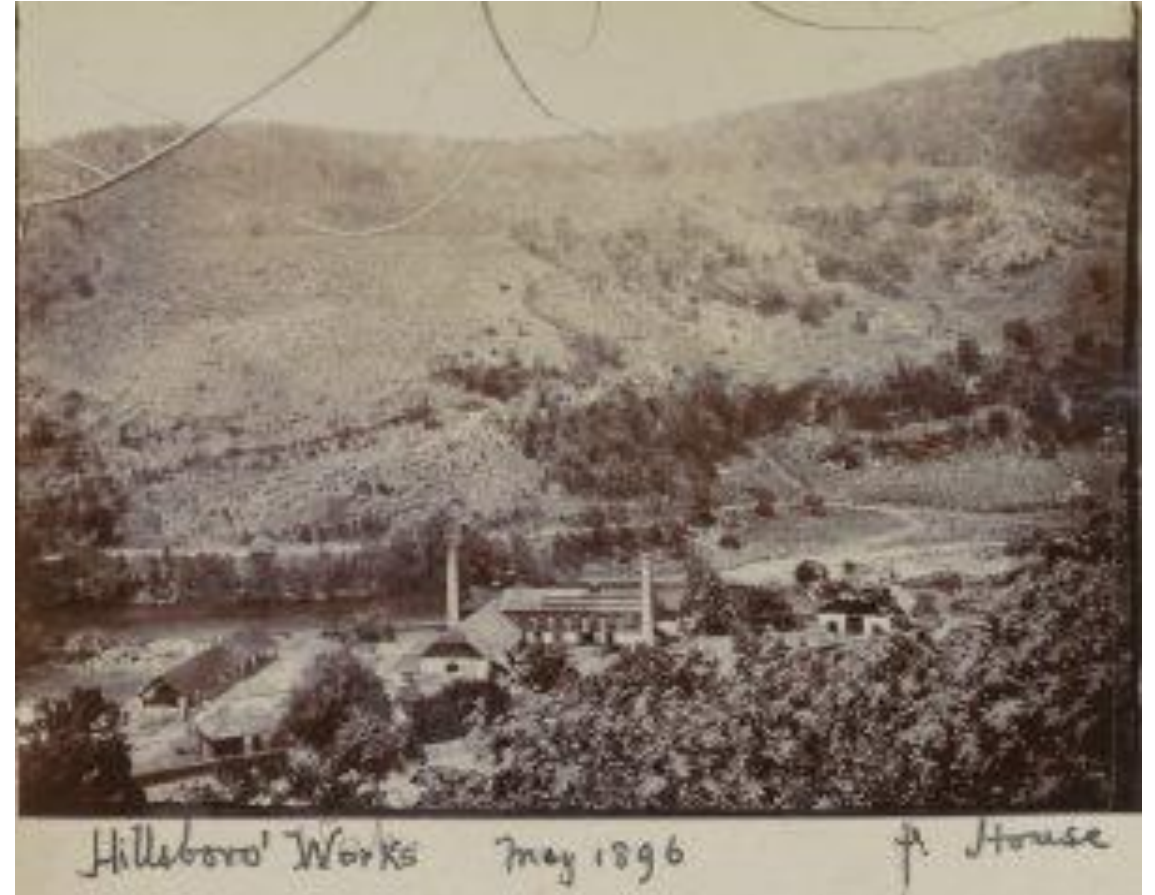


# Revolt and resistance: Balla Rebellion

**Timeframe:** The Balla Rebellion is believed to have occurred sometime between 1812 and 1814. It was one of several slave uprisings that took place in the Caribbean during this period, fueled by the desire for freedom and better living conditions.

**Grievances:** Enslaved people in Dominica, like those in other parts of the Caribbean, faced harsh and oppressive conditions, including forced labor, physical abuse, and separation from their families. These grievances likely played a role in sparking the rebellion.

**Suppression:** The British colonial authorities swiftly suppressed the rebellion. As a result, the rebellion did not achieve its goal of securing freedom for the enslaved people involved.





# Repression and impact

Repression: Following the rebellion's suppression, there were likely harsh reprisals against the participants, with severe punishments, such as floggings and executions, being carried out. The British colonial authorities were determined to maintain control and suppress any further rebellion.

Long-Term Impact: While the Balla Rebellion itself did not lead to the abolition of slavery in Dominica, it was part of a broader movement toward emancipation in the Caribbean. Slavery was eventually abolished in British colonies in 1834, with full emancipation taking effect in 1838.



# Punishments, Hillsborough Estate, January 1814

- On January 15-16, 1814, Peter, was court-martialed for inciting a mutiny among 20 other slaves and stealing provisions. He was sentenced to hang, and the execution took place on January 18, 1814. His head was placed on a pole, and his body was hung on a gibbet.
- On January 22, 1814, Dick and Daniel, were court-martialed for being runaways and received 100 lashes each. They were then returned to their owners.
- Also on January 22, 1814, Sarah,, was court-martialed for being a runaway and sentenced to receive 50 lashes. However, she was pardoned and released.
- Finally, on the same day, January 22, 1814, Hetty, Penny, and Placide, were court-martialed for being runaways and received 40 lashes each. They, too, were returned to their owners.



# Fate of the estate

- John Greg passed away on June 10, 1795, leaving his West Indian properties to his nephews Thomas and Samuel (sons of Thomas (1718-1796)), who were raised by their uncle Robert Hyde.
- Thomas conveyed his share to Samuel for a £1500 annuity.



