

## The Evidence of Things Not Photographed: Slavery and Historical Memory in the British West Indies

SLAVERY AND THE PERIOD OF apprenticeship came to an end in the British West Indies in 1838, the year photography was developed.<sup>1</sup> The twilight of slavery occurred as the new medium literally came to light. Superficially, the two moments would seem unrelated: they would seem to be two events falling in separate historical forests. Slavery's occurrence outside the purview of photography would, however, profoundly inform how the pre-emancipation era in the British Empire was reproduced, remembered, or willfully forgotten. If, as photography historian Alan Trachtenberg postulates, "historical knowledge declares its true value by its photographability," what impact would photography's development at the end of slavery have on the production of history in the African diaspora within the British West Indies specifically?<sup>2</sup> How would the fact of slavery in Britain's colonies accrue its historical valence without photography as firsthand witness?

Despite this absence of photographs dating from the pre-emancipation era, and perhaps because of the intimate relationship between the camera and the production of modern forms of historical knowledge, some historians of the Anglophone Caribbean have drawn on photographs—albeit images from the late nineteenth century—to give slavery historical form in their accounts. It is this use of photographic archives to represent slavery in the West Indies in popular and scholarly accounts that I investigate in this essay. How does the employment of photographs that date from almost a century after emancipation dramatically transform the visual imagination of slavery in the Anglophone Caribbean? How does photography cloud or

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ABSTRACT Slavery and apprenticeship came to an end in the British West Indies in 1838, the year photography was developed as a fixed representational process. No photographs of slavery in the region exist or have been found. Despite this visual lacuna, some recent historical accounts of slavery reproduce photographs that seem to present the period in photographic form. Typically these images date to the late nineteenth century. Rather than see such uses of photography as flawed, or the absence of a photographic archive as prohibitive to the historical construction of slavery, both circumstances generate new understandings of slavery and its connection to post-emancipation economies, of history and its relationship to photography, and of archival absence and its representational possibilities. REPRESENTATIONS 113. Winter 2011 © The Regents of the University of California. ISSN 0734-6018, electronic ISSN 1533-855X, pages 39-71. All rights reserved. Direct requests for permission to photocopy or reproduce article content to the University of California Press at <http://www.ucpressjournals.com/reprintinfo.asp>. DOI:10.1525/rep.2011.113.1.39.

bring into focus the memory of slavery? While the use of late nineteenth-century photographs may obstruct from view aspects of the history of slavery, this occlusion may in fact be revelatory. The reproduction of these photographic images may bring to the fore ways of remembering and ways of reconfiguring photographic representation, memory, and history in the African diaspora. Indeed, the transposition of accounts of slavery and photographs from the late nineteenth century in some historical accounts may aptly capture what Toni Morrison characterizes as “rememory” among enslaved Africans and their descendants—the ruptures in space and time and the ever-presentness of the past that are intrinsic to the memory of slavery and to the formation of the African diaspora more generally.<sup>3</sup> The presentation of late nineteenth-century photographs as the pictorial face of slavery might precisely visualize the continuities between the period of slavery and post-emancipation, the ghostly and all too real reappearance of forms of unfreedom past. As such the reproduction of photographs in contemporary historical accounts may highlight new ways of reading photographic archives from the perspective of African diasporic subjects and alternate ways of bringing to light the histories of the enslaved and their descendants.

The complexities of creating histories of slavery in the Anglophone Caribbean through the lens of photography can be seen in the volume *Slavery, Abolition, and Emancipation: Black Slaves and the British Empire*, a book that is symptomatic of the problem of the photographic in studies of slavery in the British West Indies.<sup>4</sup> Three eminent and prolific historians of the Anglophone Caribbean, Michael Craton, James Walvin, and David Wright, produced the collection of essays and primary documents in 1976. In it, they set out to present what they describe as a reexamination of slavery in the face of the unbalanced focus on the abolitionist movement in historical scholarship. To provide a more holistic consideration of black slaves, they place equal weight on six periods, whose chapter titles are “African Slave Trade,” “Plantation Slavery,” “Slavery and the Law,” “Anti-Slavery,” “Abolition,” and “Emancipation.” The period of apprenticeship in 1838 bookends the publication’s historical coverage, and photographs appear as illustrations throughout the book. Coincidentally, 1838 is the same year that Frenchman Louis Jacques Mandé Daguerre announced the invention of a photographic process he called the daguerreotype, which fixed the impressions of light as created in the camera obscura on a metal plate, creating a nonduplicatable, laterally reversed, monochrome picture. Immediately following his pronouncement, numerous persons working in a variety of locations, including England, Germany, and Brazil, came forward to show how they too had been working on the idea of making permanent photographic images from nature. Perhaps the most recognized of these was the Englishman William Henry Fox Talbot.<sup>5</sup>

He created “photogenic drawings” in 1833 and eventually patented a paper-based negative-positive system in 1841.<sup>6</sup> While Talbot, and before him the Englishmen Henry Brougham (working in 1795), Tom Wedgwood and Humphry Davy (1802), the Americans Samuel Morse (1821–1823), James Miles Wattle (circa 1828), Frenchman A. H. E. (Eugène) Hubert (the 1820s), and French-born Brazilian Hercules Florence (the 1830s), among others, all worked on photographic and protophotographic processes, it was Daguerre’s photography method that gained the greatest global currency in the 1840s and 1850s.<sup>7</sup> Indeed, by the early 1840s, a photographer in Jamaica, Adolphe Duperly, opened the first daguerreotype studio in Kingston, but this came after the period of apprenticeship.<sup>8</sup> It is the presence of photographs in the Craton, Walvin, and Wright text on the slavery and the immediate post-emancipation period—an era that predates the earliest uses of photography in Jamaica—that will serve as a point of departure in this consideration.

The frontispiece of *Slavery, Abolition, and Emancipation* reproduces two photographs of black laborers standing amid sharp blades of sugarcane (fig. 1). In the bottom image, four male figures (and one cut off by the frame) turn toward the camera. The two central figures hold up machetes, proffering the tools as photographic props. Just above the image of the men, in a shape oddly incongruous with that of its neighbor, another photograph pictures several women, all of whom also address the camera. Two of them appear to chew on the fruits of their labor, while the central figure rests her head in her hand in a gesture that seems to suggest both tired repose and self-aware pose. Not only do the figures appear in their dual group portraits in the frontispiece, but their individually framed countenances also stare out from the book jacket and at the beginning of each chapter. Since the photographs appear with no information about their producer, without titles or dates, they come to bear the representational weight of the chapters they introduce (figs. 2, 3, 4). As the subjects of the only images in the book, the bodies of these laborers, shown at work and at photographic rest, serve as visual proxies for the black experience of slavery in the British Empire.

The images, although enlisted in a certain historical recounting of slavery, however, do not date from the era of enforced labor at all, but from the end of the nineteenth century. They were also not created as two separate representations, but as a single photograph entitled *Cane Cutters, Jamaica*, taken on the island by an agent of the Scottish photo-publishing firm James Valentine and Sons in the early 1890s (fig. 5). The company, which advertised itself as “photographers to the Queen,” came to the British crown colony on the invitation of the governor in 1891.<sup>9</sup> If the photograph can be seen as representative of transitions of labor at all (as suggested by the placement of the images at the opening of each period-focused chapter), it is Jamaica’s

# Slavery, Abolition and Emancipation

## Black Slaves and the British Empire

A Thematic Documentary by Michael Craton, James Walvin and David Wright



**Longman**  
London  
and New York

FIGURE 1. Frontispiece to Michael Craton, James Walvin, and David Wright, *Slavery, Abolition, and Emancipation: Black Slaves and the British Empire* (London, 1976). Reproduced by permission of Pearson Education.



FIGURES 2, 3, 4 (left, center, right). Opening images, chapters 1, 2, and 4, in Craton, Walvin, and Wright, *Slavery, Abolition, and Emancipation*. Reproduced by permission of Pearson Education.



