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We navel-string bury here: Landscape history, representation and identity in the Grenada islandscape

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Place Identities in the Grenada Islandscape

“Grenada is a space that I can navigate with a certain amount of ease by virtue of the fact that I am part of the vibes and I understand it. I reflect it and it reflects me. I don’t suppose I’d have that ease of navigation in other spaces.”

Richie Maitland (2014), *Caribbean Constructions of Identity and Belonging* (Grenada40.com)

I was almost fifteen years old when my family (and I) emigrated to the United States to live like countless other Grenadians since the early 20th century, including many in my extended family. It is often joked that there are more Grenadians in New York alone than there are in Grenada because so many migrated there in the past century to live (with their descendants), with Tobias (1975) adding, “How you gonna keep ’em down in the tropics once they’ve dreamed New York?” (Bouvier 1984; Hill 1977; Tobias 1975, 1976, 1980). Growing up in Grenada I think I had always believed that leaving the island for the United States or United Kingdom was a strong possibility because so many of my family and friends had left permanently for those places. Grenadians, like many across the region, are in fact a primary export of the islands. Even as they had arrived in droves from other places they also left in droves for still other places, mostly, they believed, for better opportunities. And we were, in many respects, migration oriented as Caribbean peoples have moved within and beyond these islands for centuries, beginning with our Indiegenous ancestors (Hill 1977; Tobias 1975). I grew up believing that our turn to emigrate would come, and despite my parents’ advanced age (in their 50s) at the time, they nonetheless decided to uproot the family from the place we had known all our lives to a new, far-away place because they believed that it would provide more opportunities for their children and grandchildren.

And that it did! However, one of the most profound experiences, despite being with my family in our new home in North America, was that I continued to dream in the place I had known all my life (of fifteen years). My dreamscape was the place where I was born and

grew up, the place I knew best and most intimately, where I was most comfortable and at ease—a small street community overlooking the main town, itself overlooking the Caribbean Sea that encompassed my childhood playscape and emerging worldview. And as I traveled the world, my dreamscape continued to reflect the first fifteen years of my life in the Grenada islandscape. I found it quite unsettling that the place of my dreams had not incorporated the new places I had come to know and some that I even liked. I kept returning to Grenada over and over again (in my dreams, in my intellect, and in person), to the landscape of my birth and formative years. Back to my island home, that “place of greatest joy and the engendering of dizzying dreams” (Martin, L. 2016:1). And on these many journeys back to Grenada, I would jokingly tell those who quipped why I was visiting yet again that it was because I came in search of something I must have left behind since I had departed the island at such a young age compared to my siblings, I being the youngest. What was there in this landscape, buried deep in this islandscape that keeps pulling me back to its shores? Is it its sandy beaches and warm seas, lofty mountains, populated lush valleys, familiar vegetation, narrow winding streets, accustomed people, or its many trails into the past, into my past, into my childhood memories, and into the fading memories of my mother and grandmothers? Why, after so many years of travel to and living in different places around the world—Africa, Europe and Asia—did I continue to identify with this islandscape of my birth and youth, the landscape of my beginning, and of my parents’ and grandparents’ beginning?

This chapter discusses the latter part of the main research question identified in Chapter 2: *(What can the life history of a SIDS like Grenada (i.e. its landscape biography) tell us about how people convey value to the landscape through their various representation and memory-traces, and) **how sense of place and identities are (re)created in this creolizing islandscape?***

This chapter brings together the questions and ideas generated in the previous chapters and discusses the larger issue of place identities and contestation across time and space in the Grenada islandscape. With the detailed examination of how various groups, as authors of the landscape, are represented or represented themselves in the Grenadian landscape in Chapter 6 to provide the basis to explore the idea of landscape identity as discussed in Chapter 3, this chapter focuses on how individual “Grenadians” created and are creating or seeking to create identities and a sense of place in this culturally evolving yet contested islandscape. It will examine identity formation in the context of Grenadian history by using the metaphor of the buried umbilical cord or *navel-string* to narrate the creation of “origins” and “roots,” and thus

connectedness of the Grenadian storyscape across time to arrive at how we create a sense of place within and around this islandscape.

8.1 “We Navel-String Bury Here”: Affirming Identities in the Grenada Islandscape

*“We navel string bury here, she say,
and we mother and we father and everybody before them.”*

Dionne Brand, *Another Place, Not Here* (1996:14)

Echoing across the Grenadian historical landscape are the continuous claims to the land and its authorship, and by extension belonging and identity (Berberich et al. 2012). From the Kali’nago to the invading French and British, and the transported captive Africans and their descendants, the claim to land ownership/authorship is most loudly heard when that tenure appears threatened or questioned. It was loudly heard in March 1649, voiced by the Kali’nago and Kali’na when the invading French settlers insinuated themselves into their Indigenous space with their “fishing expedition” that lasted just over a century (Martin 2013). It would violently displace them to the periphery, and eventually, figuratively pushing them off the island into the sea, into mythological oblivion from atop Leapers’ Hill, Sauteurs. It was again voiced by the French after March 1762 following the British capture of the island, despite the French being allowed to remain on the island and in possession of their lands now under lease, but subjugating many of their civil rights that made them feel less as owners of the (is)land that they had birthed into modernity (Gonzalez 1994; Martin 2013). It was voiced by the British between 1779 and 1783 after the French recaptured the island, and despite them retaining ownership of their plantations but lacking political control (Devas 1974). With the British regaining control of the island in 1783, the French again contested the land and their restricted rights, culminating in civil war with Fédon’s Rebellion that ruined the island and the relationship between the French and British (Brizan 1998; Martin 2017). It was heard once again when the last remaining white British (and their descendant, including mixed race) proprietors and managers felt displaced by the violent protest of Grenadians during the labor unrest in 1951 under Eric Gairy (Brizan 1998). And it has been continuously voiced when “foreigners” lay claim to lands not accessible to Grenadians who lack the resources,

particularly financial, to own what they claim as their lands, authored by their ancestors, their inheritance, and thus their identity (see Ferdinand 2017).¹

These claims to ownership, belonging and identity are variously predicated on certain rights: birthright, possession, conquest, inheritance, and/or authorship. The enforcement of each new claim results in a denial of ownership to others, and thus a denial of belonging and identity of predecessors and their progeny. For the Indigenous population who were met here by the invading French and resident for at least four centuries it was a claim to origin, though how and when they had actually taken possession and from whom remain unknown, but they are probably the only legitimate claimant to rights of origin or at least long-term possession (Anonyme[Bresson] 1975[1659]; Martin 2013).² For the invading French and British the claims rest in their powers of conquest, which they maintained with their colonial military forces, even as the more powerful British displaced the French (Brizan 1998; Martin 2013). For the descendants of the enslaved Africans the claim would be based on the fact that their ancestors toiled, with their sweat and blood, literally planting and cultivating the land, and thus owning it as a result of inherited authorship, so eloquently voiced by Harry Belafonte (Lord Burgess and Belafonte 1957) “Oh, island in the sun/Willed to me by my father’s hand.” Premdas (1996:15), in writing about Haiti in the aftermath of the Haitian Revolution, illustrates that ownership to the (is)land thus:

“The descendants of the emancipated slaves, however, advanced a reason for their sole ownership of Haiti in the fact that they were the ones whose labor built the country. It was their sweat and tears in slavery mixed in with the soil in the construction of the plantations that conferred entitlement to the land as a whole. The emancipated slaves no longer saw Haiti as a place of exile, holding out the hope for freedom in repatriation, but as a new cradle of a revitalized existence with roots in the history of slavery and rebellion. It seemed only right that those who labored and built the land should become the new inheritors.”