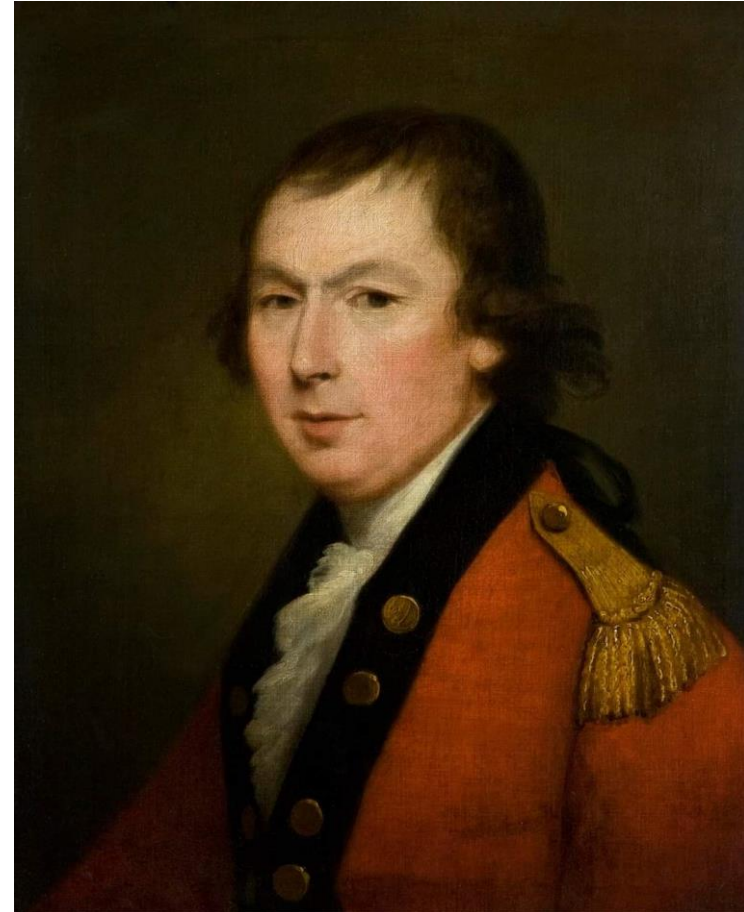
# Later history

- After Samuel's death in 1834, the estates passed to his son, Thomas (who died around 1839).
- In 1839, the Hillsborough estate was inherited by his brother, Robert Hyde Greg.
- The Greg family owned the estate until 1928 when it was sold to a Dominican family named Rolle, despite initial reluctance due to the family's ethnicity.
- The Rolle family still owned the estate as of 2010.



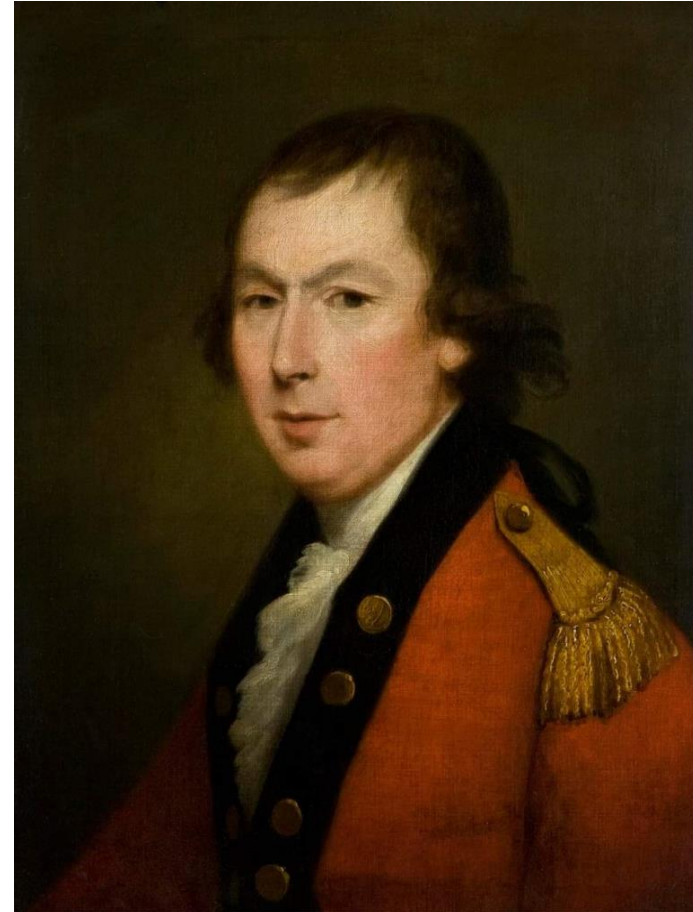
# Waddell Cunningham (c. 1729-1797)

- Irish merchant prominent in Georgian-era Belfast
- Patron of Belfast Charitable Society and its Poor House
- Commander of Volunteer patriot militia
- Supported the construction of Belfast's first Catholic chapel
- Controversial for land speculation and slaveholding
- Opposition to immediate Catholic Emancipation
- Legacy includes contributions to trade, infrastructure, and social initiatives



# Cunningham and Greg owned the 'Belfast' Estate

Thomas Gregg married Elizabeth Hyde and has 13 children: he died in 1796, leaving his youngest son Cunningham as residuary legatee, and he and Waddell Cunningham sold the Belfast estate for £17,000.



Belfast Estate Rum Distillery, Belfast,  
Dominica



# Mausoleums of Greg and Cunningham, Knockbreda, Forrestside, south Belfast





# William Forsyth in British Guiana





# Home of...

Demerara sugar is one of several types of sugar that are classified as "raw" sugars, along with turbinado sugar, as well as products described as raw cane sugar, washed sugar, evaporated cane juice, and others. Contrary to popular belief, raw sugars such as demerara do in fact undergo a high degree of refining. What the term "raw" indicates is that it has been crystallized only once, as opposed to twice for granulated [white sugar](#). It's named for the Dutch and then British colony in what is now Guyana where the sugar was first produced.



# Colonial history

1796: Britain took over from the Dutch during hostilities with France.

1802: Returned to the Batavian Republic. The Batavian Republic was a French client state in the Netherlands established in 1795 during the French Revolutionary Wars.

1803: British seizure during the Napoleonic Wars.

1814: Ceded to the United Kingdom in the Anglo-Dutch Treaty.

1831: Consolidated into a single colony known as British Guiana.