FIGURE 5. James Valentine and Sons, *Cane Cutters*, Jamaica, 1891. Reproduced by permission of Onyx: The David Boxer Collection of Jamaican Photography.



FIGURE 6. Photographer unknown, *The Great Exposition, Jamaica*, 1891. Collection of the author.

transition to a tourism economy and its closely related fruit trade in the late nineteenth century that informs the photograph's production.

### **Tropical Modernity: Photography and Developing the New Jamaica**

Starting in 1889, Jamaica's British crown government, the white mercantile elite, and their British and American corporate bedfellows aimed to promote a new ideal of the colony for the purposes of promoting tourism and a new fruit trade, particularly in bananas. Toward this end, tourism and fruit industry advocates in Jamaica organized an international exhibition in 1891 that they hoped would bring new visibility to what they deemed "the New Jamaica" as an "unequal health resort and as a profitable field of settlement for would-be British Colonists or United States citizens" (fig. 6).<sup>10</sup> The American United Fruit Company and the British Elder, Dempster, and Company—both of which transported tourists and bananas on their steamships—were doubly invested in refashioning the island. After the rapid decline of the colony's once crowning sugar industry in the early nineteenth century, the island's ruling classes complained that Jamaica could "hang only on the skirts of modern civilization."<sup>11</sup> Through tourism and

new commerce, however, they prophesied that the New Jamaica, in the words of one hopeful resident, would “be ‘discovered’ in the modern sense, and if we succeed in pleasing the fastidious taste of the class [of tourists] . . . we may also in the modern sense be ‘made.’”<sup>12</sup> Photographs, like the one Valentine and Sons created, were central to the formation and propagation of these ideals.

To bring about “the New Jamaica,” promoters discerned that they had to create images to dispel widespread fears of the tropics as a place of death and disease, and, more specifically, they had to debunk concerns that Jamaica had been “ruined” by emancipation. As a contemporaneous newspaper editor put it in 1892, “The popular idea of Jamaica at home [in Britain] is of an island ruined by emancipation, a region of derelict estates with a scattered population of negro squatters, paying no rent, living in squalid huts, supporting life on yams and bananas.”<sup>13</sup> Crafters of Jamaica’s new image enlisted British, American, and local photographers to produce, perpetuate, and project a new vision of the post-emancipation era in the British colony. Their images often circulated as lantern slides, illuminating the faces of audiences; as photographs at colonial exhibitions, offering inhabitable vistas for international audiences; as representations in illustrated guides, providing visual testimony in texts; as stereographs, presenting privately experienced three-dimensional views of the island and its inhabitants; and as postcards, providing miniature and portable souvenirs of the colony. *Cane Cutters*, in particular, formed part of a series that imagers of the New Jamaica enlarged to 21 by 15 inches and used at the Jamaica pavilion at the Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893. The photographs, as the Kingston *Daily Gleaner* reported, served to “give the passing visitor an instant idea of the beautiful scenes to be found on our sunny Caribbean island.”<sup>14</sup> The Valentine and Sons images were also offered for sale as visual mementos in local shops in Kingston and, starting in 1903, circulated as picture postcards.<sup>15</sup> *Cane Cutters* then formed part of a schematic effort to advertise Jamaica, as one member of the Legislative Council in Jamaica recognized in 1904, “more than she had ever been advertised in her social history in every way.”<sup>16</sup>

Promoters of the New Jamaica often sought to advertise the island’s landscape as tropical and bountiful, appealing to travelers’ tastes for picturesque scenes and appetites for new fruits. This may explain why in Valentine and Sons’ *Cane Cutters* sugarcane commands the focal point of the image. Nature is not simply the stage on which the scene is set, but its main actor. Indeed, the centrally positioned stalk of sugarcane assumes a dominating and almost figural presence in the image, and the cane fields generally subsume the laborers in the photograph.

The fecundity of nature is further emphasized through the three figures posed as if consuming cane, an act that likely sought to communicate, in



FIGURE 7. A. Duperly and Sons, *Cutting Sugar Cane*, postmarked 1904. Postcard, 3.5 × 5.5 in. Collection of author.

part, the idea that the island's black inhabitants could sustain themselves on the fruit of the land.<sup>17</sup> The repetition of this trope in other contemporaneous photographs gives some indication of the significance of this performance of tropicity. In a postcard by the local photography firm A. Duperly and Sons, for instance, several laborers in a cane field, namely those who pose on the ground, hold sugarcane up to their mouths (fig. 7). They do this even as their lounging positions make it physically awkward to do so. They partake in the cane as a white male figure in a hat and suit, whose presence I will return to, poses on the right of the image. Yet paradoxically, in reality laborers during the slavery and post-emancipation eras would have been discouraged from consuming the agricultural products they had reaped, especially so flagrantly under the eye of an overseer. Under the auspices of the New Jamaica, however, the feasting figures helped to perpetuate the touristic Edenic myth that the island's residents inhabited a veritable Garden of Eden.

At the same time that members of the island's black population appear in many late nineteenth-century photographs lounging on the ground eating



FIGURE 8. Jean François Millet, *The Gleaners*, 1857. Oil on Canvas, 32.9 × 43.7 in. RF 592, Musée d'Orsay, Paris. Photo by Jean Schormans. Photo credit: Réunion des Musées Nationaux/Art Resource, New York.

cane, they are also often presented as industrious and disciplined laborers—qualities that would appeal to new business investors (and potential new white residents).<sup>18</sup> Valentine and Sons' *Cane Cutters* thus also portrays the colony's inhabitants as ardent workers in the geographic context of their labor, in some instances holding tools. The woman bending over in the foreground of the photograph in particular appears engaged in back-bending labor. Her pose indeed recalls the postures of laborers monumentalized in the canvases of French realist painters like Jean François Millet. In Millet's *The Gleaners*, 1857 (fig. 8), three women with bowed backs and downcast eyes direct their attention to their physically demanding task in the same way that the foreground figure in the Valentine and Sons *Cane Cutters* bends to her work. It is possible that the monumental Valentine and Sons photograph similarly sought to ennoble black Jamaicans as steadfast laborers, to quote a visual language capable of representing free blacks as industrious and civilized subjects. The centrality of this enactment of labor is demonstrated in another version of the photograph in which the woman appears in the same pose, while her peers take up different positions (fig. 9). That she remains immutable in the dual stagings of the image suggests that the photographer explicitly aimed to spotlight the laboring black female body. Such photographs of disciplined black workers (displayed in the context of the Columbian Exposition, a celebration of industry and imperial ingenuity) not only encouraged new commerce in agriculture but also bore witness to the successes of British



FIGURE 9. James Valentine and Sons, *Cane Cutters*, 1891. Reproduced by permission of Onyx: The David Boxer Collection of Jamaican Photography.

colonial rule after emancipation more generally. *Cane Cutters*, created in the context of these representational demands for images of leisure and labor, of tropicality and industry, provides a snapshot of a common visual formula in touristic and fruit industry-oriented photographs from late nineteenth-century Jamaica. Many images simultaneously conveyed tropical languor and colonial discipline, portraying the island's inhabitants as ardent workers in a landscape that did not need labor.