With minimal contestation from other groups in Grenada, especially since the mid-20th century and shaped by “Skyred” and the Grenada Revolution, it would become the ultimate claim to a homeland where roots are established and passed on through the journeys of

¹ See, for example, the controversy over access by Grenadians to the beach at the privately owned Calivigny Island by foreign investor Georges Cohen (Ferguson 2009).

² The historical view of invading “Caribs” capturing the island from the resident “Arawak,” killing the men and taking their women as slave wives (Bullen 1969), though strongly debated, weakens the claim of origin and would be no different from the later French and British conquest of Grenada. How long after invasion can one claim possession, if ever?

thousands of Africans and their New-World descendants into the Grenada islandscape, though many still emphasize Africa as the preeminent motherland.

Land has been at the center of Grenadian (and Caribbean) society, especially beginning with the invasion of Europeans following colonization and the establishment of plantation agriculture with its proportioned, boundaried plots. The communal Indigenous space was transformed into privatized plantation plots and later subsistence gardens, yet retaining the strong connections between land and identity that has always been a facet across cultures, across the globe. To tell the story of land and place in Grenada (and the Caribbean) is the key to understanding identity and belonging in these changing landscapes of diverse relations. And as Montgomery (2007:27) so beautifully puts it, “The history of life is inextricably related to the history of soil,” the land, the landscape, the place where “*we navel-string bury*.”

To illustrate the claim to the land by dispossessed peoples and their resulting identities I use the metaphor of burying the *navel-string* of newborns in the land, in the Grenadian landscape. To bury one’s navel-string is a Grenadian (and Caribbean) folk tradition that derived from multiple western African ethnic groups like the Ibo (of present-day Nigeria) who buried the umbilical cords of newborns in a special or symbolic place like the base of a thriving or bearing tree to “ground” children in the world of their parents to prepare them for success, or to bear fruit, so to speak (Allsopp 1996). The practice of burying the *navel-string* of a newborn, however, is common among many cultures that recognize the importance of the connections between the mother and the child in the womb and the newborns’ connection to the place where they were/are born, connected to their life-womb (see Allsopp 1996; Nwaubani 2018). It was meant to bind or “spiritually bound” infants in the culture and traditions of their parents, and implant a sense of belonging, cultural confidence and loyalty to family, land(scape) and place. In Grenada, it is often used to confirm birthright, “*Me navel-string bury here!*”, insisting to those who would dare question your belonging to a place like a parent’s village or the place where you were born, affirming your claim of belonging to that space, owing your place identity. This tradition, like many others, however, is rarely practiced today, and forgotten or discarded by most, but some still recognize its meaning beautifully embedded in the expression that connects the past to the future via the land(scape).

The deep sense of connection to the landscape and ways of owning it have been imagined in diverse ways, with Pogue Harrison (2002:254) suggesting that “The surest way to take

possession of a place and secure it as one's own is to bury one's dead in it." Yet, the act of burying the *navel-strings* of one's children goes even further as it is the remains of the living, not the dead; it is of the future not the past.³ Burying of the navel-string in the Grenadian land or ground is a way of symbolically owning it, owning the landscape, owning the tree that grows from it, owning the fruits that the tree bears, nourished by the life force of the *navel-string*, from the newborn. It is about (re)birth and growth, and thus the future. The humble, yet conscious act of enslaved Africans burying their (enslaved) children's *navel-string* in the Grenada landscape in continuation of an age-old western African cultural practice was probably their most revolutionary, affirming, and forward looking despite their dire predicament. That simple act laid claim to a policed landscape that they did not own nor dare publicly claim, but only in their secret practice of traditional identity. This ancient rite, instigated in this 'foreign' land, was the beginning of their authorship of the Grenada islandscape with the birth of their progeny into this new land. That simple act established and recognized "origins" and laid "roots" in the depth of exiled soils that would later connect them in death to their children. It is the place from where their new journeys and that of their children, their Creole children, unlike them, born into this 'New World,' would begin and grow, and maybe even flourish because they "*navel-string* bury here." Ironically, it would be a land their descendants would eventually claim and own in their own right as freed men and women.

Metaphorically, the *navel-string* can be imagined as the act of creating origins in the land of one's birth by all of the people born into the Grenadian landscape, from the Kali'nago and Kali'na to the Africans, the French and British, and all others before and since. This was the ultimate act of becoming and belonging in this contested islandscape, this landscape that was once foreign to all of its residents, including the various Indigenous peoples. It was the beginning of authorship that would continue the rest of their lives in the Grenada islandscape. For them, they literally planted pieces of themselves in the landscape with the umbilical cords of their children, claiming the rights by virtue of the newfound origins that began in Kali'nago *carbets*, behind European plantation great houses and in churchyards, and in

³ As the burying of the dead is a necessary act it may not have afforded the believed possession of the landscape as implied. Also, enslaved Africans saw death as an opportunity to return to ancestral lands/origins as illustrated in the belief in the "flying Africans" (see McDaniel 1998). And the absence of headstones in enslaved burial grounds, that would have afforded some semblance of permanence, have meant the disappearance of their burial sites altogether. However, the laying of the headstone in the Tombstone Feast of Carriacou can be seen as an indication of creating that permanence by the Creole descendants of the enslaved Africans in the land of their birth (see David 2004; Traditional 2001). McDaniel (1985) contends that the Carriacou practice of the Tombstone Feast is also derived from West Africa.

African provision gardens, where each exercised the most agency, the most intense feelings of ownership and identity, and thus belonging.⁴

Buried in the Grenada landscape is an intricate, rhizomic web of umbilical cords (*navel-strings*) of all of the people who have been born in Grenada, metaphorically connecting them and binding them to this islandscape and to each other. This place, like the rhizomic roots of the black, red and white mangrove trees that bind the Grenadian coast, nourishing its fisheries, protecting its coral reefs, protecting its coast, protecting this islandscape, is so too entangled and connected via these umbilical relations. The deliberate act of burying the *navel-string* of newborns in the Grenadian soil is the recognition by parents that their children are now part of a new journey of the ancestors, beginning in this new land, cementing them in this new place, but incorporating each of their ancestral roots from far off places, sometimes lost places, with this imported tradition. The Grenada islandscape is now the origin, with the creolization process creating that journey of authorship, identity, of self, and across place and time in the Grenada landscape.

