University of King's College and Slavery: A Scholarly Inquiry

Literature Review, February 2019

by

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Executive Summary

This paper offers a reconnaissance of principal themes in research on the development of the University of King's College and the history of slavery. It is organized into five sections: the history of King's College in New York and its links to slavery; the early development of King's College in Nova Scotia; the arrival of Loyalists and Black Loyalists in the Maritimes; the broader imperial and economic history of slavery in the Atlantic world; and recent studies of African Nova Scotians, African Canadians, and systemic racism. The past generation has witnessed a transformation in scholarship on the history of slavery in Canada. Led by scholars such as Afua Cooper and Amani Whitfield, there is now a wealth of evidence on the prevalence of slavery and institutionalized racism in Nova Scotia during and after the founding of the University of King's College. Based on this evidence, it is clear that there are links between the histories of King's College and slavery that require further research.

Introduction

The University of King's College is the oldest university in Nova Scotia and one of the oldest in Canada, and it prides itself on its long and accomplished history. Prompted by Columbia University's inquest into its historical links to slavery and the slave trade, King's College is investigating its own historical connections to slavery. This literature review serves as an initial working document to support three research papers on specific topics related to King's and slavery.

In light of the many broad areas of scholarly research that relate to possible connections to slavery in the early history of the University of King's College, this review addresses a range

of topics: the literature pertaining to the history of King's in New York and Nova Scotia; the history of King's College in New York relative to slavery; the views, households, and lives of prominent figures in the founding, governance, and operation of the University of King's College; Loyalist experiences in Nova Scotia, including that of the Black Loyalists; the broader history of slavery in Nova Scotia, the British Empire and the international economy; and the history of African Nova Scotians, African Canadians, and racism in Nova Scotia and Canada. Our review discusses salient patterns and debates within the literature and considers how these have developed over time.

For over a century, slavery was written out of the national historical narrative of Canada.[1] The prevailing image of Canada's history was that of a safe haven, a place where runaway slaves found freedom.[2] In contrast to the highly public history of widespread American slavery, Canada's history of slavery still remains largely absent in public discourse. Nonetheless, scholars and writers such as Afua Cooper, Harvey Amani Whitfield, Sylvia Hamilton and Lawrence Hill have firmly established the existence of slavery as an integral part of Canadian history, particularly in the Maritimes. It is in this current spirit of acknowledgment, transparency, and untold narratives that this inquiry has been initiated, beginning with a review of the relevant literature.

[1] Harvey Amani Whitfield, *North to Bondage: Loyalist Slavery in the Maritimes* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2016), 4.
[2] Harvey Amani Whitfield, ed., *Black Slavery in the Maritimes: A History in Documents* (Peterborough: Broadview Press, 2018), 1.

The History of King's College in New York

King's College in New York City opened in July 1754.[3] Since 1702, there had been requests and plans for a college, though this was an ambitious project. When the college was first proposed, the city of New York had less than 6,000 inhabitants and one-sixth of the population at this time was African American.[4] More than fifty years later, the plans were ready to come to fruition but they faced opposition. New York was under British colonial rule from 1664 to 1776, but, at the time of the College's opening, tensions between British Loyalists and American Patriots were already emerging. Though most of the College's supporters sought to secure a royal charter from Britain for the school, William Livingston and his fellow Presbyterians opposed the decision to seek royal approval, insisting that a charter would render the college "a mere appendage of the Church of England."[5] Despite this opposition, the charter for the establishment of King's College passed the seals in 1754.[6] Samuel Johnson was invited to become the president of the new college. Johnson stated clearly that there would be no imposition of any particular sect or tenet of Christianity at the school; rather, every student would focus on the principles of Christianity generally agreed upon by all denominations.[7] He reinforced the broadness of the charter's term "Liberal Arts and Sciences," noting his intention for the college to provide a wide range of education. As John Pine notes, in this way, "the origin of Columbia differs from that of any other of the older colleges established…in that it came into existence...as a full-fledged college in the modern sense of the term."[8] When Johnson resigned in

[3] Columbia University in the City of New York, "1. King's College and Slavery," in *Columbia University and Slavery*, 2018, https://columbiaandslavery.columbia.edu/.
[4] John B. Pine, "King's College and the Early Days of Columbia College," *Proceedings of the New York State Historical Association* 17 (1919): 108.
[5] Pine, "King's College," 113.
[6] Ibid.
[7] Ibid., 114.
[8] Ibid., 115.