The complexities and contradictions of the photographic image-world of the New Jamaica are evident in another photograph of black Jamaicans consuming native products, this one a postcard from the early twentieth century captioned *Jamaica Peasantry* (fig. 10). In this image by the local firm Cleary and Elliott, in an improbable roadside scene, a line of local inhabitants hold fruit up to their mouths, readying it for eating. As if this scene of communal feasting were not sufficient to demonstrate the island's tropical abundance, a comparison of the postcard with an earlier version of the image shows how the card's producer colored and enlarged the original image to make the fruit appear fuller, perhaps more succulent and tropical (fig. 11). But perhaps more telling than what the later image makes visible is what it hides from view. The postcard's producers removed electrical lines—a sign of modernization—from the later photograph, subsuming them in lush green foliage. The image's overpainting offers a further glimpse at the scope

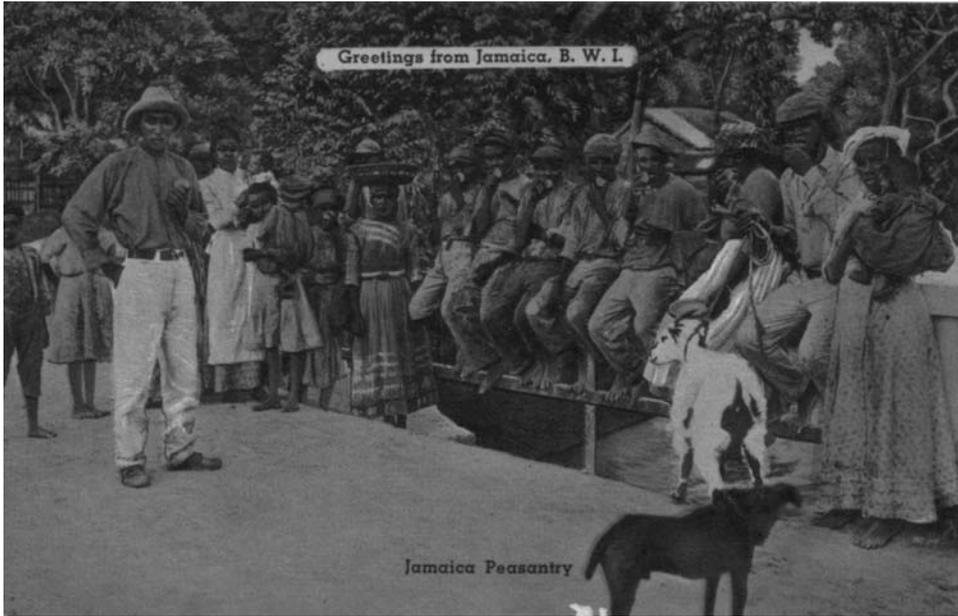


FIGURE 10. Cleary and Elliott, *Jamaica Peasantry*, 1907–14. Postcard, 3.5 × 5.5 in. Collection of the author.



FIGURE 11. E. Wells Elliott, *Types of Jamaica Peasantry*, 1907–14. Postcard, 3.5 × 5.5 in. Collection of the author.

of the New Jamaica initiatives and the role photography played not only in portraying but also in producing these ideals. Through photographic manipulation, tourism promoters and fruit companies presented the island as untouched by the modern world—despite the fact that the island was modernized precisely through plantation slavery and before industrialization took place in Europe. While the architects of the New Jamaica viewed the tourism and banana trades as blueprints for the island’s ascension to modernity and future development, they often engaged in practices that may be described as tropical modernization, a fashioning of Jamaica as a tropical land that was in many respects premodern, a vision of modernity constructed on an armature of the past.

### **Writing the New Jamaica and Framing the Slave Past**

What is particularly pertinent here is that modern progress in the New Jamaica also entailed a return to the slave past, a desire for the former glory and prosperity that existed under slavery. A local visitor to one pavilion of Jamaica’s international exhibition, for instance, lauded the perceived parallels between representations of cultivated lands from the “palmy days” of slavery and those of the New Jamaica, and encouraged exposition viewers to do the same. “When the public look at the diagram exhibited by the Jamaica Institute, showing the cane lands cultivated in 1790, the chief of the so-called ‘palmy days’ of old, and turn to the companion diagram showing the cane-fields cultivated to-day, they will see some reason for writing of a *new* Jamaica.”<sup>19</sup> In other words, Jamaica’s newness, its modernity, could be seen through the contemporary landscape’s acquiescence to slavery’s past.

Moreover, crafters of the New Jamaica believed that the island’s former slave plantation society held prestige in tourists’ imaginations. This is likely why images of workers within the representational landscape of cane would remain a constant theme of late nineteenth-century photographs like *Cane Cutters*, although sugar production had declined to 11 percent of the agricultural product by this period. In an effort to support the notion that the islands had not declined since emancipation, some tourism promoters suggested in promotional literature that the landscape and those that labored on the land had not changed since the days of slavery. American promoters in particular propagated this view. In the United Fruit Company magazine, *The Golden Caribbean*, published in 1904, for instance, writer A. M. Kellogg remarked on “the stationary civilization of the black population” in Jamaica.<sup>20</sup> He maintained, “They [the black population] are no longer slaves, but they remain much as they were at the time of their emancipation in 1834. . . . The truth is that the languor that seizes at once on us when we land has permanently



FIGURE 12. Photographer unknown, *Golden Vale, in Jamaica via the Great White Fleet: United Fruit Company Steamship Service* (Boston, 1913), 29.

affected them, and they have become constitutionally lazy.”<sup>21</sup> The same periodical reproduced a text from 1790 from the planter William Beckford and assured readers that “this charming island has not changed in the least in over one hundred years.”<sup>22</sup> The United Fruit Company also reproduced photographs of their own plantations in the same *Golden Caribbean* publication and in contemporaneous promotional literature (fig. 12).<sup>23</sup> In such images they replace the sugar crops of old with newly transplanted banana plants. In other words, tourism promoters framed the period of slavery as an ideal era in Jamaica’s history—a time when the potential of the land and its inhabitants were realized—and quite literally framed, through photographs, their own plantations as continuing the slave-owners’ legacy.

This return to the slave past as a development scheme in the New Jamaica performed two historical erasures at once. First, it presented the island’s slave-maintained plantations as naturally occurring and aesthetically ideal landscapes, even though much of the island’s geography had been dramatically transformed through what art historian Jill Casid calls “colonial relandscaping,” the discursive and material production of the ideals of the “tropical landscape” in the island.<sup>24</sup> Jamaica, like many islands in the West Indies, had undergone extensive relandscaping with the first plantations in the Americas.<sup>25</sup> In fact, many parts of the island were completely razed to the ground and recreated through the introduction of botanical grafts from around the British Empire. Second, the literal late nineteenth-century focus on the slave-maintained sugar plantation also effectively erased and idealized the subsequent dramatic transformations of the landscape inaugurated by the new fruit industry. The United Fruit Company dramatically transformed both the



FIGURE 13. C. H. (Carleton H.) Graves, *Our Observation Car, Golden Grove R. R., Jamaica*, 1899. Stereograph, 3.5 × 7 in. (in mount). Reproduced by permission of the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture/Photographs and Prints Division.

landscape and labor relations on the island through its transnational conglomeration of their fruit plantations. By claiming that nothing had changed since slavery, the United Fruit Company erased, naturalized, and aestheticized their recent transplantation of the island, encouraging visitors and locals alike to see these transformations not as changes at all but as somehow a naturally occurring, seamless extension of and return to slavery’s natural order.

The fruit companies and other authors of the New Jamaica, while promoting the immutable nature of Jamaica’s landscape, did help to inaugurate a change in the way visitors viewed the island: they encouraged travelers to recognize value in the colony’s picturesque scenery and its inhabitants. As an editorial entitled “The New Jamaica” outlined, “There is another new thing connected with Jamaica. The character of its scenery is not new. So far from that, it is as old as the hills. But the recognition of it and of the character of the climate is new.”<sup>26</sup> Through the efforts of promoters, gazing at and photographing the island’s scenery became a new form of commodity in the island. Tourism industry supporters encouraged visitors to travel to its contemporary plantations, in particular to view the landscape and those who labored on it. The United Fruit Company indeed installed railcars on their plantations that they used for this purpose. A rare stereograph, dating from 1890 and taken by the photographer C. H. Graves pictures one such observation car bearing well-dressed white male and female passengers in the process of sightseeing on the plantation (fig. 13).<sup>27</sup> “Everyone who goes to Jamaica

wants to see bananas growing, and guests are always welcome at the immense plantation of the United Fruit Company at Golden Vale,” one early guidebook crowed.<sup>28</sup> The Graves and Valentine and Sons photographs capture this particular and peculiar moment when the plantation and black laborers became objects of touristic leisure; when, as photography historian Peter Osborne puts it, the “overseeing stare of the planter with time and space in his hands” metamorphosed into “the ludic, pleasuring gaze of the tourists with time and space *on* their hands.”<sup>29</sup>

It is precisely this image pool, filled with photographs produced precisely when the needs of the agricultural industry intersected with the demands of touristic leisure in the late nineteenth century, that some late twentieth-century historians—like Craton, Walvin, and Wright—dip into to reflect on slavery. Given that tourism and fruit industry promoters created images like the *Cane Cutters* that picture laboring and lounging black workers to reframe the new fruit plantations through the lens of slavery, to both bring about and disguise modernity, what view of slavery in the British Empire can they offer? And how is slavery reconfigured in the process? I do not want to dwell on the obvious historical incongruities and temporal warps produced when a late nineteenth-century image is presented as representative of slavery—on the way the details of the image, such as the figures’ dress, if understood as set in the era of slavery, would be a misrepresentation of the period. Indeed, the very engagement with the camera evident in the image captures a particular historically specific understanding of what it means to be represented as a photographic subject.