Thus, the reason for burying newborns' *navel-strings* in the ground, in the landscape, is because "landscape has meaning." Spirn (1998:16-18) adds that "landscape associates people and place... landscape is not a mere visible surface, static composition, or passive backdrop to human theatre.... Landscape connotes a sense of the purposefully shaped, the sensual and aesthetic, the embeddedness in culture." These individual actions shape the landscape, embedding places with cultural and other meanings that in turn shape who inhabit these particular spaces (Lyle 2020). Through individual biographies and their relations, the story of the entangled Grenada landscape unfolds, even today.

8.2 Palimpsest Landscape: Connecting Stories Across Place and Time

"Stories matter. Many stories matter.... That when we reject the single story, when we realize that there is never a single story about any place, we regain a kind of paradise."

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, "The Danger of a Single Story" (TEDGlobal 2009)

⁴ The burying of people next to their homes continued for generations, with the government passing legislation to stop the widespread practice, even though it still continues, especially in rural areas. It is interesting to note that the Kali'nago buried their dead within their house posts.

The Grenada storyscape is littered with the narratives of the hundreds of thousands of beings who have trodden across this islandscape in the last half millennium or so, even though we are unable to imagine the majority of those voices. Each have left in their faded footprints impressions of lived lives rooted in the landscape (Ingold 1993). Their experiences of births, celebrations, creativity, production, wars, survival, enslavement, resilience and death across centuries have left an entangled web embedded in a cultural palimpsest that defined them yesterday, and us today. These narratives of identity and belonging, from the Kali'nago to the Creole, have shaped the way we see ourselves and the world around us, the way we regard the past and recognize its continuing influences on our present, and even on our future. These stories connect us all to the Grenadian landscape and shape our identities and create our sense of place, even as they connect to diverse identities that have, in their turn, impacted this changing and contested islandscape. What follows is a telling of stories of identity and belonging in the Grenada islandscape as told through the lives of several individuals who helped fashion or authored this changing landscape and continue to have an impact on the people who experience it today, and into the future. These are our stories, ancestral stories of belonging to the Grenada islandscape.

On the northwestern coast of Grenada sits a small, quiet fishing village in the bend of the Western Main Road, skirting the borders of St. Mark and St. Patrick parishes (Figure 8.1). It is one of the oldest historically occupied villages on the island, from a Kali'nago village then to a fishing community today, via two centuries of slave plantations.⁵ Duquesne village begins at the water's edge of Duquesne Bay, following the Duquesne River and main road going east towards Union, passing the junction to Diego Piece on the hill above to the right, and on the left over a narrow bridge towards Fond Duquesne just west of Chantimelle.⁶ Though the village takes its name from that of a Kali'nago "chief" known as "Captain Du Quesne," whose village, in the 1650s, was situated just inside the bay, it occupies lands that were formerly part of several plantations, primarily those of Industry and Resource in St. Mark and Duquesne in St. Patrick (Figure 8.2).⁷ The village of Duquesne and its surroundings thus have a layered history, reflected as in a palimpsest, that upon examination reveals the stories of identity in the Grenada islandscape. These deeply connected stories—through place,

⁵ Indigenous ceramics recovered from the Duquesne area to date and possibly the petroglyphs, however, place the site in the Suazan Troumassoid period between AD 1150 and 1450 (Hanna 2017).

⁶ Fond Duquesne, described by Holdren as "a narrow ridge, past the Chantimelle junction... [with] a perfect, long-distance view of Duquesne Bay," as "Behind Duquesne," which Holdren believes is possibly derived from the French "Fond du Quesne"/"Bottom of du Quesne," the furthest part from the bay (Holdren 1998:59).

⁷ Duquesne is first recorded as a place name in the pages of Anonyme[Bresson] (1975[1659]), and on François Blondel's (1667) map of Grenada.

Captain Du Quesne's goodwill by retaliating against his village, burning it and destroying its gardens. A few months later, in May 1650, a personal incident involving Captain Du Quesne's family and another Kali'nago named Thomas from Oüáitoucoubouli (Dominica) led to a full-scale ambush by the French, aided by Thomas, of the Kali'na and Kali'nago at what became known as Leapers' Hill, Sauteurs, resulting in the deaths of many and their symbolic demise (Hanna 2023; Honychurch 2002; Martin 2013; Newton 2014).⁸ In another retaliatory attack on Du Quesne's village in May 1657, the French, attempted to ambush the villagers in a nighttime raid, but failed to do so when the Kali'nago became aware and deserted the village. The French reported that the residents of Du Quesne's village "left all without having time to carry anything with them, but still happy to save their lives.... We set fires everywhere and carried all that we found that was any good to us like beds and *canaries*. We broke up all the rest as well as a boat and two canoes and we feigned to withdraw" (Anonyme[Bresson] 1975[1659]:145).

Despite these continuous and incessant devastating attacks, murders, and the destruction of their *tabouï*, *mánna*, gardens and canoes, and theft of their resources, the Kali'nago returned each time to rebuild their villages as these were the places they had lived and called home, long before the French invaded and threatened their very existence. Though the Kali'nago had strong ties across the islands and the continent where they traded and raided, and even had wives and families on other islands, they nonetheless had a strong sense of belonging to their island communities. They were even known to name themselves after the islands where they were born or permanently resided. In the beginning, the Kali'nago admonished the French for their invasion of their homeland, questioning why the French were taking their lands, declaring their strong identity with this place, insisting: "We do not go in your home, so why do you come in ours? We would not take your land and why are you taking ours? We are satisfied with ours, why can't you be satisfied with yours?" (Anonyme[Bresson] 1975[1659]:55).

⁸ Thomas had hoped to marry a daughter of Captain Du Quesne, but he was refused by her brother whom Thomas reportedly killed as a result. Fearing reprisal, Thomas ran off to Martinique and informed Governor Du Parquet that he can deliver the Kali'nago on Grenada, with intentions to destroy them. Thomas' traitorous action led to the now infamous massacre at Morne des Sauteurs on 30 May 1650 (Anonymous[Bresson] 1975[1659]; Martin 2013).