Flag of the Batavian Republic,  
a client state of the French Republic that ruled over the Low  
Countries during the French Revolutionary Wars

# Economy

- 1807–1830s: Slave economy dominated.
- Shifts: Post-emancipation transition to rice farming, mining, and forestry.
- 1822: Administration of Essequibo and Demerara combined.
- 1831: Formation of British Guiana through the merger of Essequibo-Demerara and Berbice.
- 1959: Sugar still accounted for nearly 50% of exports.



# William Forsyth (1789-1856)

William Forsyth, a native of Ballynure, County Antrim, emigrated to the West Indies as a penniless youth.

He achieved wealth by becoming a prominent landowner in the West Indies.

His financial stability was challenged by the impact of slave emancipation on property values.

Through a legal dispute, Forsyth successfully recovered his lost property.

He later relocated to Belfast and gained respect as a highly regarded resident.

Forsyth was actively involved in civic affairs, representing the town in the Town Council.



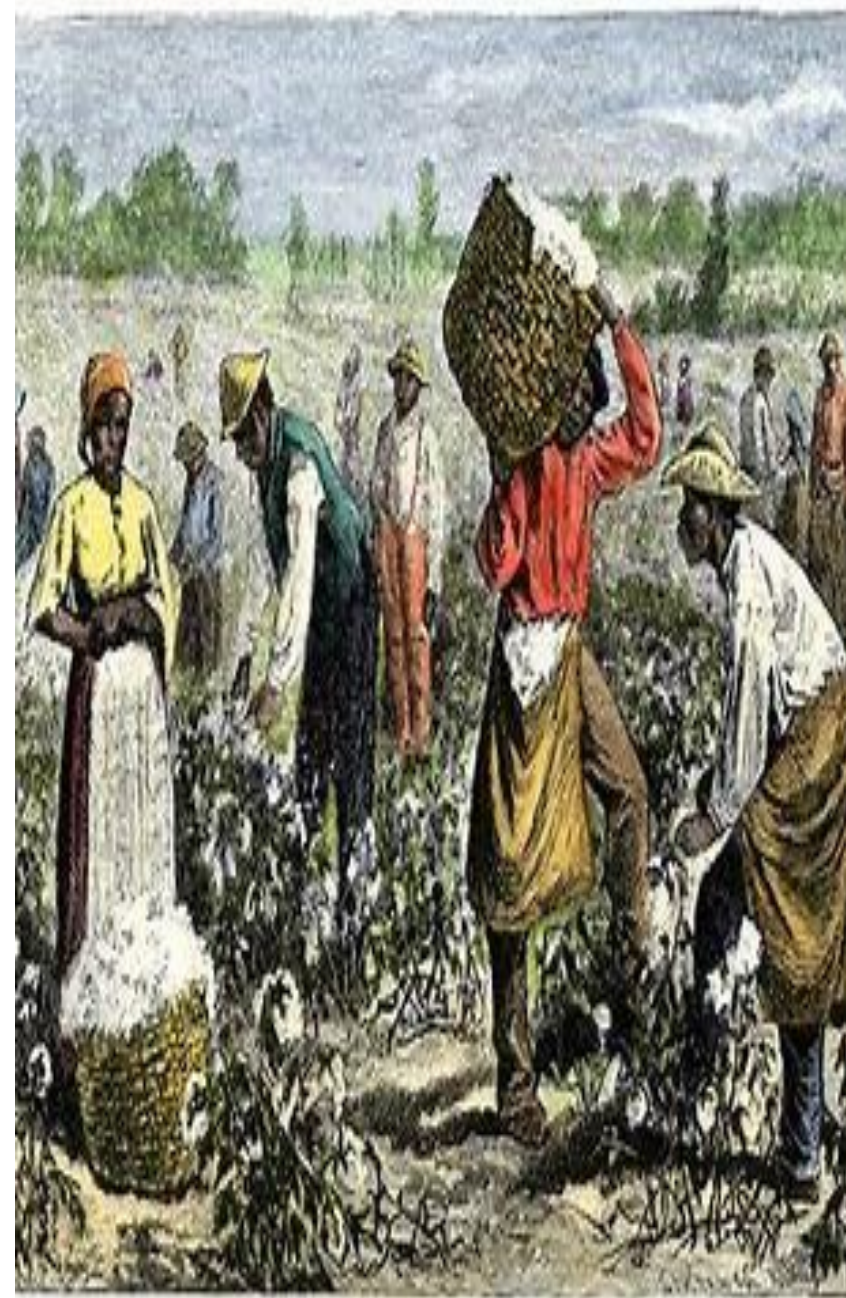
# Unsuccessful claim

- Claimed unsuccessfully as owner of Friends plantation in British Guiana which had 272 slaves.
- The compensation for the enslaved on which was awarded to George Robert Smith of Smith Payne & Smith.