Rather, what I find more pertinent epistemologically is the publication’s recasting of the late nineteenth-century image as representative of the slave era, which inadvertently replays precisely the narrative of the New Jamaica that the fruit companies and ruling classes were projecting through photographs in the last decade of the nineteenth century: the narrative that nothing had changed since the end of slavery, that the landscape and ethnoscape remained unchanged since the sun set on that peculiar institution. Perhaps to enhance the case that the late nineteenth-century image represents the slave past, in *Slavery, Abolition, and Emancipation*, the book’s designers appear to have altered the photograph to seem older, more antique, and to bear the visual traces of age. In the process, the image becomes a mirage, representing any desired time or place through its shadowy new form. The presentation of the image in *Slavery, Abolition, and Emancipation* threatens to enact in the register of the visual precisely the forms of historical erasure that became central to the production of certain touristic narratives of the New Jamaica. In a book purporting to offer a temporally accurate textual account of slavery, the image erases a certain temporal passage by reproducing a photograph that was designed precisely to occlude a sense of history and historicity.

Post-production manipulation of the photograph further creates the sense of temporal erasure (fig. 1). The reproduction of *Cane Cutters* in the Craton, Walton, and Wright volume conjures the dreamwork of tourism, which is itself based on a creative reimagining of slavery, on giving the slave past visual substance.

The use of a photograph that aimed to aestheticize black labor to represent slavery in the book also runs the risk of historicizing a benign and even romantic sense of the period of forced labor. The image of picturesque blacks cannot begin to convey the daily negotiations of life on the plantation or the spectacular forms of bodily violence that governed black labor in the pre-emancipation period. As Saidiya Hartman reminds us, it is difficult to recover the experience of slavery through any image, photographic or literary, since attempts to empathize with or figure the slave often result in the occlusion or displacement of his or her subjectivity.<sup>30</sup> The representational slippery allusiveness of slavery through photographic representation in the Anglophone Caribbean seems especially evident in *Slavery, Abolition, and Emancipation*. Indeed, in a publication about black slave labor, it is notable that the only figure in the *Cane Cutters* photograph who explicitly appears engaged in agricultural work is erased. The black woman, who bends over with axe in hand, is removed from the frontispiece. The odd shape of the top photograph seems to stem from efforts to crop the figure out of the image altogether. Like the post-development manipulation of nineteenth-century photographs, the book's creators engage in their own form of visual excision. Only the barest traces of the figure, a crescent moon-shaped sliver of her back, remain visible in the image. In the process, the photograph originally enlisted to signify slavery in the end resists showing black subjects performing agricultural work, presenting instead figures who participate in a form of labor new to the late nineteenth century: working as a photographic subject.

The absented figure is revealing not only for the labor she performs, but for what her image refuses. She does not appear to offer her body readily as a visual commodity. Her "Gleaneresque" pose does not yield to the camera, as do those of her counterparts, who uniformly turn their eyes, faces, and bodies toward the photographer. Indeed, her steadfast attention to her labor and stooping position result in the least camera-friendly position one can imagine. This is not to attribute intentionality to the figure, since her appearance in the same position in two photographs makes it clear that she posed at the urging of the photographer, holding the posture for the time required to secure the photographic images and retaining it perhaps as the photographer reorganized the other figures. Irrespective of the conditions and purposes of the image's creation, the resulting posture of the woman denies visual consumption. Indeed, the very opacity of the figure, her anomalous presence within the photograph's production, is visualized in her exclusion

from the subsequent reproduction of the photograph. In other words, it is precisely because she is not made available to the viewer in the typical ways that photographers required black subjects to address the camera in Jamaican tourism-oriented photographs that she is likely excised from the subsequent reproduction. The woman's erasure, I want to suggest, highlights how we might and should read absences in images for what they make present, how we might read photographs against the grain to assess certain histories and historiographies of African diasporic subjects. What does the exclusion of the figure render legible about possibilities and the impossibilities of certain forms of knowledge through the photographic archive? What does the figure's disqualification from the production of history reveal about visual ideals of slavery specifically? What ways of remembering slavery does the photographic archive of tourism conveniently offer and occlude?

Although I have concentrated primarily on Craton, Walvin, and Wright's book, their use of photography is not unique. Their book simply provides a catalyst for a conversation about a widespread practice. Several recent histories on Jamaica also use late nineteenth-century photographs as illustrations of slavery. Philip Sherlock and Hazel Bennett in *The Story of the Jamaican People* (1998), for instance, use another Valentine and Sons photograph of two young black women taken in Cherry Gardens in a chapter on pens, provision grounds, and higglers during slavery. Steeve O. Buckridge's *The Language of Dress: Resistance and Accommodation in Jamaica, 1760–1890* (2004), reproduces two early twentieth-century postcards by tourism promoter and bookseller Astley Smith in a section on "the colour and fabric of plantation dress."<sup>31</sup> Thomas Holt, in *The Problem of Freedom* (1992), also reproduces photographs by the Duperly firm, *A Peasant's Hut* and *Falmouth Market*, as images of the immediate post-emancipation period.<sup>32</sup> Even more enigmatically, Werner Zips, in *Black Rebels: African-Caribbean Freedom Fighters in Jamaica* (1999), reproduces a mid-nineteenth-century photograph from the United States to signify "the politics of intimidation by mutilation and torture" in Jamaica.<sup>33</sup> I do not have the space here to describe in detail how these different photographs occupy or ornament these individual texts. Indeed, it is not clear whether in each case it is the authors, publishers, or designers who are responsible for the inclusion of the photographs in the books.<sup>34</sup> This visual roll call simply aims to make the case that there is a broader use of the photographic archive to cast historical light on slavery, and that, regardless of how and why these photographs came to be in these accounts, they inform and frame the presentation of historical knowledge about the region.

I suspect that many authors of books pertaining to slavery, as well as their publishers and designers, use photographs to render slavery more legible, the unrepresentable more imaginable, the unrecorded more truthful, the past more present. They lay claim to the ontology of the photographic image

and its indexicality to substantiate their narrative accounting of slavery. For a historical period that has often been shrouded by what Marcus Wood refers to as “blind memory,” photographs may appear to offer an unblinking witness to the institutional practices of slavery.<sup>35</sup> Photography historian Jens Ruchatz points out that photographs are intrinsic to the externalization of memory for many social groups.<sup>36</sup> Photography is a technology through which memory can be materialized and stored outside the body, and in the process transmitted across generations over time. The books’ creators may use the photographs to give slavery material form, substantiating and consolidating memory and history in the process.