Figure 8.2 Model of a Kali'nago village at Argyle, St. Vincent with tabouï and mánna round houses at the National Public Library, Kingston, St. Vincent by Eric Pelissier/Leiden University, 2016

The bloody struggle by the Kali'nago for survival against the invading French continued for half a century, with the conflicts in the *Capesterre* or windward side of the island, particularly Sauteurs (St. Patrick) and villages like Duquesne, proving the fiercest and longest.⁹ The last conflicts occurred between 1705 and 1707, with the Kali'nago and Kali'na retaliating against the French for incursions into their dwindling space as French settlements advanced across the north and east of the island, slowly displacing them (ANOM 1705b; ANOM 1706; ANOM 1707). An incident in August 1705 involving the Kali'nago Ollivier is illustrative of the final conflicts as the two communities collided. Ollivier attacked and killed a French settler and an enslaved laborer because he believed that a settler had kidnapped a female relative; he was also accused by a settler of stealing a pig that he insisted was “stray” (Beaumont 1992[1705]; ANOM 1705). Lejeune, one of the French colonists, when informed of the attack, “put himself at the head of some inhabitants of the *Basse-Terre* settlement who resolved, like him, to settle there. And they went out to fight them; He [Lejeune] himself killed ‘the Carib named Ollivier,’ which discouraged the other savages ‘and finally conquered the district after several years and much trouble, himself having received three

⁹ Reiterating, it did not end with the 1650 genocidal ambush at Leapers' Hill as is often claimed even on the controversial monument at Leapers' Hill, Sauteurs, St. Patrick.

bullet wounds”” (Clifford et al. 2011:7; see also Beaumont 1992[1705], ANOM 1705; Hume and Whitehead 1992).¹⁰

The narrative of Captain Du Quesne (Captains Antoine, Du Buisson, and Grand Pauvre) had ended long before these final battles when his voice had disappeared from the ongoing conflict, silenced most likely by his death at the hands of the French, or less likely departure from the island. But the remaining Kali’nago and Kali’na clung to the periphery of their conquered villages as they became plantations like Duquesne, Sauteurs, Levera, River Antoine, Meneré, Savanne Suazey and Marquis in much reduced circumstances into the mid-1700s as recorded on French censuses until 1735 (Martin 2013; see also Labat 2005[1722]). Though some abandoned the island to the French invaders and hundreds were massacred, scores remained because it was their home, where they belonged, symbolically, where their *navel-string* laid buried just inside the bay and on the banks of the river that anchored them to the Grenada islandscape.



Figure 8.3 Prime Minister Mitchell (in red shirt) and other officials and heritage advocates at the dedication of the Duquesne Petroglyphs in 2003 (courtesy Michael Jessamy)

¹⁰ Though Lejeune boasted that he had killed Ollivier, an official report mentioned that “We were told only that it was believed the fellow [Ollivier] was coming. Whereupon this murderer was put in prison.” The same report also insisted that it was another “savage” who had abducted Ollivier’s female relative, not a French settler. (See Beaumont 1992[1705]; ANOM 1705)

If it was not for the name of the village that is inscribed in the landscape with their blood, the memory of Captain Du Quesne and his Kali'nago village would have faded away like so many others, especially as no archaeological evidence have been recovered in the area to date to connect to their historical occupation (Hanna 2017; Holdren 1998). However, the power of the memory of what happened here became embedded in the landscape, preserving the memory, generation after generation, over three hundred years since, and inscribed in stone. Along Duquesne Bay, at the southern edge, sits a large standing rock with faded faces and symbols etched into it, mysteriously looking back at us as in a mirror, reflecting our past (Dubelaar 1995; Hanna 2017). The locals call it a *Carib-stone*, as they believe it was fashioned by the Kali'nago like Captain Du Quesne and others of the village, representing the island's Indigenous heritage, but also their own ancient past. Grenadians, in celebrating the Indigenous petroglyphs as part of their heritage and identity, as an important monument of the cultural landscape, continue to honor the sacrifices of Captain Du Quesne and the Kali'nago of this island, of this village, in this bay and along this river that bears his name, and retains his identity in this hallowed place called Duquesne (Figure 8.3).

After the violent subjugation of Captain Du Quesne and the Kali'nago communities across the *Capesterre* by the first decade of the 18th century, the French quickly apportioned the Indigenous lands to their eager colonists' desirous for more plantations. Men like Louis Lejeune who led the fight against the Kali'nago, La Burguriere, Rochard and L'Olive received concessions where they suitably established cocoa, coffee and sugar plantations in the newly conquered lands. They utilized the Duquesne River to power their watermills and irrigate their crops across extensive canal systems, with no less than five by the mid-1700s (Figure 8.4). The Quartier des Sauteurs was established soon thereafter, with the Rivière Duquesne its western boundary, and on its east the Rivière Antoine, also named after a vanquished Kali'nago captain; it was the second district/parish established on the island. In 1718 they consecrated the Notre Dame du Bon Secours Chapel at Sauteurs on the site of the massacre of the Kali'nago and Kali'na on 30 May 1650, memorializing their victory over them, but ironically preserving the Indigenous landscape in their attempt to erase it (Martin 2013).¹¹

¹¹ There is debate as to the correct location of this hallowed site, but based on the historical evidence it is clear that the current site where a controversial monument was erected, behind the Roman Catholic Church, is not the 1650 site. The historical site is in the vicinity of the Anglican Church and Primary School where the first Catholic Church was built and the invading British would build their church (on the site of the Catholic Church ruins) to erase the French as the French had attempted to do of the Kali'nago landscape, neither accomplishing

One of the early French families settling in the northwest of the island (i.e., at Grand Pauvre and Sauteurs parishes) were the Cloziers, dating to the turn of the 18th century. François Clozier is recorded on a French document in 1702, and François Clozier de Beaulieu recorded as an official in the colonial government by 1714.¹² By the mid-1700s, Grenadian-born Cloziers, particularly Charles Philip Clozier (d1785), Clozier D’Arcueil (c1716-96), Clozier Decotteaux (d1788) and Clozier Chantemelle had become prominent residents, especially because of their large plantations, and extended families of whites and mixed-race descendants of Cloziers, Decoteaus and Chantemelles.¹³ By 1763 the Cloziers possessed several coffee, cocoa and sugar plantations, and unlike many of the wealthy French sugar planters who sold their properties, packed up and left Grenada in the wake of the invading British, several of them remained most probably because they had well-established roots on the island, and their extensive families would have been difficult to uproot and relocate across the French Caribbean like others did (Bonney 2019; Jefferys 1760[1765]). They were Grenadians!

The Clozier brothers were born in Grenada and thus identified as French Creoles, and the island was their only home, with limited, if any lingering connections to France. And though, like the Kali’nago before them, they traded with the French islands and were part of their extended social sphere, particularly Martinique, Grenada was the family’s base for over half a century (see Murphy 2021). This all changed following the British capture of Grenada and its cession in 1763 by the Treaty of Paris, cutting off official connections to the rest of the French Caribbean. Though the Cloziers appeared to have integrated well with the incoming British administration, with a few of its members serving in official capacities as New British Subjects, they remained French Creole still identifying with the “Creole Archipelago” that they had been a part of all their lives (see Murphy 2021). The political and religious situation between the British Old and New Subjects slowly deteriorated, with the French gradually losing more and more of their civil rights in an island they had literally built from the ground up (Murphy 2018). Also, many of the family members, being mixed race, suffered deprivations and humiliating attacks on their liberty, having to prove that they were in fact

their desired erasures entombed in the palimpsest landscape (Devas 1974; *Grenada Free Press* 30 June 1830; Martin 2013).