# Hugh McCalmont

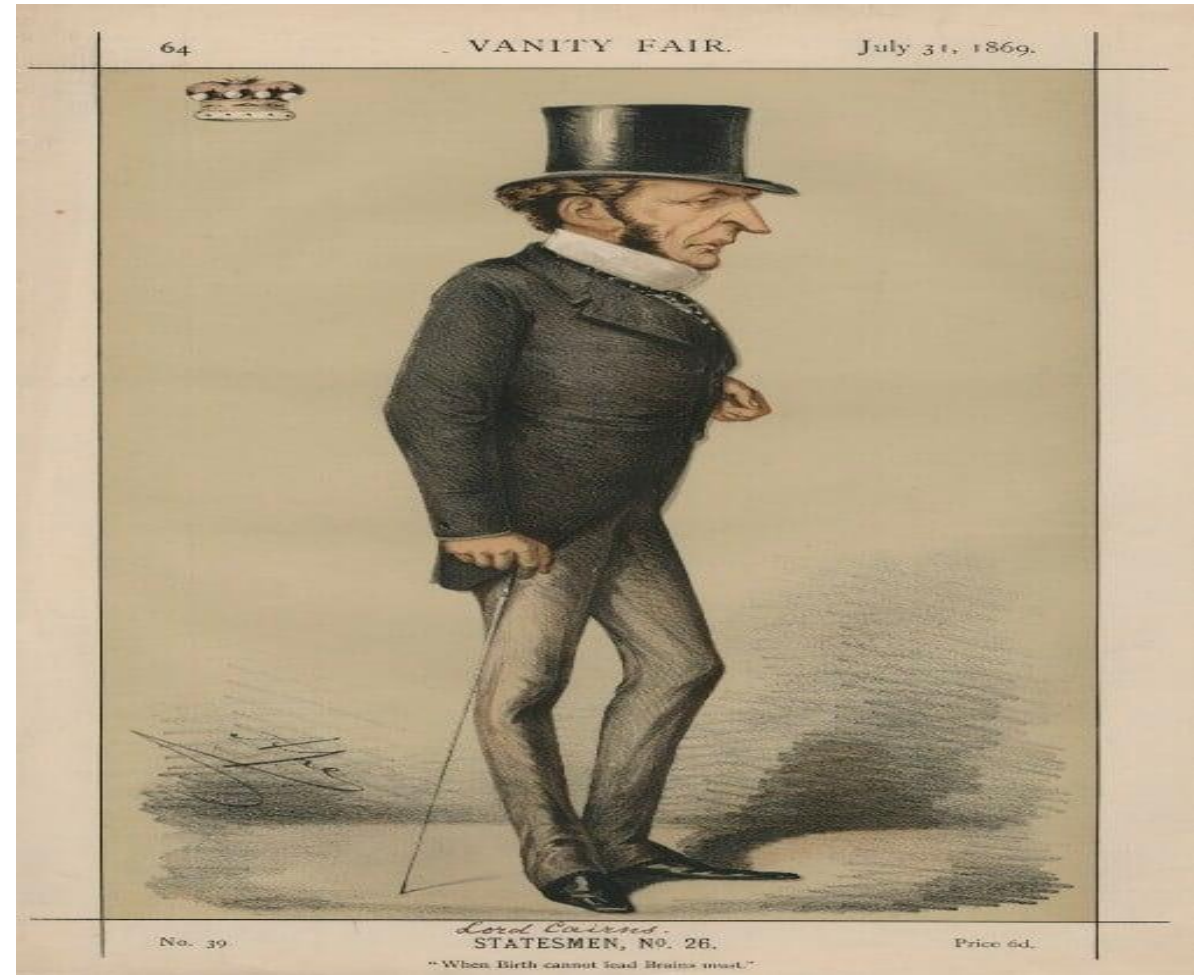
- McCalmonts' involvement in Demerara since 1790 and in Berbice from about 1799.
- They owned two plantations on the west sea coast.
- Hugh McCalmont, a key figure (1765-1838) from Abbeylands, Co Antrim.
- Letters addressed to him in Demerara, London, and Baltimore.
- In 1814, a McCalmont slave named February was rewarded for revealing an uprising plan.





# Management of the estate

- In 1819, Hugh McCalmont owned the Hope & Experiment plantation on the west sea coast with 285 slaves.
- John Maclennan managed the plantation on his behalf.
- A letter from 1823 mentions Hugh McCalmont's presence in the colony during an insurrection.



# Change of management

- A letter from 1823 suggests a younger relative was managing the family's interests.
- A younger Hugh McCalmont (1811-1838) who drowned in 1838 in Berbice.
- He is commemorated as 'late Mayor' of Georgetown and an elder of the church.



# Wealth and descendants

- In 1826, a letter from James Calley, manager of a plantation in Berbice, to owner Hugh McCalmont in Belfast.
- McCalmonts managed their interests across different locations.
- Hugh McCalmont (1765-1838) married Elizabeth Allen Barklie in 1807.
- Their son Hugh McCalmont (1810-1887) became one of the richest men in the country.
- McCalmont Brothers of London was their merchant bank.
- The latter Hugh McCalmont was an uncle of Unionist politician Hugh McCalmont MP (1845-1924).



# Compensated under the Act

- Their success reflects broader processes of wealth transfer from slavery into the British national and imperial economy in the 19th century.
- Plantations compensated under the 1833 Act.

Hope & Experiment, British Guiana	287 slaves	£14,639
Hope & Experiment, British Guiana	139 slaves	£7,244
Orangestein, British Guiana	82 slaves	£4,261