By using photographs to represent slavery, book producers and authors also place the experience of slavery within a genealogy of other traumatic world events that have become ingrained in popular memory through photography. Alan Trachtenberg suggests that the impact of photography on the production of historical knowledge was first felt in the mid-nineteenth century, at the time of the American Civil War.<sup>37</sup> Strikingly, despite the history-transforming presence of the camera in the era, slavery remained a blind spot in early Civil War histories.<sup>38</sup> The photographic production of history perhaps reached its apogee in the Second World War. Photographs taken by Allied forces at the end of the war became widely representative of the horrors of concentration camps during Nazi rule.<sup>39</sup> Interestingly, according to Siegfried Kracauer, not only did photographs offer a visual record of events, but photography’s seeming ability to reconstruct a “series of events in their temporal succession without any gaps” also reproduced the temporal unfolding of historical narratives.<sup>40</sup> What Kracauer describes as “the photography of time” provided a technological ally to historicist reconstructions of the past.<sup>41</sup> The impulse to use photographs in histories of slavery in the British West Indies may respond to this photographic colonization of the imagination, and even temporality, of modern history over the last century and a half.

Recent historical accounts of slavery in the British West Indies that use photographs from the late nineteenth century as illustrations, however, inadvertently present what might be described as a nonhistoricist sense of temporal unfolding as outlined by Kracauer. By publishing photographs that date from a time period that does not coincide with slavery but purports to represent it, the publications juxtapose and commingle different eras, resulting in a distinctly nonlinear sense of time and history. Rather than interpret the reproduction of the late nineteenth-century photographs simply as incongruous, might we consider such reconfigurations of temporality to have their own historical value, particularly when it comes to histories of slavery? In other words, might the kinds of ruptures and repetitions of time facilitated by photographs in these accounts in fact be fitting within historical narratives of slavery and its legacy in the Anglophone Caribbean?

This atemporal use of photography, as it is used in these accounts, provocatively recalls Nobel laureate Toni Morrison's concept of rememory, her characterization of the way the traumatic experiences of the past maintain a living presence with the world of slaves and their descendants.<sup>42</sup> More specifically, in the case of historical accounts in the Anglophone Caribbean, such photographs may encourage reflection on how the specter of slavery maintained a living presence in the New Jamaica. Many historians and post-colonial critics observe that the late nineteenth century and the era of slavery are linked by more than touristic nostalgia for the palmy days of the slave-maintained plantation. They point to the constitutive relationship between tourism and slavery. Frank Taylor, for one, insists on casting tourism as it developed in the late nineteenth century as "intrinsically . . . a neoplanation enterprise" built on and extending some of the socio-economic relations and hierarchies that existed under slavery.<sup>43</sup> While being careful not to collapse the experiences of oppression in the era of plantation slavery with those that governed the tourism trade in the Anglophone Caribbean, literary scholar Ian Strachan also maintains that, in the English-speaking Caribbean, "in a number of crucial ways, tourism has grown out of and sustains the [slave and post-emancipation] plantation economy."<sup>44</sup> Intriguingly, Walvin, Craton, and Wright make a related argument about the connection between slavery and subsequent plantation systems in the very publication that features the Valentine and Sons photograph of the sugar plantation. They argue: "As long as plantations lasted, so did all the socio-economic effects usually ascribed solely to slavery days."<sup>45</sup> In other words, the commingling of photographs from the New Jamaica with descriptions of slavery results in a reconfiguration of temporality, which in turn calls attention to the way plantation slavery informed the structure of the tourism and fruit trades, how it shaped the socio-economic horizons of post-emancipation Jamaica. This use of such photographs projects and presents slavery not as a thing of the past but as an enduring presence in late nineteenth-century Jamaica.

Present-day historians and critics are not the only ones to telescope between slavery and the era of tourism as inaugurated by the New Jamaica. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, residents in Jamaica were quick to characterize the Elder, Dempster, and Company's; the United Fruit Company's; and the crown government's labor practices as they related to black Jamaicans and indentured Indian laborers on the fruit plantations as constitutive of a "new slavery," to use a term blazoned across the front page of one local newspaper in the early twentieth century.<sup>46</sup> In many cases, those who most insisted on drawing parallels between the New Jamaica and the old plantation system vehemently opposed the new system of Indian indentureship because it undermined wage-based black labor.<sup>47</sup>

Crucially, late nineteenth-century newspaper reports suggest that many black Jamaicans saw more than metaphorical links between the slave past and the celebrated New Jamaica period. Indeed, although organizers of the island's great exhibition hoped the event would draw local as well as international audiences, many blacks steered clear of the exhibition site because they believed it was part of a plot to re-enslave them. As the local *Gleaner* recounted: "The story goes that Captain L. D. Baker [head of the United Fruit Company] has been actively engaged in the importation of shackles in casks in large quantities for the purposes of entrapping the people when they got to the Exhibition and making them slaves again. . . . The Exhibition is a trap."<sup>48</sup> Another newspaper article ridiculed the popular idea that "the Exhibition would . . . cause a going back to Slavery in any form." It berated "the people [who were] not yet seeming sufficiently intelligent to see the difference between entering into voluntary agreements to work for certain parties or properties and the old time bondage of slavery."<sup>49</sup> The descriptions of the exhibition as a trap reveal that, although the island's governing classes saw the event as inaugurating a New Jamaica, some of the formerly enslaved and their descendants thought it held the power to return them to the condition, if not the time, of slavery. The prevalence of this belief suggests that some black Jamaicans, even sixty years after emancipation, conceived of their freedom as something so fragile and alterable that it could be taken away at any moment. That they believed the shackles of slavery awaited them confirms a point made by scholars like Saidiya Hartman and Diana Paton that the lines between freedom and unfreedom were not indelibly marked by the proclamation of emancipation.<sup>50</sup> It appears that the memory of slavery—the bodily experience of being enslaved in casks—had a lived presence in late nineteenth-century Jamaica. For some blacks, the New Jamaica seemed a clear picture of the days of old. In provocative ways, then, the historical accounts that juxtapose the tourism-oriented photographs with the history of slavery draw the same parallels as did the suspicious black residents between the New Jamaica and the period of slavery.

The photographs of the late nineteenth century may provide an even more interesting linchpin between slavery and the New Jamaica. In the last decade of the nineteenth century and into the early twentieth, photography served precisely to manage what historian Thomas Holt describes as "the problem of freedom," the colonial authorities' efforts to govern black Jamaicans outside the structures of subjection that maintained the slave plantation.<sup>51</sup> Specifically, the colonial authorities faced the challenge of transforming slaves into voluntary wage-based workers without using the techniques of surveillance, discipline, and punishment that ordered and produced black labor before emancipation. The camera would play a role



FIGURE 14. James Johnston, “*Hard Labour*,” in *Jamaica, the New Riviera* (London, 1903), 49.

in these new phases of social regulation and labor structures introduced by colonial authorities in the post-emancipation era.

The regulatory purposes of photography at the turn of the twentieth century are evident in a tourism-oriented photograph of prison laborers taken by the minister-turned-tourism-promoter James Johnston in 1903 (fig. 14). Like Valentine and Sons, Johnston worked as part of the colonial government’s and the fruit companies’ tourism and trade efforts. The photograph, titled “*Hard Labour*,” appeared as an illustration in Johnston’s tourist guide and in his global lantern lectures promoting tourism.<sup>52</sup> The image pictures chained black male prisoners breaking stones in a desolate stone quarry. Several cast a wary eye toward the photographer, while others turn away from the camera entirely. One prisoner wears the word “penitence” or “penitentiary” across his back. His counterparts literally wear the terms of their sentences on their uniforms. The photograph pictures a form of social discipline and punishment that was a central component of Jamaica’s penal system in the post-emancipation era and gives visual support to the belief in the redemptive and reformatory potential of coerced prison labor.<sup>53</sup>

The “*Hard Labour*” photograph highlights the intersecting forms of social control in late nineteenth-century Jamaica and the visual economy of the

tourist trade, and it calls attention to the blurred lines between slavery and freedom in the post-emancipation era. As historian Diana Paton details, although the crown government transformed the Jamaican penal system after emancipation, the state contradictorily relied on hard labor—and, after 1850, corporal punishment—as a form of rehabilitation, so that inmates would willingly accept labor contracts upon their release.<sup>54</sup> In other words, in the post-emancipation period the state managed wage workers by using a form of coerced labor reminiscent of the practices employed during slavery. No wonder that the critic of local blacks who refused to go to Jamaica's international exhibition accused them of not knowing the difference between "voluntary agreements to work" and "old time bondage."<sup>55</sup> Even judges at the time recognized the similarities between prison labor and slavery. One member of the judiciary, in the course of sentencing a man to a three-year term, explicitly admonished him: "While there you will have to labour like a slave."<sup>56</sup> Throughout the post-emancipation period, as Paton details, the colonial state depended heavily, in some parishes entirely, on unpaid prison labor for the maintenance of post-emancipation infrastructure. The stone quarry pictured in the Johnston photograph was but one of the places Jamaican prisoners labored in the post-emancipation era in colonial efforts to turn them into hard-working citizens. The photograph in this way pictures a site in which contradictory forms of freedom, as identified by the authorities and black residents alike, coexisted in post-emancipation Jamaica.