1763, he was succeeded by Myles Cooper, a young classical scholar with strong Tory views. Resentment of Cooper's political beliefs by opponents of British rule drove him to flee the college and colony in May 1775.[9] When the American Revolutionary War broke out, the doors of King's College in New York closed in 1776 and remained so until 1784.[10] In the wake of the Revolution, Anglican Loyalists moved to Nova Scotia and some of them began the process of founding a new King's College in Windsor.[11]

The initial accounts of the founding and early history of King's College focused primarily on its accomplishments, innovation, and founding figures. Scholars typically note the religious and nationalist tensions in the pre-Revolution school, but until the *Columbia University and Slavery* project, research often failed to mention the racial tensions, importance of the slave trade, and presence of African Americans at the college. In 2015 Columbia University began conducting an inquiry into its own history of slavery. The University has since created a comprehensive website detailing the research into this history.[12]

The History of King's College in New York Relative to Slavery

When King's College opened in July 1754, many of its founding figures had direct links to slavery and the slave trade. Daniel Horsmanden, a college governor, was a justice of the colony's Supreme Court and presided over the sensational trial of alleged slave conspirators in 1741, a key event in New York's complex history of slavery.[13] Henry Beekman was also among the governors who took the oath in 1755; the Beekman family was among New York's

[9] Ibid., 119.
[10] Ibid.
[11] University of King's College, Halifax, "History," 2018.
[12] Information on this project is available at http://ukings.ca/kings-to-explore-possible-colonial-links-to-slavery.
[13] Columbia University, "1. King's College and Slavery."

wealthiest elite, and Henry Beekman owned enslaved people and occasionally traded them. Gerard Beekman, a King's graduate in 1766, owned nine slaves in 1790, and nine Beekmans attended King's and Columbia between 1766 and 1889.[14] Of ten presidents of King's and Columbia from 1754 to the end of the Civil War, at least half owned slaves at one point in their lives, as did the first four treasurers.[15] Samuel Johnson, the first president of King's College, was an Anglican minister and well-known theologian and philosopher, who described slavery metaphorically as "a most wretched and abject condition."[16] Despite his criticism of the Atlantic slave trade, he bought and sold enslaved peoples who worked in his household. At least one early student, George Washington's stepson John Custis, brought a slave, Joe, to King's College in 1773.[17]

King's - and later Columbia - were shaped by the city around them. In the eighteenth century, New York was a key trading centre in Britain's slave economy: food, livestock, and lumber were sent to the West Indies via New York, and the resulting import and sale of Caribbean goods produced by enslaved people, such as rum, sugar, and molasses, formed "the linchpin of the colony's mercantile economy."[18] Ownership of slaves was widespread at the beginning of the American Revolution: the population of 19,000 included 3,000 enslaved people.[19] As Craig S. Wilder notes, from its beginning, King's was a "merchants' college."[20] Its governors, students, and donors were all part of the mercantile economy, and this shaped the curriculum.[21]

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[14] Ibid.
[15] Ibid.
[16] Ibid.
[17] Ibid.
[18] Ibid.
[19] Ibid.
[20] Craig S. Wilder, *Ebony and Ivory, Race, Slavery, and the Troubled History of American Universities* (New York: Bloomsbury Press, 2013), 67, quoted in Columbia University, "1. King's College and Slavery."
[21] Columbia University, "1. King's College and Slavery."