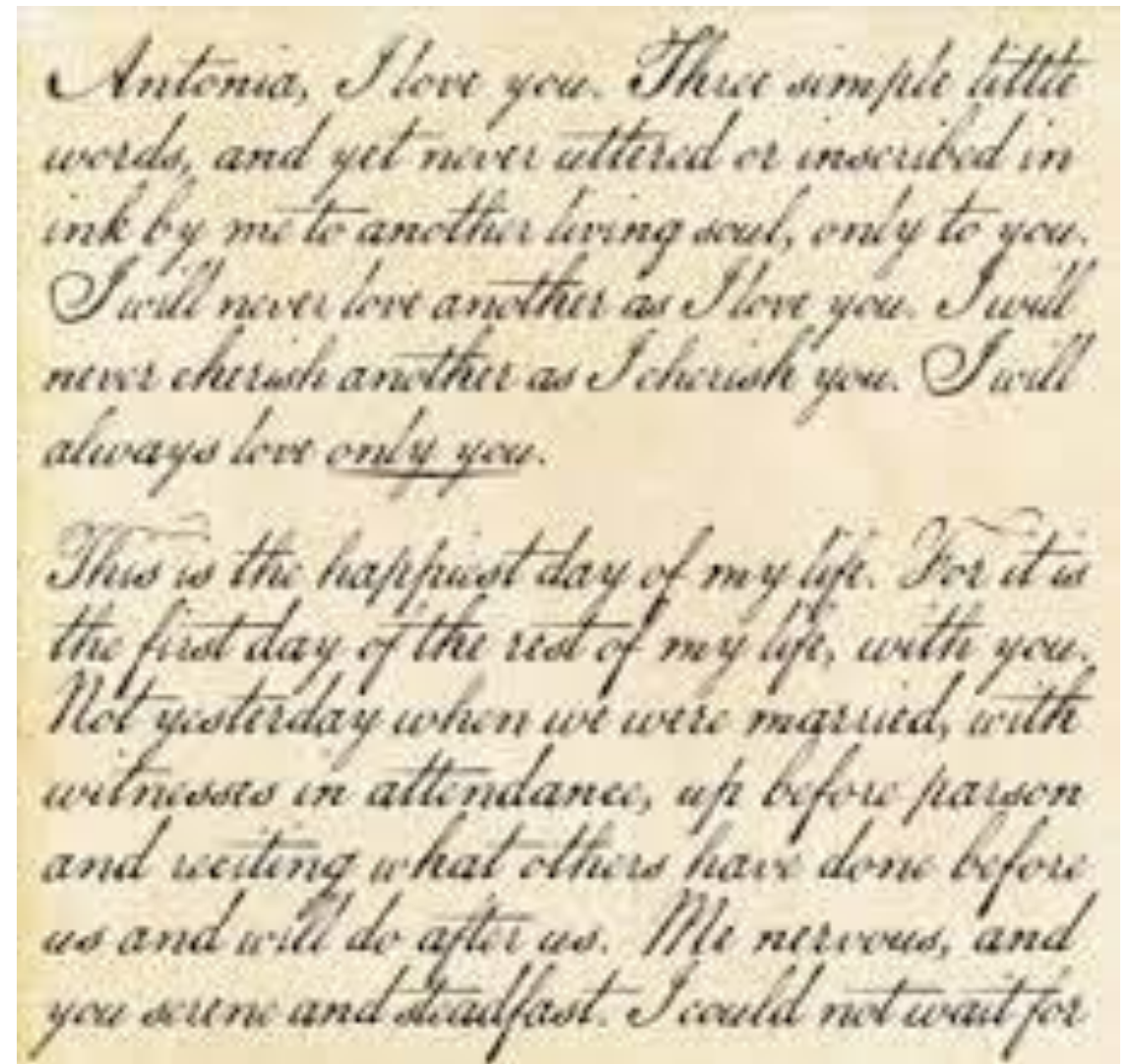
# John Black

- John Black, a pioneering British/Irish settler in Trinidad, hailed from a prominent Belfast family, with his father George Black serving as the Mayor of Belfast.
- After Britain seized Trinidad from the Spanish in 1797 and formal accession in 1802, Black became part of the early power structure around Thomas Picton.
- He owned the Barataria estate, along with the enslaved people on it, from some point between 1819 and 1828.
- Born in Ulster, Black left Ireland in 1771 and settled initially in Grenada before moving to Trinidad in 1784 [sic], establishing himself as a major slave owner and a prominent figure among the island's planter elite.

Date of Award.	No. of Claim.	Name of Party to whom the Payment is Awarded.	No. of £ s. d.	SUM.
7 Mar. 1830	343	Samuel King - - -	17	£. s. d. 211 - 4
—	344	William Farrington - -	38	308 17 7
—	345	William Farrington - -	23	220 18 11
25 April 1830	346	William Farrington - -	8	102 12 3
7 Mar. 1830	347	Mustapha Munnings - -	1	8 5 10
—	348	Elizabeth Greenleaf - -	7	65 8 0
—	349	John Longley - - -	2	23 19 9
28 Mar. 1830	350	Alexander J. Thompson -	8	104 15 7
7 Mar. 1830	351	Jane Eliza Watson - -	2	30 10 0
2 May 1830	352	Margaret Bridgewater -	21	240 17 4
7 Mar. 1830	353	Elixa M'Kenzie - - -	7	64 3 4
—	354	David Reckley - - -	1	20 2 3
—	355	Mary Marsh - - -	1	8 5 8
—	356	Emeline Adderley - - -	10	112 0 7
—	357	George Adderley - - -	8	147 4 7
—	358	Henry Adderley - - -	14	230 11 8
—	359	Henry Adderley - - -	2	25 4 1
—	360	Mary Hewitt - - -	2	23 10 0
—	361	William Farrington - -	18	213 7 3
7 Mar. 1830	362	- - [Litigated Claim]	3	—
4 Apr. 1830	363	Mary Jane Baker - - -	11	17 12 -
—	364	John Sanders - - -	11	230 10 5
10 April 1830	365	Caroline Eliza Forster and Hannah Solomon - -	1	10 12 0
7 Mar. 1830	366	Charlotte W. Ambrister -	5	80 7 1
—	367	George Ambrister - - -	5	80 12 7
—	368	Louisa Musgrove - - -	20	230 12 -
—	369	Margaret Davis - - -	5	34 9 7
—	370	George Ambrister - - -	8	91 3 5
—	371	Emily C. Edgecombe - -	1	10 12 0
—	372	Emily C. Edgecombe - -	1	26 2 3
—	373	Emily C. Edgecombe & Joseph Edgecombe - -	1	26 2 3
—	374	John Miller - - -	4	30 5 1
—	375	Alexander Mason - - -	23	387 5 3
—	376	William T. C. Bethell - -	8	94 14 2
7 Mar. 1830	377	[Remains for Adjudication]	3	—
—	378	George Gibbs, junior - -	3	30 5 -
—	379	George Gibbs, senior - -	40	536 14 2
—	380	Robert Barry - - -	9	138 15 -
—	381	Elisha Swala - - -	17	201 10 4
—	382	William Gibson Fulford -	18	280 - 9
—	383	Charlotte Spatches - - -	2	10 11 8
—	384	Joseph S. Johnson - - -	2	27 18 4
—	385	Joseph J. Johnson - - -	26	281 10 2
—	386	Joseph S. Johnson - - -	1	15 5 7
—	387	Mary Clutson - - -	14	107 10 11
—	388	William H. Johnson - - -	5	80 7 1
—	389	James Curry - - -	4	32 14 4
18 June 1830	390	Murtha Thrift - - -	1	25 2 3
27 Aug. 1830	391	James Farquharson - - -	52	600 1 11
7 Mar. 1830	392	John Dickson - - -	6	82 18 7
—	393	Elizabeth Craunmond - -	5	65 8 4
—	394	Mary Ann Ambrister - -	14	180 7 8
2 Apr. 1830	395	Sophia Hudson & Sarah Hudson - - -	4	61 1 1
7 Mar. 1830	396	William S. Hudson - - -	3	32 14 1
—	397	Robert C. Hand - - -	2	10 12 11
—	398	Robert C. Hand - - -	16	166 15 3
—	399	- - [No Claims or Return]	—	—
7 Mar. 1830	400	Robert C. Hand - - -	3	38 17 1