The "*Hard Labour*" photograph also provocatively calls attention to processes of surveillance that were intrinsic to the island's post-emancipation penal system. Paton points out that authorities in Jamaica created new, modern penal facilities in the 1860s. The new prisons, like those designed by English social reformer Jeremy Bentham, were designed with a "hall of inspections" to facilitate the surveillance of prisoners.<sup>57</sup> Since prisoners spent substantial time on public works projects, surveillance was often carried out in public spaces by overseers and by the public more generally.<sup>58</sup> This process of public and institutional surveillance, so central to governance in post-emancipation Jamaica, intersected with tourism-oriented uses of photography. The connection is hinted at in the "*Hard Labour*" photograph, which not only pictures penitence and presents it as a touristic sight but also positions and presents the camera, literally and figuratively, as a central surveilling presence in the scene of black penitence. The photographer's part in producing disciplined black laboring subjects is evident. This is suggested in the positioning of, and even redefinition of, the overseer in the image. A uniformed officer occupies the margins of the quarry, barely visible on the right side of the photograph. More centrally positioned, and assuming the primary role of overseer, is the photographer himself (and subsequent observers of the scene), whom the prisoners acknowledge through their gaze. The camera's

overseeing presence extended from prisons to the cane fields, from explicit scenes of discipline like the stone quarry to the touristic surveillance of black wage earners on the plantation. The photographers' gaze, whether directed through the tourists' viewfinder or through the eyes of plantation visitors or tourist promoters, played a role in managing black labor in the New Jamaica era. At the very least, the importance of photographing black laborers in the new visual economies of tourism resulted in the constant possibility of inspection for many Jamaican laborers. One laborer at the turn of the twentieth century complained precisely about the intrusion of camera-toting tourists during the workday, remarking, "An when de tourists come up de country and see we working in de ground, dem is not going to do anything fa we, but take picta and laugh at we."<sup>59</sup>

Not only would laborers have been conscious of their possible inspection by tourists, but in the late nineteenth century they would also have been acquainted with the subtle and not so subtle forms of bodily discipline required of them before its lens. The men and women who acknowledge the camera in the Valentine and Sons photograph offer some insight into how much laborers were accustomed to the presence of the camera and to the new work of being a photographic subject. Bodily performance for the camera is perhaps most explicit in the posture of the woman who poses with her head tilted to the side and hand on her chin. Like the stooping woman, she is the only figure to appear in both versions of the image, and, of all the women pictured, she seems most aware of posing for the camera, most attentive to the bodily ideals of the picturesque subject (figs. 5 and 9).<sup>60</sup> In another photograph produced by the local A. Duperly and Son, the bodily labor of the photographic subject is also emphasized (fig. 15). The women, especially at the far right and in the middle of the image, contort their bodies, leaning in uncomfortable poses, fulfilling the bodily demands of the picturesque photograph. This awareness of how one should behave for the camera, I want to suggest, had broader implications. The presence (or even suggestion) of a photographer elicited certain behaviors, a phenomenon that itself constituted a way of overseeing, managing, and revaluing new forms of labor in the New Jamaica era.

That the island's black inhabitants could be photographed, that they were willing to submit to the camera, that they performed the kind of bodily discipline necessary for capture and consumption by photography implicitly constituted a selling point for the promoters of tourism. Tellingly, when local residents refused to be photographed or when they demanded money for posing, travelers framed these incidents as acts of black indiscipline or evidence of the corrupting influence of American capitalism on the British colony.<sup>61</sup> The assumption that the natives were photographable was the visual equivalent of saying the natives were friendly, an important mantra when



FIGURE 15. A. Duperly and Son, *Cane Cutters*, circa 1900. Reproduced by permission of the National Gallery of Jamaica.

trying to market travel to a majority black island to white British and North American tourists in the late nineteenth century.

It is worth pointing out too that black photographic subjects were not the only ones framed by the disciplining lens of photography. The tourists themselves were also subject to the lessons of photography—from the other end of the camera. Through plantation tours, photographs, and stereographs (to recall the stereograph of the plantation tour, fig. 13), tourism promoters aimed to indoctrinate tourists into a new vision of post-emancipation Jamaica, encouraging them to see value in British and American civilizing missions more generally.

While tourism promoters' photographs aimed to picture and produce black discipline, these ambitions were never realized, either in photographs or on plantations. Black Jamaicans sometimes refused to inhabit photographs or inhabited them in ways that sometimes simultaneously confirmed and confounded ideals of the island's residents as "civilized subjects" or docile photographic ones. In Valentine and Sons' *Cane Cutters*, for instance, two of the men in the photograph hold up their machetes, one turning his blade

in such a way that its sharp edge flashes in the sun. The image communicates threat as much as thrift. The figures speak to the ambivalences within both tourism's visual script and local responses to its photographic demands.

The historical accounts that use photographs from the late nineteenth century to represent slavery ultimately transpose the period of slavery and tourism in ways that might enable a more complicated historical window precisely into relationship between these eras, a connection that the formerly enslaved may have ultimately recognized. It is possible that some of the blacks who were subject to touristic forms of social overseeing in the late nineteenth century associated it with structures of governance under slavery. This may explain in part why some black Jamaicans were so certain that their re-enslavement lay just around the exhibition's corner. The forms of social control employed to manage blacks in the late nineteenth century may have recalled types of surveillance and discipline that former slaves and their descendents associated with slavery. The use of photographs in contemporary historical accounts do not simply posit connections between the slavery days of old and the purported New Jamaica, but highlight the very medium through which a contiguity was maintained, the means through which a social overseeing and bodily regulation of blacks would continue to be carried out: the medium of photography itself.

While the use of the photographic images in historical accounts like *Slavery, Abolition, and Emancipation* offers the possibility of new histories of slavery, post-emancipation, and photography, the very compulsion to mine the photographic archive for representational traces of slavery may leave certain expectations about the evidentiary nature of photography intact. Such interpretative lenses reinforce notions of the historical value of certain forms of representation. I would argue that slavery in the Anglophone Caribbean, and perhaps in the African diaspora more generally, demands a more radical reformulation of the "evidence of things unseen" and unphotographed. Absences in the photographic record should be viewed not as a lack for which compensation is necessary, but as an intrinsic part of, and even representation of, the history of slavery and post-emancipation in the region.<sup>62</sup>

I want to conclude by exploring the representational and historical possibilities of absence in the Anglophone Caribbean as they relate to photography, through a consideration of a photographic series by Andrea Chung, a contemporary artist of Jamaican and Trinidadian descent. Starting in 2008, Chung began producing a series of approximately thirty cutouts entitled *May Day*, in which she took touristic photographs from late nineteenth-century Jamaica and cut out all the black laborers that had inhabited the images. In the resulting photographs, sugarcane stalks still bear the weight of the workers (fig. 16), bananas remain upheld on litter-strewn docks (fig. 17),



FIGURE 16. Andrea Chung, *’Im hole ’im cahner*, 2008. Photo cutout, 24 × 17 in.  
Courtesy of the artist.

and baskets tilt in mid-air (fig. 18), but only vacated white silhouettes, blank spaces, remain within the excisions where laborers once appeared. In cutouts like *’Im hole ’im cahner* (fig. 16), she left only the white male figure in place, casting a light on “the overseer” figure in late nineteenth-century photographs.<sup>63</sup> Chung’s reading of the hatted white male as an overseer (fig. 7; as it happens, he is Armand Duperly, a photographer in the A. Duperly and Son photography firm), brings into further focus the surveilling role of the photographer in the spaces of black labor during the period.