King's was the richest colonial college but, due to its construction and maintenance costs, was in constant need of operating funds.[22] The few donations it received were from slave-owners. The single largest philanthropic gift in colonial America was given to King's by Joseph Murray, a lawyer and governor of King's from 1754 to 1757.[23] Murray acted as the assistant prosecutor during the 1741 "slave plot" trials, over which Daniel Horsmanden presided as a provincial Supreme Court justice.[24] During these trials, he obtained convictions against two of his own enslaved people, Jack and Adam, the former of whom allegedly admitted that he planned to kill Murray and his family.[25] In the will that donated his estate to King's, Murray freed two slaves. This was highly unusual in New York at this time, and perhaps a result of new views towards slavery after the trial.[26] Other large donors were merchants, including slave traders. Most donors had "a connection to slavery either via ownership or trade."[27] Additionally, the college's endowment, as a source of credit, helped to subsidize the business activities of men who profited from slavery.[28]

The Livingston family exemplifies the depth of connections to slavery among members of the King's community in New York. Philip Livingston was one of New York's most active slave traders. Six Livingstons attended King's before the American Revolution, and three served as governors. Various Livingstons were treasurers and trustees of the college.[29] The family

[22] Columbia University, "2. Where the Money Came From."
[23] Ibid.
[24] Tyler Zimmet, "Joseph Murray, Edward Antill, and New York City's Interlocking Elite," Seminar Paper, Columbia and Slavery, Spring 2015.
[25] Columbia University, "2. Where the Money Came From."
[26] Ibid.
[27] Ibid.
[28] Ibid.
[29] Columbia University, "3. The Livingstons."

invested heavily in mercantile voyages, including at least seventeen slaving voyages, and, when the first federal census was taken in 1790, the Livingstons owned 170 enslaved people.[30]

Other prominent figures in the history of King's College in New York related to the slave trade, pre-American Revolution, include John Watts, a major slave owner and trader. He was a donor, a governor of the college from 1754-1776, the father of two King's students, and the grandfather of another. He imported wine and rum from the West Indies and invested in ships engaged in the Atlantic slave trade.[31] The business partners Henry and John Cruger were the owners of one of the major mercantile firms.[32] They were also two of the founding governors of the college and the fathers of King's students.[33] The research conducted by Columbia University notes that evidence from records of slaving voyages, runaway ads, wills, and other documents reveals that "numerous other King's officials and donors owned slaves and participated in slave trading."[34] These include William Alexander, a donor, fundraiser, and governor of King's; Edward Antill, a donor, governor of King's, and father of a graduate; Nathaniel Marston, a donor, governor, and father of two students; Adoniah Schuyler, a donor and member of a major landowning merchant family; Philip Verplanck, a founding King's governor; and Frederick Philipse III, a donor, founding King's governor, and father of a graduate.[35]

The research presented above is due to the dedicated scholars at Columbia University, who have filled the gaps in their school's history by sifting through the historical records of the university's links to slavery. Before 2015, when Professor Eric Foner led a research course on the role of slavery in Columbia's early history, the institution's connections to slavery were

[30] Ibid.
[31] Columbia University, "4. Watts, Crugers, and Others."
[32] Ibid.
[33] F. W. Vroom, *King's College: A Chronicle* (Halifax: The Imperial Publishing Company, 1941), 6.
[34] Columbia University, "4. Watts, Crugers, and Others."
[35] Ibid.

largely unknown.[36] In examining the key figures, family ties, economic links, donations to the college, and legal proceedings of the era, the Columbia University and Slavery project allows us to understand the fundamental role of slavery in the early history of King's College. The researchers note, however, that the project is a work in progress with significant gaps in knowledge.[37]

The History of King's College in Nova Scotia

There are four extant histories of King's College in Nova Scotia. Thomas B. Akins wrote the first, published in 1865; Henry Youle Hind's 1890 history was next; F.W. Vroom wrote the most recent comprehensive study in 1941; and Mark DeWolf and George Flie created a short photo-based history published in 1972. These histories emphasize the Anglican, colonial, and traditional aspects of the college. They outline its founding figures and the progression of governors, faculty, and students throughout its extensive past.