# Black's letters

- Black's letters, written between 1799 and 1836 to his brother George in Belfast, reflect his attempt to maintain familial ties across the Atlantic and offer insights into the close connections between Ulster and the West Indies during the early nineteenth century.
- The letters depict the challenges of mercantile life amidst political and economic unrest and provide a vivid portrayal of a world centered around the institution of slavery, in which Ulster played a significant role.
- His career in Trinidad, detailed in a recent unpublished doctoral thesis by Jennifer McLaren of Macquarie University, reveals Black's partnership with Edward Barry as a 'merchant and planter' and his role as an agent for the slave-traders Baker and Dawson of Liverpool.



Antonia, I love you. Three simple little words, and yet never uttered or inscribed in ink by me to another living soul, only to you. I will never love another as I love you. I will never cherish another as I cherish you. I will always love only you.

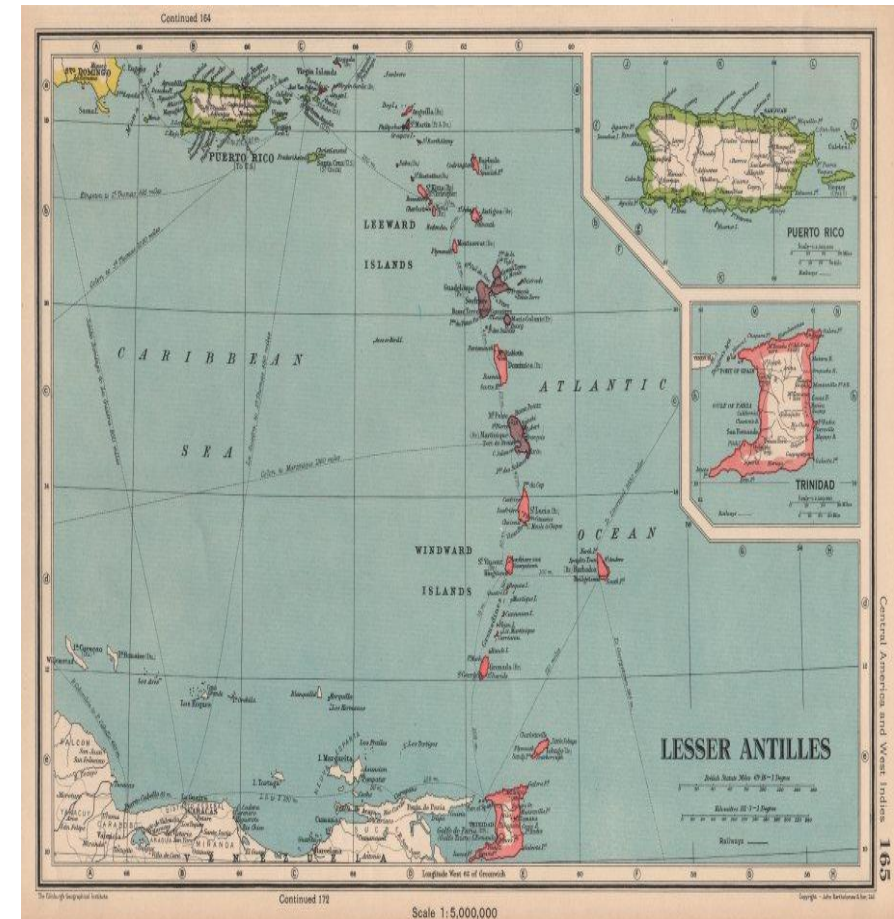
This is the happiest day of my life. For it is the first day of the rest of my life, with you. Not yesterday when we were married, with witnesses in attendance, up before parson and reciting what others have done before us and will do after us. Me nervous, and you serene and steadfast. I could not wait for

# Trinidad in the Lesser Antilles



# George Black, John Black's father

- Held the position of Sovereign of Belfast five times (1775, 1776, 1782, 1783, and 1785).
  - Appointed Vice-President of the Belfast Charitable Society.
- Lived at Stranmillis, Lagan water course ran through his land.
- Brother of Dr. Joseph Black, a renowned Professor of Chemistry at the University of Edinburgh, famous for his work on carbon dioxide and latent heat.





# History of Trinidad, history to 1700

- Pre-Columbian Inhabitants: Before Christopher Columbus's arrival in 1498, Trinidad and Tobago were inhabited by Arawak and Carib Indian populations, leaving limited physical traces.
- Impact of Spanish Encomienda System (1300s): The indigenous populations faced a decline under the Spanish encomienda system, which coerced them into converting to Christianity and working as slaves on Spanish Mission lands.
- Viceroyalty of New Spain (1700): By 1700, Trinidad, a sparsely populated island, fell under the Viceroyalty of New Spain, comprising Mexico, Central America, and the southwestern United States.



# History of Trinidad, 1700-1838

- 1783 Cedula de Poblacion: King Carlos III issued the Cedula de Poblacion in 1783, offering free lands to foreign settlers and their slaves in exchange for allegiance to the Spanish crown, attracting French planters and other Europeans.
- British Occupation (1796-1802): In 1796, British forces led by Sir Ralph Abercromby compelled the Spanish Governor to surrender Trinidad. By 1802, it officially became a British colony.
- Sugar Industry Expansion: The British, eager to expand the sugar industry, relied on African slaves as the main labour force. However, the abolition of slavery in 1838 posed economic challenges to Trinidad's agricultural sector.