Interestingly, Chung creates her cutouts from reproductions of the photographs as they appear in historical accounts or online, rather than from archival originals. Often she enlarges the images in ways that emphasize the “visual texture” of their reproduction history—highlighting the pixels, grain, and lines. By extracting the workers from the photographs, she allows them to take reprieve from their labor, to take a May Day, a day without work. She wants them to escape the confines, the spatiotemporality, of the photograph. The absented figures thus disrupt the indexicality or temporality of photography, its signification of a particular space in time. The missing persons, the black laborers, are precisely not represented; they are only hinted at by their absence.



FIGURE 17 (*left*). Andrea Chung, *Daylight cum an' mi waan guh home*, 2008. Photo cutout, 13.5 × 15 in. Courtesy of the artist.



FIGURE 18 (*center*). Andrea Chung, *Yuh nuh see it?* 2009. Photo cutout, 12 × 16 in. Courtesy of the artist.

Ultimately Chung's vacant silhouettes not only produce and call attention to photographic absence but also give absence figurative form. Hans Belting argues that an "image makes present that which is absent." It replaces absence through an iconic presence or "visible absence" by material means.<sup>64</sup> The late nineteenth-century archive that Chung mines, photographs previously used to make slavery present despite the absence of photographs from the pre-emancipation period, may be seen to mark a doubly visible absence. The artist describes how she emphasizes this quality by mounting the photographs on top of Plexiglas so the work is raised enough to cast a slight shadow, one that gives the absented figure three-dimensional depth. Some of her titles also taunt the viewer with what can't be seen: "Yuh nuh see it?" one image queries (fig. 18).

An example of the representational possibilities of absence is discernible in figure 16, *'Im hole 'im cahner* (He holds his camera). Coincidentally, Chung chooses for her cutout the A. Duperly photograph *Cutting Sugar Cane*, in which several of the black figures located at the bottom of the photograph appear to chomp on sugarcane. Chung's version of the image brings visibility to figures barely discernible in the Duperly photograph, like the man kneeling, largely concealed by cane, on the right near the overseer (figs. 19, 20).<sup>65</sup> One wonders how he came so ambivalently to appear in the photograph, when in many other tourism-oriented images by A. Duperly and Son the photographers seemed so intent on making all the photographed subjects fully visually accessible to the camera. Intriguingly, a similar figure can



FIGURE 19 (left). Andrea Chung, *'Im hole 'im cahner* (detail). Courtesy of the artist.  
FIGURE 20 (right). Duperly and Son, *Cutting Sugar Cane* (detail), postmarked 1904. Postcard 3.5 × 5.5 in. Collection of author.

be made out in the Valentine and Sons photograph of cane cutters (fig. 21). Close inspection reveals a man just to the left of the men with the machetes. The man's face seems almost an eclipse of the face in front of him. He is barely detectable in the original photograph and almost invisible in reproductions (fig. 22). The most visible thing about him is the way light catches his one-eyed stare, a gaze that does not meet the photographer's. How might we understand these almost-hidden figures and their near disappearance in the photographs themselves and in the visual textures of their reproduction? How do Chung's cutouts, her production of and playing with absence in the photographic archive, create new types of representational presence? It is tempting to interpret these men as engaged in a photographic refusal, as not wanting to be seen or inscribed in the representational apparatus of tourism even as they appear, if only barely, in the image. My interest here is not to speculate on the intentions of these two, or to expound on their complex figuration in the photographs. Instead, I am concerned with suggesting that the figures' absent presence opens an alternate way of seeing, interpreting, and assessing the history of the African diasporic subject through the photographic image.

This reading of the representational spaces of absence involves more than seeking that which inhabits the edge of visibility or invisibility in photographs, as the male figures in the Duperly and Son and the Valentine and Sons photographs do. It tries to take seriously Toni Morrison's prescient observation that "invisible things are not necessarily 'not there' . . . Certain



FIGURE 21 (*left*). James Valentine and Sons, *Cane Cutters, Jamaica* (detail), 1891. Reproduced by permission of Onyx: The David Boxer Collection of Jamaican Photography.

FIGURE 22 (*right*). Frontispiece to Craton, Walvin, and Wright, *Slavery, Abolition, and Emancipation* (detail). Reproduced by permission of Pearson Education.

absences are so stressed, so ornate, so planned, they call attention to themselves.”<sup>66</sup> It pays attention to these planned absences, like the one evident in the frontispiece where the female figure was erased. In some respects, the woman’s absence called so much attention to itself that this essay has been an attempt to understand the meaning of her disappearance and what it reveals about the work of photography in representing (and vanquishing) slavery, post-emancipation, tourism, labor, and their histories. Moreover, the absence of a photographic archive pertaining to slavery can be seen as yet another, and even more ornate, absence. The challenge is to recognize and value the historically specific forms that image, memory, and history-making take in the space of the absence of the photographic archive of slavery, to see that absence as productive and generative of its own types of representation, meanings, histories, and subjectivities.

## Notes

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1. Apprenticeship was the four-year transitional period following slavery during which ex-slaves trained, without pay, with their former masters.
2. Alan Trachtenberg, “Albums of War: On Reading Civil War Photographs,” *Representations* 9 (Winter 1985): 1.
3. Toni Morrison, *Beloved: A Novel* (New York, 1987), 35.
4. Michael Craton, James Walvin, and David Wright, *Slavery, Abolition, and Emancipation: Black Slaves and the British Empire: A Thematic Documentary* (London, 1976).
5. For a discussion of the idea and desire for photography as well as a careful and nuanced examination of different thinkers in early protophotographic and photographic practices, see Geoffrey Batchen, *Burning with Desire: The Conception of Photography* (Cambridge, MA, 1997), 24–102.
6. Naomi Rosenblum, *A World History of Photography* (New York, 2007), 29.
7. For an examination of these photographers, see Batchen, *Burning with Desire*, 24–53. On the global circulation of the daguerreotype, consult Rosenblum, *World History of Photography*, 14–17, and for its circulation in Latin America and for more on Hercules Florence, someone not discussed in some histories of photography, see Boris Kossoy, “Photography in Nineteenth-Century Latin America,” in Wendy Watriss and Lois Parkinson Zamora, eds., *Image and Memory: Latin American Photography, 1865–1994* (Austin, TX, 1998), 19–54.
8. David Boxer, “The Duperlys of Jamaica,” in *Duperly: An Exhibition of Works by Adolphe Duperly, His Sons, and Grandsons Mounted in Commemoration of the Bicentenary of His Birth*, ed. National Gallery of Jamaica (Kingston, Jamaica, 2001), 6.
9. As art historian David Boxer notes, “The photographers were in Jamaica at the invitation of the Governor to prepare a series of photographs for exhibition at the Chicago Columbian Exhibition in 1892”; *ibid.*, 20. For newspaper articles on the photography of Valentine and Sons in Jamaica, see *Daily Gleaner*, May 2, 1891; February 15, 1893; April 12, 1900, January 10, 1903.
10. C. J. Ward, *World’s Fair: Jamaica at Chicago: An Account Descriptive of the Colony of Jamaica with Historical and Other Appendices* (New York, 1893), preface; Edgar Mayhew Bacon and Eugene Murray-Aaron, *The New Jamaica; Describing the Island, Explaining Its Conditions of Life and Growth and Discussing Its Mercantile Relations and Potential Importance; Adding Somewhat in Relation to Those Matters Which Directly Interest the Tourist and the Health Seeker* (New York, 1890).
11. *Daily Gleaner*, September 28, 1889.
12. *Daily Gleaner*, January 9, 1893.
13. *Daily Gleaner*, February 2, 1892.
14. *Daily Gleaner*, February 15, 1893.
15. *Daily Gleaner*, November 21, 1902.
16. *Daily Gleaner*, December 8, 1904.
17. For a more expansive examination of the importance and purposes of such representations of tropical abundance, see my discussion in Krista A. Thompson, *An Eye for the Tropics* (Durham, NC, 2006), 74–78.
18. *Ibid.*, 29, 67–70.