The history of King's College in Nova Scotia begins at the end of the American Revolution. After the Revolutionary War, approximately 18,000 British Loyalists settled in Nova Scotia.[38] Hind describes the condition of these people as "gloomy in the extreme," due to the lack of provisions and the harsh climate.[39] In March 1783, five Loyalist clergymen sent a letter to Sir Guy Carleton, expressing their concern about the lack of schools in Nova Scotia.[40] Bishop Charles Inglis was the chairman of that group of clergymen; he founded King's College and

[36] Columbia University, "About This Project."
[37] Ibid.
[38] Mark DeWolf and George Flie, *1789: All the King's Men: The Story of a Colonial University* (Halifax: The Alumni Association of the University of King's College, 1972), 6.
[39] Henry Youle Hind, *The University of King's College, Windsor, Nova Scotia: 1790-1890* (New York: The Church Review Company, 1890), 13.
[40] Vroom, *King's College*, 10.

planned and supervised its construction in Windsor.[41] In 1802 George III granted the college a Royal Charter. He named the Governors of the College: Sir John Wentworth, Bishop Charles Inglis, Sampson Salter Blowers, Alexander Croke, Richard John Uniacke, James Stewart, and Benning Wentworth.[42]

From its beginning, the University of King's College reflected the beliefs of its Loyalist founders and was closely aligned with the Church of England.[43] In his study, Vroom emphasizes the central role of the Church,[44] and notes the stringency of the college's statutes in its early history. Students had to sign the thirty-nine articles of the Church of England before receiving their degree.[45] The College president, in its early history, also had to be "an Oxford man."[46]

Bishop Charles Inglis died in 1816, and King's College began to decline. Vroom calls this the crucial period in the history of King's College.[47] The school's resources and number of students began to dwindle.[48] Dr. John Inglis solicited donations from the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, various bishops, and Reverend Samuel Wilson Warneford, among others.[49] The situation began to improve, and Reverend George McCawley was appointed president in 1836.[50] The college continued to grow, and, as it became more successful, new

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[41] Dewolf and Flie, *All the King's Men*, 8.
[42] Thomas B. Akins, *A Brief Account of the Origin, Endowment and Progress of the University of King's College, Windsor, Nova Scotia* (Halifax: MacNab & Shaffer, 1865), 13.
[43] University of King's College, "History," 2018.
[44] Vroom, *King's College*, xi.
[45] Ibid., 42.
[46] Ibid., 49.
[47] Ibid., 60.
[48] Akins, *A Brief Account*, 30.
[49] Vroom, *King's College*, 65. The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts was a Church of England missionary organization active in the 18th and 19th centuries. Margaret Dewey. *The Messengers: A Concise History of the United Society for the Propagation of the Gospel*. London: Mowbrays, 1975; Daniel O'Conner et al. *Three Centuries of Mission: The United Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, 1701-2000*. London: Continuum, 2000; Andrew N. Porter. *Religion versus Empire? British Protestant Missionaries and Overseas Expansion*, 1700-1914. Manchester UK: Manchester University Press, 2004; Rowan Strong. *Anglicanism and the British Empire, c. 1700-1850*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007.
[50] Ibid., 66.

buildings were erected, including an excellent library. In 1920 King's College in Windsor burned to the ground.[51] King's moved to Halifax in 1923 and became associated with Dalhousie University.[52] As the focus of this review is the early history of King's College, as it may relate to slavery or the slave trade, we have omitted details of the school's history post-1834, when slavery was officially abolished in British territories.

Generally, these authors share a pleasant nostalgia for campus life. Vroom writes of students playing sports, skating outdoors, going hunting and fishing, and having supper together each night.[53] Hind's history is the only one to mention slavery: he notes that Lieutenant-Colonel Morse's 1783 report of the inhabitants of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick lists 28,347 Disbanded Troops and Loyalists, 1,232 of whom were servants.[54] In a footnote, Hind states that these servants were most likely slaves.[55]

Prominent Figures in the Founding and Governance of King's College

The first governors of the college, recorded in 1789 before the Royal Charter was given, were John Parr, Bishop Charles Inglis, Richard Bulkeley, Sampson Salter Blowers, and Richard John Uniacke.[56] In 1802 Sir John Wentworth, Bishop Charles Inglis, Sampson Salter Blowers, Alexander Croke, Richard John Uniacke, James Stewart, and Benning Wentworth were the governors appointed by George III.[57] Though university accounts of these figures are rarely critical, many of the governors had connections to slavery or displayed racist prejudices in some

[51] Ibid., 146.
[52] Ibid., 151.
[53] Ibid., 59.
[54] Hind, *The University of King's College*, 13.
[55] Ibid.
[56] Vroom, *King's College*, 23.
[57] Dewolf and Flie, *All the King's Men*, 12.

form. Dr. Whitfield cites James Walker, who noted in *The Black Loyalists* that there exists a 1784 description of Sir John Wentworth's slaves (nine men, six women, four children). Wentworth had purchased them in Halifax, likely from Loyalists.[58] He also had a Maroon mistress, Sarah Colley.[59] The Maroons, and Wentworth's relationship to them, will be discussed further in the final section of this review.