# Geographical Context of Correspondence

- Member of a prominent Belfast Anglican mercantile family.
- Extended network to Bordeaux, Dublin, Edinburgh, and the Caribbean.
- Black's letters focus on his experiences in Trinidad, revealing a "nobody" in Ireland but a "somebody" in Trinidad.



# John Black's Role as a Slave Owner

- Unapologetic slave owner, reflected in banal references to slaves as commodities.
- Mentality of Black and his Belfast family accepting the everyday nature of the slave economy.
- Contrasts with modern narratives emphasizing abolitionism, highlighting Irish complicity.



# Black's Early Life and Transition to Trinidad

- Born into a Belfast Anglican mercantile family.
- Career in Grenada, transition to Trinidad in 1784.
- Trinidad as an unstable frontier zone between Spanish, French, and British empires.



# Life in Trinidad - Plantation Owner and Politician

- Black's reliance on Belfast connections for influence in Trinidad.
- Use of correspondence to strengthen bonds with Belfast while establishing a new life.
- Challenges faced as a plantation owner: impact of weather, sickness, and anti-slavery legislation.



# John Black's Correspondence - Maintaining Bonds with Home

- Importance of correspondence in maintaining ties with Belfast.
- Reminiscences of old acquaintances, family members, and spaces.
- Efforts to connect his Trinidad-born daughters with his Belfast family.



# The Chilling Reality of Slave Ownership

- Casual references to slaves alongside other investments.
- References to burying slaves, described as the "very best and most valuable people."
- Provides a glimpse into the mentality of a slave owner running a middling sugar plantation.





# John Black's Prosperity in Trinidad

- Despite challenges, Black prospered in Trinidad.
- Correspondence reflects aspirations to return home, though he never did.
- Illustrates the trials and tribulations of a plantation owner in an uncertain climate.



A historical black and white photograph of a plantation landscape. In the foreground, there are several tall palm trees. In the middle ground, a large, multi-story building with a prominent arched entrance is visible. The background shows a wide, open field or plantation area under a cloudy sky. The overall scene depicts a typical plantation environment from the 19th century.

How does Belfast compare to other towns for its connections to slavery?

# London

- The Elizabethan Slave Trade: John Hawkins, the first English slave trader, initiated Britain's involvement during Elizabeth I's reign.

- Despite initial concerns, Elizabeth I supported Hawkins due to the profitability of the trade.

17th Century Expansion: English colonies expanded rapidly in the 17th century, increasing the demand for African labour.



# Early 18th Century Peak

- Treaty of Utrecht in 1713 granted Britain the 'asiento,' allowing enslaved Africans to be transported to the Spanish Americas.
- London's involvement in the slave trade grew significantly in the 1710s and 1720s, with Bristol later overtaking London in the 1730s.
- London's ships continued to carry enslaved people until the abolition of the trade in 1807, and the city played a central role in financing, insuring vessels, and arranging cargoes for Africa.



# Bristol

- Bristol's involvement dates back to the eleventh century.
  - Official participation begins in 1698 after the Royal African Company's monopoly ends.
  - The slave trade, though risky, was highly profitable.
  - Bristol's international port status made it well-suited to exploit the trade.



# Bristol's Ascendancy

- Premier Slaving Port:
  - By the late 1730s, Bristol becomes Britain's premier slaving port.
  - In 1750 alone, Bristol ships transport 8,000 enslaved Africans to the British Caribbean and North America.
  - Many Bristolians profit from the trade, including shipbuilders, merchants, and manufacturers.
  - Profits form the basis of Bristol's first banks and contribute to the city's architecture.



# Liverpool

- The African Company Act 1750
  - Establishment of the African Company of Merchants, replacing the Royal African Company.
  - Stipulations for a "free and open" slave trade and the organizational structure of the new company.
  - Liverpool's integral role in the African Company of Merchants, outlined in the act.
  - The town clerk of Liverpool given specific responsibilities within the company.