¹² There remains much research to be done to unravel the genealogy of the Clozier family in Grenada, which is not at all clear at present. Is the François Clozier of 1702 the same as François Clozier de Beaulieu of 1714 who had now adopted an honorific based on his identity with the Grenada landscape when he incorporated the place Beaulieu, or was that of his French origins? (Thanks to Peter Redhead for sharing his research on the family).

¹³ McMahon (1823:26) characterizes D’Arcueil and Decotteau as “both had a numerous progeny of coloured children,” but this also applied to their brother Clozier Chantimelle.

free, including long-established Grenadians like the Fédons (Jacobs 2002). In 1779 the French recaptured Grenada but lost it in the Treaty of Versailles in 1783 when it was returned to the British, despite the protests of longtime residents like the Cloziers (ANOM 1782). The French Grenadians subsequently were more restricted in their civil and religious rights as the British retaliated against what they deemed disloyalty of their “New Subjects” during the brief French (re)occupation (Anderson 2010; Devas 1974; Freund 2021; Muller 2017; Polson 2011).

The brothers, Clozier D’Arcueil and Clozier Decotteaux, owned several plantations, including the 120 hectares (296 acres) sugar estate straddling the neighboring parishes of St. Mark and St. Patrick, which by 1763 had eighty enslaved laborers, with the Duquesne River powering its watermill (Figure 8.4). The property that became widely known as Duquesne estate was (probably) initially known as Bisaitre.¹⁴ Following the death of Clozier Decotteaux in 1788, Clozier D’Arcueil became the sole owner of the sugar estate that would later be known as Duquesne, and the most senior member of the extended family.

With the deteriorating relations between the French and British and the volatile political situation in the region as a result of the French and St. Domingue (Haitian) Revolutions, the French in Grenada, an alliance of free coloureds/blacks and whites, staged a rebellion against the British on 2-3 March 1795 to return to the French political, social and economic spheres (Friedland 2018; Murphy 2018, 2021; Polson 2002). Prominent white French Grenadians like Clozier D’Arceuil, aged about 79 years old at the time, was willing to risk everything to change the political situation, and return Grenada to the French. D’Arcueil became one of the leaders of Fédon’s Rebellion and was involved in its planning at least 18 months prior. As a member of Fédon’s inner circle, he was on the “Committee of 24” that managed the rebellion, which Victor Hugues condemned as exclusionary (Martin 2017). According to Hay (1824:43), D’Arceuil “seemed to take a very active part, had a uniform, blue coat turned up with red, was always consulted on every emergency; but his particular department was as commissary of stores and provisions.” D’Arceuil managed the feeding and provisioning of

¹⁴ It is not clear why the Clozier’s appropriated the name Duquesne as it was continually owned by them since at least the early 1760s. In fact, the plantation in St. Mark that was bounded by the Duquesne River, much of Duquesne Bay and Duquesne Point, to its southwest, had earlier held the name Duquesne as would be evident, but it changed to “Industry” under British ownership (of Alexander Stewart) by 1772. Several properties appear to have had similar names as they derived from the same area or *etage*, which were often defined by a significant landmark like rivers or streams, or other prominent physical or cultural feature.



Figure 8.4 Possible ruins of the canal for the Duquesne estate along the banks of the Duquesne River, Duquesne, St. Patrick built with enslaved labor, c18th century

the thousands of rebels that flocked to the camp at its height.¹⁵ He is recorded as saying that “We Republicans dislike equivocation” when Lieutenant Governor Home failed to demand the surrender of the government per the rebels’ demand (Hay 1823:37). Father McMahon (1823:26), however, was unsparing in his denunciation of D’Arceuil as “a low, ignorant, weak man and not exceeded by any rebel in atrocious acts of cruelty...” for the killing in a most inhuman manner a group of British soldiers taken prisoners by the rebels.

As the patriarch of the Clozier family he most likely encouraged or at least inspired members of the extended family to join the fight against the British to restore Grenada to the French,

¹⁵ The size of the rebel forces remain unknown as it fluctuated during the rebellion and there are no records available; towards the end it would have waned as the rebellion faltered. A Grenada Planter (1796:97), on Julien Lussan’s information as assistant to Clozier D’Arcueil as commissary of stores, provides an estimate of around 7,000 total people in the camps in the first weeks of the revolt based on those who had to be fed each day. He estimated that the fighting force was around 4-5000 by mid-April 1795. There is no basis for the 14,000 (about 50 percent of the total enslaved population at the time) figure that is popularly quoted today, but it might include renegade former enslaved who seemed to have taken up the call to affirm their freedom just not in league with Fédon and his group. Many of the enslaved seemed to have tried their best to not get involved on either side as they were fully aware of their vulnerability at the hands of either the French rebels or the British colonial government; in effect, their condition and agency had not changed drastically that much due to the rebellion.

and return their homeland to its ‘rightful owners,’ thus restoring their French Creole identity. About twenty-five members of the extended family actively participated, with many killed during the rebellion, or executed at the end of the revolt, including Clozier D’Arceuil himself, nephews Clozier St. Marie, Medard and Clovis Chantimelle, and Jacob Dumont Gerbet, with several others captured and deported, thus destroying the once prominent French-Grenadian family. The family was severely impacted by the failure of their efforts to recapture their sense of ownership and belonging in Grenada, and they suffered greatly as a result. All of their properties were forfeited due to their participation in the rebellion, and D’Arceuil’s several estates, including Grosse Point and Duquesne, were embroiled in legal limbo for decades before finally being returned to his family by 1830 (Kesselring 2011).¹⁶

Clozier D’Arceuil, ironically like Captain Du Quesne before him whom his French compatriots had eliminated from the Grenadian landscape, was himself removed in similar fashion defending his birthright, authorship and identity, paying the ultimate price with his death at the hands of whom he considered invaders. Like the retaliatory war against the French by the Kali’nago and Kali’na that resulted in their defeat, Fédon’s Rebellion brought about the destruction of many of the French and the embedded French Creole society in Grenada. It would instigate the process by the British to finally remake the French Creole landscape in their image. However, continuing the palimpsest, Clozier D’Arcueil and his family have left their bloodied imprints in the Grenadian landscape in the place names of two villages Clozier, St. John and Chantimelle, St. Patrick, the former after a property Clozier D’Arcueil had owned there, and in the family name of Decoteau that is quite common among Grenadians at home and in the diaspora.¹⁷ Like Captain Du Quesne, he is not often remembered despite his name being attached to a village that today is known more for its (East) Indian descent residents than its French legacy. But in any discussion of Fédon’s Rebellion and its impact on the Grenadian landscape, Clozier D’Arceuil and his extended family must figure prominently in it because of their major contributions (Martin 2017). I have often joked that Fédon’s Rebellion should be renamed the Clozier Rebellion for the

¹⁶ It is worth mentioning that only the properties of white rebels, even those executed, were returned to their families, even after long periods; none of the free coloureds or blacks were even considered as their families were banished from the island following the crushing of the rebellion; several of the white French families remained in Grenada (Kesselring 2011).