Bishop Charles Inglis was the first colonial bishop of the Church of England.[60] White Anglicans at this time often treated free Blacks, who had been baptized as Anglicans, with prejudice and exclusion, and Inglis exemplified these attitudes.[61] According to the Black Loyalist Digital Collections, when Inglis visited Brindley Town, a Black community about three kilometres south of Digby, he discovered a Black lay preacher named Joseph Leonard performing baptisms, marriage, and communion.[62] Inglis confronted Leonard, who expressed his desire to be ordained as a minister, but Inglis "rejected him on the spot."[63] Inglis enforced segregation and refused to ordain Methodist clergymen or let them preach from Anglican pulpits.[64] Black people were segregated to the rear pews in Anglican churches and eventually completely excluded from white Anglican churches, "by social convention and expensive pew fees if not by official rules."[65]

Two of the founding governors had a significant positive impact on Nova Scotia's history of slavery. Sampson Salters Blowers, who pictured King's as an institution for liberal education

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[58] Whitfield, *North to Bondage*, 56.
[59] Bridglal Pachai and Henry Bishop, *Historic Black Nova Scotia* (Halifax: Nimbus Publishing, 2006), 15.
[60] Judith Fingard, "Inglis, Charles," in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 5, University of Toronto/Université Laval, 2003.
[61] Black Loyalists: Our History, Our People, "Faith: The Anglicans," *Canada's Digital Collections*, 2018.
[62] Black Loyalists, "Faith," 2018.
[63] Ibid.
[64] Mary Louise Clifford, *From Slavery to Freetown: Black Loyalists After the American Revolution* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2006), 91.
[65] Ibid.

rather than a seminary, was a superior court judge from 1797 to 1834.[66] Slavery was an important issue to Blowers: he sought to gradually wear out the claims of slave-owners,[67] and "slowly chipped away at slavery," contributing to its eventual decline.[68] Richard John Uniacke was an abolitionist, lawyer, and politician, who, along with Blowers, wanted slavery not to be mentioned in statute law, because formal acknowledgment would have made its eradication highly difficult.[69] The legal institution of slavery likely ceased to exist in Nova Scotia by the 1820s.[70]

Governor John Parr was the first Chairman of the College Board of Governors, succeeded by Sir John Wentworth.[71] Parr oversaw the planning for the Black Loyalist's exodus to Sierra Leone, but was uncooperative about this decision as he thought it might reflect badly on his administration.[72] He was criticized throughout his career for discriminatory practices and long delays in assisting Black Loyalists in Nova Scotia.[73] Upon Governor Parr's death, Richard Bulkeley, one of the original governors of King's and the senior counsellor to Parr, carried out the arrangements for the emigration of many Black Loyalists to Sierra Leone.[74]

Other key figures included Dr. William Cochran, the first president of King's College in Nova Scotia, who was succeeded by Dr. Thomas Cox, then Dr. Charles Porter.[75] The Earl of Dalhousie (General George Ramsay) became President of the Board of Governors at King's as

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[66] Phyllis R. Blakeley, "Blowers, Sampson Salter," in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 7, University of Toronto/Université Laval, 2003.
[67] Blakeley, "Blowers, Sampson Salter."
[68] Whitfield, *North to Bondage*, 85.
[69] Ibid., 88.
[70] Ibid., 85.
[71] Ibid., 23.
[72] Peter Burroughs, "Parr, John," in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 4, University of Toronto/Université Laval, 2003.
[73] Burroughs, "Parr, John,"
[74] Phyllis R. Blakeley, "Bulkeley, Richard," in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 4, University of Toronto/Université Laval, 2003.
[75] Vroom, *King's College*, 50.