# Liverpool's Emergence in the Slave Trade

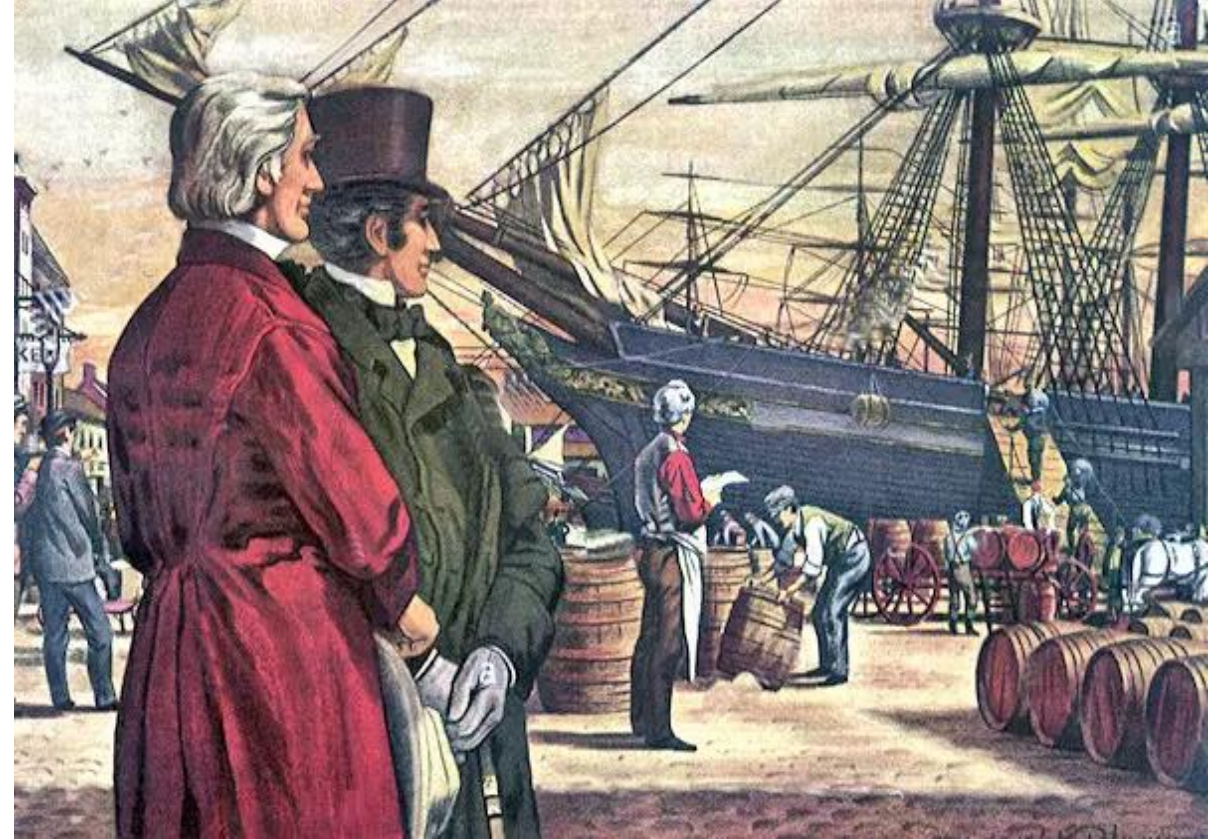
- Liverpool becomes Britain's primary slaving port in the 18th century.
  - Rapid growth surpasses Bristol and London, achieving 80% control of British slave trade by the 1790s.
  - Liverpool's prosperity intricately linked to the transatlantic slave trade.
  - Between a third and a half of Liverpool's trade directed towards Africa and the Caribbean.
  - Liverpool's pivotal role in the triangular trade system.
  - Dominance in both British and European slave trade, solidifying economic prowess.





# Growth and Pre-eminence

- From the mid-1740s, Liverpool becomes the largest slave trading port in Britain.
  - By 1750, Liverpool surpasses Bristol, becoming the pre-eminent slave trading port in Great Britain.
  - Liverpool's substantial control of the slave trade: 84.7% of all voyages between 1793 and 1807, London accounting for 12% and Bristol 3.3%.
- At least 25 of the city's lord mayors were slave owners or traders and many of them have been immortalised in the likes of Tarleton, Cunliffe and Gildart streets.



# Infrastructure

## Docks and Shipbuilding

- Liverpool Corporation's financial strength: £1 million invested in six new docks during the 18th century.
- Liverpool's docks play a significant role in shipbuilding, constructing 26% of total UK ships involved in the slave trade.

## Locational Advantages

- Geographical advantages during times of war, allowing ships to sail north of Ireland after leaving port.
- The tax-free status of the Isle of Man until 1765 contributes to Liverpool's economic ascent.



# Sourcing Goods and Trading

- - Liverpool's proximity to the industrializing North of England facilitates easy sourcing of goods for the slave trade.

- Liverpool traders specialize in trading cotton goods, aligning with the preferences of African slave traders.

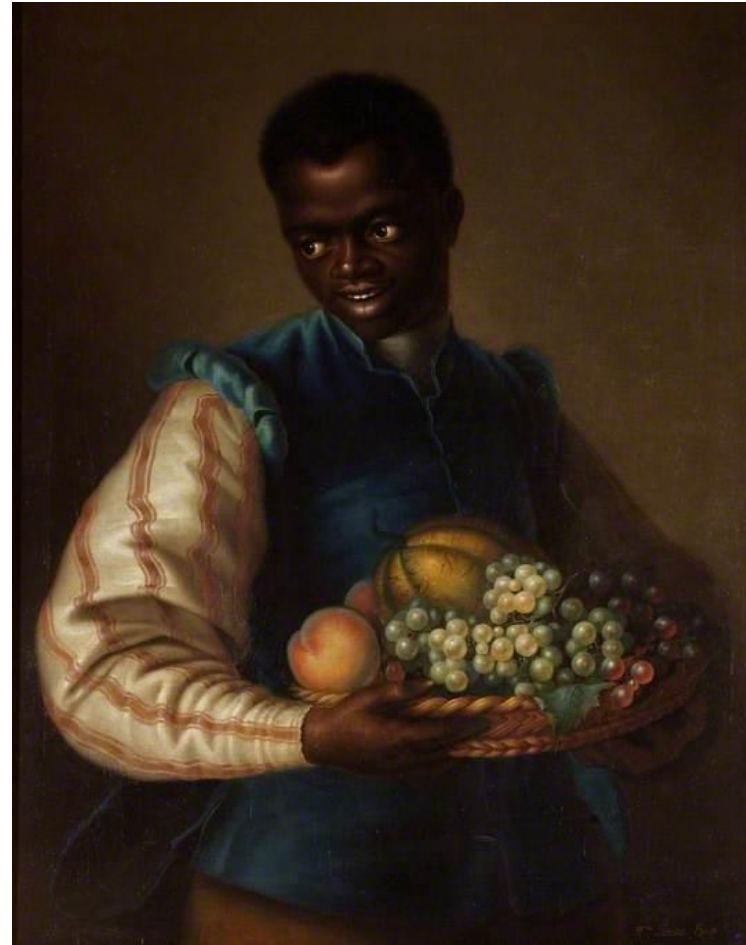
- Regions of Focus

- Liverpool's specialization in the Bight of Biafra and West Central Africa, transporting 427,000 and 197,000 individuals, respectively.



# How does Belfast Compare?

- Around 10 Belfast citizens or former citizens owned enslaved people on plantations.
- No one was involved in slave trading, or owning slave ships (as far as we know).
- No ships registered to Belfast.
- Anti slavery sentiment stopped attempts by Waddell Cunningham to start a Belfast Slave Ship Company



# Questions