¹⁷ The Chantimelle last name disappeared from Grenada as most of the males carrying it were killed during the rebellion, executed at the end, or banished from the island. In the 1820s there were five female (free coloured) Chantimels listed on Slave Registers as owners of enslaved, and one in Trinidad. The Clozier name survived among several white Cloziers and some were listed on the Slave Registers and as property owners into the 1830s, but the name has since disappeared; it does show up in Trinidad in the late 1800s. The Clozier name never figures in the discussion of the village of Duquesne.

sheer numbers of the extended family who actively participated in prominent roles, died, and lost so much as a result of their enthusiastic support for a rebellion that aimed to return Grenada to its French-Creole roots and their return to a French Creole identity in the place they *navel-string* laid buried in the soil at Duquesne and surrounding areas.

Only 5 km (3.1 mi) south of Duquesne along the Western Main Road is the village of Waltham, just north of the main town of Victoria, St. Mark (Figure 8.5). Though the village occupies the former 255 hectares (631 acres) Waltham sugar estate from which it derives its name, the residents live on a long, narrow strip, hugging the coastline between the Great Crayfish and Little St. Mark's Rivers, with their gardens occupying the hillsides. The name Waltham most likely derived from that of Waltham, Lincolnshire, England, while its French name was probably *Écrevises* ("Crayfish") as it was part of the "Quartier des Écrevises" and bounded to the north by the Grande Rivière des Écrevises from which its waterwheel was powered. If Waltham was casually named, it may be after its original meaning of "forest" or "homestead," but there is a tale that it was named as such by Penelope Payne, wife of Ninian Home, because of her connection to its namesake in the UK. It is linked to the village of Duquesne via the presence of Indigenous petroglyphs, indicating habitation for at least a millennium, and the possible historical Kali'nago occupation as identified by Labat (2005[1722]) to circa 1700 despite being attacked and destroyed by the French as well (Anonymous[Breton] 1975[1659]).

Between 1764 and 1840 the Waltham sugar estate was owned by the Home family of Scotland, established by Ninian Home (1732-95), prominent longtime resident (1764-95), government official, including judge and assistant justice of the Supreme Court, speaker of the General Assembly, and lieutenant governor of Grenada (1793-95) (see NRS GD267/5,7). Home arrived in Grenada on the heels of the British takeover in 1763, before the ink signing the Treaty of Paris had dried as he was already in the region, having lived first in Virginia, US then St. Kitts. He was just over 30 years old, and Grenada probably represented a lucrative opportunity for him as the promise of new lands and plantations appealed to British investors (Gonzalez 1994). Home quickly inserted himself into the administration of the colony as an elected member of the Legislature and rapidly rose to the highest ranks in government, becoming one of the island's most prominent residents (Hamilton 2005; Mullen 2022; Renwick 2015). He also invested in plantations, owning Waltham and significant shares in Paraclete sugar estate in St. Andrew with his longtime friend and fellow Scott Alexander Campbell (Quintanilla 2003; Renwick 2015). As a Protestant, Home was among

the group of British residents, particularly Scotts, who opposed any “special rights” for Roman Catholics beyond what were allowed those in the UK, thus advocating for a restrictive role for the majority French Grenadians, now styled New Subjects (Gonzalez 1994; Polson 2011). Home, like some of the Old British Subjects, probably desired the French to leave the island and its opportunities to the British, advocating an opposing policy to the British colonial government (Gonzalez 1994). During the Anglo-French conflict, Home led verbal attacks against the French inhabitants, continuing his campaign against them after becoming lieutenant governor in 1793.



Figure 8.5 The coastal village of Waltham, St. Mark (courtesy Google Earth)

Though Home had spent most of his adult life in Grenada and probably considered it his home and felt a deep connection with it, he had all intentions of returning to his estate in Scotland where he had bought and furnished his home at Paxton in Berwick-on-Tweed, where his navel-string was buried (Home Robertson 2007). But his brother George Home, as far back as 1781, “saw plainly it would be difficult to prevail upon him to come home while he flattered himself with the hopes of procuring some publick employment” (Edinburgh, NAS, GD267/1/3). It would appear that financial difficulties, primarily with Waltham, forced Home to remain in Grenada (Hamilton 2005; Polson 2011). Despite reaching the highest ranks of the government in Grenada and actually retiring to Scotland, he returned when his brother and others successfully advocated for him to be named its lieutenant governor. His desire to hold the highest office, and return to the place he strongly identified with, brought

him back to the island despite the ill health of his wife who would die in Grenada in September 1794, and buried at Paraclete, St. Andrew.

Home assumed the leadership of Grenada at a most difficult time as the entire region was consumed by political instability, and he may not have had the necessary skills to manage a complex society like Grenada's in these difficult times; his management of Waltham had not been the most successful either (Renwick 2015). The deteriorating situation in Grenada between the French and British, of which he had been an instigator, would occupy his entire governorship. At his Waltham estate, he was surrounded by neighbors who had become his enemies because of his staunch political position against them for much of his time in Grenada. His first communication with London announcing his arrival in Grenada in January 1793 and assuming office read like a complaint, writing that he was "sorry to find that a great number of Emigrants from the French West India Islands have been admitted here, but [I] shall take the earliest and most effectual measures in my power to remove them from the Colony..." (TNAUK 1793). Unbeknownst to Home and the British residents, however, the French free coloureds/blacks and whites, including Clozier D'Arceuil and Julien Fédon, were already planning a rebellion to whist the island from them, under his watch. On the night of 2-3 March 1795, the bloody rebellion against his rule began.

In a surprise coup for the rebels, Ninian Home was captured on the first day of the rebellion and taken hostage with tens of other British residents, including his close friend Alexander Campbell (Hay 1823). According to Hay (1823:16), "...to my great sorrow, I saw Mr. Home..., led like prisoners, with great shouts (of "*Vive la république*") and rejoicings on the part of the rebels, and treating Mr. Home with all the insult they could offer him." To the French, Home represented all that was wrong with the British occupation of Grenada, with La Riche, a rebel leader, insisting that Home should not be allowed to escape for the sufferings he caused the French during his "tyrannical rule" (Hay 1823). Julien Fédon, leader of the rebellion, in echoing the views of his fellow rebel leaders like Clozier D'Arcueil, remarked to Home and Campbell that "This island was theirs [French] by right; and you, are only intruders; you come from England, that is your country, where you ought to have remained" (Hay 1823:47).