he became Governor of Nova Scotia in 1816.[76] Early professors included Reverend William B. King, Reverend George McCawley, and Benjamin Gerrish Gray,[77] whom Wentworth had previously appointed as king's chaplain to the Maroons.[78] Some early notable graduates included Major-General James Robertson Arnold, Colonel de Lancey Barclay, Sir James Cochrane,[79] who went on to become Chief Justice of Gibraltar,[80] and Thomas Chandler Haliburton, who became a inferior court judge in Nova Scotia, a Tory politician (in Nova Scotia and England) and the celebrated author of many books, including the Clockmaker series and others featuring the character Sam Slick.[81]

The Loyalist and Black Loyalist Experience in Nova Scotia

Neil MacKinnon's book *This Unfriendly Soil: The Loyalist Experience in Nova Scotia, 1783-1791*, remains central to considering the experience of white Loyalists in the Maritimes. He asserts that Loyalist history is treated by most American historians as "a foil to the triumph of the new republic."[82] Jerry Bannister and Liam Riordan share a similar view: they note that the scholarship on Loyalists has typically been shaped by nationalist perspectives.[83] They address

[76] Ibid., 62.
[77] Dewolf and Flie, *All the King's Men,* 30.
[78] D. Murray Young, "Gray, Benjamin Gerrish," in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 8, University of Toronto/Université Laval, 2003.
[79] Ibid., 37.
[80] Arthur Wentworth Eaton, *The Church of England in Nova Scotia and the Tory Clergy of the Revolution,* (New York: Thomas Whittaker, 1891).
[81] Recent literature on Haliburton has brought attention to the racism and pro-slavery views contained in his writings: for example, see the chapters by George Elliot Clarke, Henry Roper and Greg Marquis in Richard A. Davies, ed., *The Haliburton Bi-Centenary Chaplet*. Kentville, NS: Gaspereau Press and the Thomas Raddall Symposium, Acadia University, 1996. See also Henry Roper, "Thomas Chandler Haliburton: Complications and Contradictions" *Journal of the Royal Nova Scotia Society*, Vol. 14, 2011.
[82] Neil MacKinnon, *This Unfriendly Soil: The Loyalist Experience in Nova Scotia, 1783-1791* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1989), ix.
[83] Jerry Bannister and Liam Riordan, "Loyalism and the British Atlantic, 1660-1840," in *The Loyal Atlantic: Remaking the British Atlantic in the Revolutionary Era*, ed. Jerry Bannister and Liam Riordan (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012), 3.

this by exploring loyalism as an Atlantic subject; they view it as an inclusive concept, one that is able to transcend traditional temporal, geographic, and disciplinary boundaries.[84] Bannister and Riordan's basic premise is that loyalism fundamentally shaped the British Atlantic world.[85] In considering the existing literature on the subject, they state that the area of Loyalist scholarship most studied in recent years considers the significance of the American Revolution for enslaved people.[86]

Loyalist scholarship focuses on the flood of immigration to Nova Scotia, which doubled the population of the province.[87] MacKinnon's work outlines the British defeat in the Revolutionary War from 1781 to 1783, and considers the mass evacuation to Nova Scotia.[88] Over 16,000 Loyalists immigrated during this time, according to MacKinnon, though the number varies from source to source.[89] Bannister and Riordan discuss changing ideas of loyalty. In Nova Scotia, there was a shift from passive loyalty to Britain in the early years of the Revolutionary War to a more active loyalty, "partially in response to coastal raids by rebel privateers."[90] This helped keep the colony in British possession. Opposition to Roman Catholicism was a key feature of loyalism pre-1775, whereas a rejection of republicanism became a principal tenet post-1775.[91]

In the scholarship on Black Loyalists, there has been an important debate about proper terminology. Should Black immigrants to the Maritimes be considered Loyalists? Barry Cahill argues that the term is a myth originating from James Walker's research, an academic invention