19. *Daily Gleaner*, January 29, 1891.
20. Kellogg's article from *The Golden Caribbean* was reprinted in *Daily Gleaner*, January 26, 1904.
21. *Ibid.*
22. The editors of *The Golden Caribbean* framed William Beckford's statements with this quote: "We accidentally picked up an old volume published in England, about 1790, by William Bickford [*sic*], an old time English painter"; *The Golden Caribbean* 1, no. 1 (Nov. 1903): 4.
23. *Ibid.*, 3, 5.
24. Jill H. Casid, *Sowing Empire: Landscape and Colonization* (Minneapolis, 2005), 1–14.
25. *Ibid.*, 14–24.
26. *Daily Gleaner*, January 29, 1891.
27. The stereograph is rare in that it makes the tourists, the consumers of Jamaica's newly recognized scenery and laborers, the subject of the photograph, in a reversal of the typical scenarios in which tourists observed and photographed local laborers.
28. Mortimer C. DeSouza, *A Tourist's Guide to the Parishes of Jamaica: Together with an Account Descriptive of the Jamaica Exhibition, 1891, Being a Supplement to Desouza's . . . Jamaica Commercial Almanack* (Kingston, Jamaica, 1891), 69.
29. Peter D. Osborne, *Travelling Light: Photography, Travel, and Visual Culture* (Manchester, England, 2000), 113.
30. Saidiya V. Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self-Making in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York, 1997).
31. Steeve O. Buckridge, *The Language of Dress: Resistance and Accommodation in Jamaica, 1760–1890* (Kingston, Jamaica, 2004), 53.
32. Philip Manderson Sherlock and Hazel Bennett, *The Story of the Jamaican People* (Kingston, Jamaica, 1998), 172; Thomas C. Holt, *The Problem of Freedom: Race, Labor, and Politics in Jamaica and Britain, 1832–1938* (Baltimore, 1992); Werner Zips and Shelley L. Frisch, *Black Rebels: African-Caribbean Freedom Fighters in Jamaica* (Princeton, 1999), 102, Buckridge, *The Language of Dress*, 53.
33. Zips and Frisch, *Black Rebels*, 102.
34. Photographs come to populate historical texts as illustrations, as covers, and as frontispieces through processes that involve many people—including the authors, publishers, designers, and marketing specialists. The publishers' involvement in such decisions is hinted at in the *Slavery, Abolition, and Emancipation* frontispiece. Longman's insignia, a stylized merchant ship (an ironic accompaniment to a book on slavery), appears wedged between both photographs. In this publication the Valentine and Sons photograph continues its work as a marketing tool serving, like all book covers and frontispieces, to heighten the book's desirability as a commodity. As anthropologist Corrine Kratz points out, regardless of how and why a particular photograph comes to occupy a text, readers and reviewers often attempt to tell a book by its cover, understanding it as revelatory of the identity or genre of the book or as allegorical of the text and its interpretation. Photographs used on covers and as internal illustrations frame literally and figuratively the content of the text and, I would suggest in the case of history texts, function as part of the historical narrative; Corinne A. Kratz, "On Telling/Selling a Book by Its Cover," *Cultural Anthropology* 9, no. 2 (May 1994).

35. Wood, *Blind Memory: Visual Representations of Slavery in England and America* (New York, 2000).
36. Jens Ruchatz, "The Photograph as Externalization and Trace," in *Cultural Memory Studies: An International and Interdisciplinary Handbook*, ed. Astrid Erll (Berlin, 2008), 8:337.
37. Trachtenberg, "Albums of War."
38. Ibid. See also Wood's observation that few photographs of slavery existed prior to the Civil War; Wood, *Blind Memory*, 268.
39. Although, as Frances Guerin and Roger Hallas suggest, as early as the 1950s some scholars, survivors, and critics had questioned the "representability" of the photographic archive; photographs became central to historical imagination of and transmission of the Holocaust and other traumatic events, as well as truth claims about those events. Frances Guerin and Roger Hallas, introduction to *The Image and the Witness: Trauma, Memory, and Visual Culture*, ed. Frances Guerin and Roger Hallas (New York, 2007), 6.
40. Siegfried Kracauer and Thomas Y. Levin, "Photography," *Critical Inquiry* 19, no. 3 (Spring 1993): 425.
41. Ibid., 426.
42. Morrison, *Beloved*, 35.
43. Frank Taylor, *To Hell with Paradise: A History of the Jamaican Tourist Industry* (Pittsburgh, 1993), 175.
44. Ian G. Strachan, *Paradise and Plantation: Tourism and Culture in the Anglophone Caribbean* (Charlottesville, VA, 2002), 9.
45. Craton, Walvin, and Wright, *Slavery, Abolition, and Emancipation*, xi.
46. *Daily Gleaner*, January 27, 1910.
47. Thompson, *An Eye for the Tropics*, 78–80.
48. *Daily Gleaner*, November 7, 1890.
49. Ibid.
50. Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection*; Diana Paton, *No Bond but the Law: Punishment, Race, and Gender in Jamaican State Formation, 1780–1870* (Durham, NC, 2004).
51. Holt, *The Problem of Freedom*.
52. James Johnston, *Jamaica, the New Riviera: A Pictorial Description of the Island and Its Attractions* (London, 1903); James Johnston, *Optical Lantern Lectures on Jamaica, "The New Riviera"* (Bristol, UK, 1903).
53. Paton, *No Bond but the Law*, 90.
54. Ibid.
55. *Daily Gleaner*, November 7, 1890.
56. Paton, *No Bond but the Law*, 137.
57. Ibid., 128.
58. Ibid., 135.
59. Quoted in Bessie Pullen-Burry, *Ethiopia in Exile: Jamaica Revisited* (London, 1905), 30.
60. In one image she appears in the same position under the shelter of a makeshift parasol held by an older white or brown Jamaican male. "Brown," a term used locally, describes a class of mixed-race Jamaicans who, within colonial hierarchies, ranked higher than Jamaicans of primarily African descent but lower than the British colonials, the former planter class, and the white mercantile elite.
61. This was evident in geographer and naturalist Harry Johnston's account of his travels throughout the Caribbean, *The Negro in the New World* (1910). Johnston

was disarmed when members of the Maroon community in Jamaica demanded monetary compensation when he aimed a camera in their direction or at the surrounding scenery. A faithful believer in the virtues of the British civilizing mission in the West Indies, Johnston attributed such behavior to the corrupting forces of the Americans; Harry Johnston, *The Negro in the New World* (London, 1910), 279.

62. James Baldwin, *The Evidence of Things Not Seen*, 1st ed. (New York, 1985).
63. Andrea Chung, telephone interview with author, February 3, 2009.
64. Hans Belting, *Likeness and Presence: A History of the Image Before the Era of Art*, trans. Edmund Jephcott (Chicago, 1994), 11.
65. Conversely, many of the figures in the photograph, especially those in the group in the middle, become most indistinguishable and unrecognizable.
66. Toni Morrison, "Unspeakable Things Unspoken: The Afro-American Presence in American Literature," *Michigan Quarterly Review* 28, no. 1 (Winter 1989): 11.