Home's demeanor at the camp left observers like Dr. Hay little doubt that he was resigned to his impending death as he saw no other way this situation could be resolved, especially as he would "never sign any order which would disgrace his memory" when asked to use his

position as lieutenant governor “to deliver up the island” to the rebels (Hay 1823:36). According to Hay (1823:69), “The Governor never assumed any authority [in the Camp], but sometimes rebuked them with mildness, and recommended union and tenderness as the only solace for accumulating misery.” Following the unsuccessful bloody attack by British forces on the rebel camps on 8 April 1795 Fédon carried out his threat that if attacked he would execute the hostages, with Home and Campbell among the forty-eight British executed that day on “Second Camp,” way up the mountainside overlooking his Belvidere estate (Hay 1823; McMahon 1823). Clozier D’Arceuil, when asked to intercede on behalf of the prisoners, especially the lieutenant governor, replied that he, and the other white leaders who had exhibited some level of authority, “had no influence whatever over him [Fédon],” thus letting Home and the others die, except for three of them whose lives Fédon spared (Hay 1823:76).

Lieutenant Governor Home was reported to have faced his death quietly as he exited the makeshift prison on the mountaintop after witnessing the executions of his compatriots, including his longtime friend and business partner Alexander Campbell. He was reportedly shot by Baptiste Stanislaus, the (free-black) cook of Clozier D’Arceuil who, following the rebellion, had hid among the enslaved on Duquesne estate but his whereabouts was divulged by fellow rebel leader Stanislaus Besson in a bid to save his own life; he was subsequently captured and hung (Hay 1823; McMahon 1823). Like Captain Du Quesne and Clozier D’Arceuil, Ninian Home firmly believed that he was fighting to preserve his identity as a British Subject by defending his adopted island which he had called home for over three decades. Leaving his retirement on his Scottish estate, Home returned to Grenada to protect his property at Waltham, but also for the island to remain a British colony and society he had fought to create (Figure 8.6). Though Ninian Home is probably the best remembered among the three so far, he is not regarded positively because of his colonial role as lieutenant governor and slave owner. There once was a sign at the entrance to Paraclete village that said “Welcome to Paraclete. Home of Ninian Home,” but his name is not included on the current sign.¹⁸

The current relic landscape, particularly of the former plantations, reveals little to nothing of its enslaved workers and the slave past unless one is knowledgeable of what took place here

¹⁸ Ninian Home had only owned a $\frac{1}{3}$ share in Paraclete that he sold to Alexander Campbell in 1770, but remained attached to it as the various paintings illustrate (see Figure 8.6) and the fact that his wife was buried there and not at his Waltham estate. It was there where both he and Campbell were when the rebellion broke out on the night of 2 March 1795.

beyond the cocoa and coffee trees and sugar-cane fields. The decaying windmill towers, copper pots, rusted waterwheels and crumbling aqueducts that fueled over a century of sugar production seem almost out of place today and little connected to their dark histories (Figures 8.7). That brutal, dehumanizing system of forced and torturous servitude that ended almost two centuries ago. There were little in the way of family heirlooms to pass down, no artifacts like shackles or whips that remind of the brutality, no memory of tears that tell of the suffering, no ruins of thatched houses that reveal the hearth of everyday (enslaved) lives, no drums beating out rhythms of melancholy melodies, no cultural objects that linger in museums, no genealogies or memoires to trace old and proud ancestries, and no monuments that sing praises to heroic ancestors. It is a landscape and heritage barren of slavery except in the enduring trauma and nightmare of it all (see Nelson 2015).



Figure 8.6 Idealized representation of Paraclete estate, St. Andrew, with Ninian and Penelope Home believed to be in the carriage by Adam Callender, 1789 (courtesy Paxton House, Scotland)

The stories of Clozier D’Arcueil and Ninian Home are easier to tell because they have left adequate records, and despite the incomplete nature of these, we can still piece together credible stories of their identity in Grenada and personal connections to the landscape, oftentimes in their own voices. Though the story of Captain Du Quesne was limited we could

still tell it adequately. But for the tens of thousands of enslaved who labored on these plantations building aqueduct systems (like in Figures 8.4 and 8.7), and in the towns across Grenada there are very few options available to tell their stories in the plantation landscape, particularly from their own perspectives. We have to use proxies we hope would tell adequate and compelling stories that lift their already silenced voices, not further distort them. Thus, to locate the stories of the enslaved in the landscape one has to dig deep to uncover mere echoes of their stifled, subjugated, exploited, and hidden experiences.



Figure 8.7 18th century ruins of the massive canal/aqueduct system, built by the enslaved like Louison, that brought water across the estate and to power the waterwheel at Waltham estate, St. Mark (courtesy Michael Jessamy)

When Ninian Home established Waltham sugar estate from two separate, but contiguous properties (sugar and coffee estates) purchased (with a £17,000 mortgage) from the heirs of Pierre Dominique Ronzier, he set out, like many of the British who had come to Grenada to create large sugar estates to rival the ones in the old British colonies (Gonzalez 1994; Hamilton 2005; Ragatz 1928).¹⁹ In purchasing these properties in 1764 Home acquired 145 enslaved workers on the two properties, the names of whom were meticulously copied into

¹⁹ It is interesting to note that Julien Fédon may have had a personal connection to Waltham Estate as his mother Bridgette was an enslaved on an estate owned by Ronzier in Grand Pauvre/St. Mark from where his father Pierre Fédon purchased her in 1758 upon their marriage. It is also possibly the place of his birth, where his *navel-string* was buried and where his mother remained connected to many of the enslaved listed in Figure 8.8.

the deed of sale: first, the more valuable men: “Alexander, Francois, Paul, Caligula, Dominique... Louison...” to the number of 59, then the women, primarily field laborers: “Françoise, Rose, Therese... Veronique...” to the number of 44, then the boys: “Petit Jean, Barnabe, David (Mulatto)...” to the number of 26, and finally the least valuable girls: “Pelagie, Escolastique, Veronique...” to the number of 15 (Figure 8.8) (Indenture, 16 Oct 1764:137-41). Their mostly French-derived names reflect the fact that they all spoke French Creole and were predominantly Creole enslaved, born on the estate or brought from Martinique as the majority of enslaved entering Grenada at that time.

Ninian Home was the quintessential paternalistic slave plantation owner, seeing himself as the protector of his enslaved, whom he insisted (in a letter to one of his overseers) that “They are human beings as well as ourselves and very capable of distinguishing between what is right and what is wrong” (Renwick 2015; RH4/64, 22.10.1789). But they were akin to children and could not take care of themselves, hence he made sure that invalid enslaved were taken care of in old age, and pregnant women were given “special treatment” though it did not seem to improve their health to be more productive as he had hoped (Renwick 2015). Home also tried to protect his enslaved from abuse, especially from his white male workers,

N. 1. Or the first Schedule referred to by the annexed Indenture
Containing the names of the Persons from the Sugar Plantation

48. Alexander	49. Francois	50. Paul	51. Caligula	52. Dominique	53. Louison
54. Françoise	55. Rose	56. Therese	57. Veronique	58. Petit Jean	59. Barnabe
60. David	61. Pelagie	62. Escolastique	63. Veronique	64. ...	65. ...

N. 2. Or the second Schedule referred to by the annexed Indenture
Containing the names of the Persons from the Coffee Plantation

14. ...	15. ...	16. ...	17. ...	18. ...	19. ...
20. ...	21. ...	22. ...	23. ...	24. ...	25. ...
26. ...	27. ...	28. ...	29. ...	30. ...	31. ...

Ninian Home

Figure 8.8 Lists of the enslaved on the sugar (left) and coffee (right) plantations bought by Ninian Home in 1764 to create Waltham (courtesy Paxton House, Scotland)

having to dismiss two overseers for “raping” enslaved women (Renwick 2015). One of the other important things Home fully promoted was the availability of gardens for the enslaved as he believed that they promoted self-sufficiency and a sense of community, but it also absolved him of providing adequate rations. Home believed that his paternalistic caring would endear him to his enslaved and they would thus be loyal to him (Polson 2011).

By 1772, the 178 hectares (440 acres) estate—65 ha (160 acres) in sugar cane, 40 ha (100 acres) in coffee and 73 ha (180 acres) in woods—was one of the largest on the island, and definitely in St. Mark parish, and worked by 230 enslaved laborers. By 1794 the enslaved population had grown to 267. The expansion was facilitated by the increased enslaved labor, extensive canal system, and new technologies like the windmill and later watermill that augmented the less efficient cattle mill they replaced (Figures 8.7 and 8.9).



Figure 8.9 “A Plan of the Estate Called Waltham Situated in the Parish of St. Mark Belonging to Ninian Home, Esq.” by Daniel Phillips, 1772. The “Negro Huts” or Slave Village, and “Negro Ground” or Provision Grounds are highlighted (courtesy Paxton House, Scotland)

On the 1764 list of enslaved the name Louison was recorded as number 18 (Figure 8.8). Later data showed that he was about 27 years old at the time. In 1771, at the age of 34 years and valued at £330, he was listed as a “[slave] driver,” one of four to hold that highest enslaved position of authority on the plantation, often given to the most experienced, trusted and obedient.²⁰ Serving as the assistant to the white overseer, Louison was tasked with maintaining discipline (with the whip, if needed) and directing activities assigned to the enslaved laborers. But in March 1795, the 58 year-old “driver” left his prized position on Ninian Home’s sugar plantation and marched south with dozens of self-emancipated from Waltham into the rebel camp in the hills of Belvidere (Polson 2011).²¹ They joined thousands of other self-emancipated who heeded Julien Fédon’s and his French compatriots’ call to rebel against their British enslavers and claim their freedom. Turnbull (1795:11) was most likely referring to enslaved as Louison when he castigated the “favourite,” “most trusted,” “best treated” and Creole enslaved as ungrateful for being among the first to join the rebellion and taking the most active part against their owners.

Louison and his rebel brothers would fight against some of their own friends and maybe even family when at least 11 “trusted” enslaved from Waltham fought on the side of the British as part of the Loyal Black Rangers, exemplified by Harigay, an African who arrived at Waltham as a “new Negro” in 1788, then only 18 years old. For fifteen months Louison was a free man, a rebel, a soldier, fighting on the side of French Republicanism against his British enslaver. Then, at the end of 1796 after the suppression of the rebellion Waltham estate listed Louison, valued now at £200, as having been hung for his active participation in Fédon’s Rebellion, thus ending his short-lived attempt to be free. He was among hundreds of self-emancipated enslaved rebels who were captured at the end of the rebellion and either executed or sold off the island as punishment for their impromptu rebellious participation.

Other than the few details listed above, we know nothing else of the life of the almost 60-year-old Louison: where he was born, did he have a wife and children, other relatives? What about his exploits as a rebel?—what was he fighting for?, how did he survive to the end of the

²⁰ Louison was the most valued enslaved on the estate. The term “slave driver,” derived from its association with slavery and the forcing of enslaved to work on the plantations by other enslaved, has a disapproving meaning in popular usage as a result.

²¹ Among them were Calais, Jean Pierre (“Fisherman”), Cupidon (c51 years, “head boiler”), Puqua (c33 years, “driver in the mill”), Aaron (c25 years, “large gang”), Haliho (c17 years, African), McSween (c30 years), Bartholomew (18 years), Thoulous, Gulian, Alexander (“Boiler”), Nottingha, Ettiene and Macisnum. At the end of the rebellion 57 enslaved on the Waltham estate had died: 17 killed in the camp, 38 died of various causes, 1 hanged, and 1 missing. Seven others were in the Black Rangers, including Edward (c30 years, “Boiler”), Pierre, St. John, Hanigay, Hilaire, Polidore, Pompey (“Mason”), and Fido (c43 years, “Carpenter”).

rebellion when many of his friends were killed?, and what he thought of the rebellion and his pending death following capture? Though some self-emancipated enslaved operated in bands roaming the island looting and burning plantations, Louison and some of his neighbors chose to join the rebel camp (Brizan 1998; Polson 2011). While in the camp atop Mount Vauclin did they see their former enslaver in the stocks, miserably imprisoned, and later dying a most humiliating death? Did Louison join the rebellion because he was French Creole, felt connected to Julien Fédon because he possibly knew his mother, or he just saw this as an opportunity to be free? We can only speculate, but like Clozier D'Arceuil, Julien Fédon and the many others, he had everything to lose, including his life. Louison, the highly valued "driver" of Waltham estate for over two decades, is only remembered as single-line entries in the list of enslaved in the archives of his former owners' Scottish estate at Paxton House, Berwick-on-Tweed. But because of new technologies the few facts of his life are accessible to many and maybe now he can take his (redeemed) place as a fighter against enslavement in Grenada, a named rebel in a sea of nameless self-emancipated freedom fighters. And maybe the village of Waltham can claim him as one of their own who died fighting for their freedom, including possibly unknown descendants in the small coastal village today where the memory of slavery is only seen in the (crumbling) ruins of the massive slave-built canal overshadowing the St. Mark's Secondary School.