[84] Bannister and Riordan, "Loyalism and the British Atlantic," 3-4.
[85] Jerry Bannister and Liam Riordan, "Preface," in *The Loyal Atlantic: Remaking the British Atlantic in the Revolutionary Era*, ed. Jerry Bannister and Liam Riordan (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012), ix.
[86] Bannister and Riordan, "Loyalism and the British Atlantic," 21.
[87] MacKinnon, *This Unfriendly Soil*, xi.
[88] Ibid., 3-6.
[89] Ibid., 15.
[90] Bannister and Riordan, "Loyalism and the British Atlantic," 7.
[91] Ibid., 8.

for a group of people who were seeking refuge from slavery, rather than rebellion.[92] Cahill notes that fugitive slaves of Patriots, who were transported to Nova Scotia along with Loyalists and their slaves, did not become Black Loyalists; fugitive slaves and Loyalists that happened to be Black should not be merged.[93] Walker responded to this critique with the argument that academics did not invent the term "Black Loyalists." Rather, fugitive enslaved people were considered Loyalists at the time of their migration to the Maritimes, and the African Americans who travelled to the Maritimes in 1783 did consider themselves Loyalists.[94] He gives an example: in a petition to Governor John Parr (the first chairman of the King's College Board of Governors[95]) on behalf of the veterans of the Black Pioneers, an African-American military unit, Thomas Peters and Murphy Still "claimed that when they swore allegiance to the Crown in New York in 1776, they were promised to be treated the same as the rest of the king's soldiers."[96] Peters and Still had been fugitive slaves before joining the British, but described themselves and sought to be treated in the same manner as white Loyalists.[97] The debate ranges further, but, as Walker notes, the very question of whether the Black Loyalists were Loyalists provides a valuable entry point into the study of Loyalist Nova Scotia and of racism in Canada.[98]

Lawrence Hill's 2007 novel, *The Book of Negroes*, a fictional slave narrative later made into a CBC mini-series, was an introduction to the history of the Black Loyalists for many Canadians. The actual "Book of Negroes" was an extensive ledger created for British and

[92] Barry Cahill, "The Black Loyalist Myth in Atlantic Canada," *Acadiensis* 29, no. 1 (1999): 79.
[93] Cahill, "The Black Loyalist Myth," 79.
[94] James W. St. G. Walker, "Myth, History and Revisionism: The Black Loyalists Revisited," *Acadiensis* 29, no. 1 (1999): 4.
[95] DeWolf and Flie, "All the King's Men," 10.
[96] Walker, "Myth, History, and Revisionism," 4.
[97] Ibid.
[98] Ibid., 30.

American officials in 1783.[99] Eleven years later, it was reproduced for an administrator in Nova Scotia. The ledger contains the names of 3,000 Black individuals evacuated from New York in April to November of 1783. Most individuals were on ships bound for Nova Scotia.[100] The "Book of Negroes" contains both names of free Black Loyalists and enslaved Black people,[101] as well as a large number of their transcribed statements.[102]

According to Bridglal Pachai and Henry Bishop, Black Loyalists came to Nova Scotia because of the offer of freedom, rather than any loyalty to their oppressors.[103] Shelburne and Birchtown were principal destinations for the 1783 transport of Black immigrants from New York: Birchtown was chosen specifically as a site of settlement for free Black Loyalists.[104] Though they were promised land by the British, it was never fully granted to Black immigrants. In 1792 many chose to emigrate to Sierra Leone.[105] Others remained in Nova Scotia. Afua Cooper discusses the Black communities in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick that existed in the eighteenth century, noting that "Black people of Loyalist origin built free villages and towns in such places as Preston, Shelburne, Birchtown, and Saint John."[106] Despite facing immense hostility and discrimination from white settlers, these towns became the first free Black communities in North America.[107]

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[99] Winifried Siemerling, *The Black Atlantic Reconsidered: Black Canadian Writing, Cultural History, and the Presence of the Past* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2015), 36.
[100] Siemerling, *The Black Atlantic Reconsidered*, 36.
[101] Whitfield, *North to Bondage,* 34.
[102] Siemerling, *The Black Atlantic Reconsidered*, 36.
[103] Pachai and Bishop, *Historic Black Nova Scotia*, 9.
[104] Black Loyalists: Our History, Our People, "Birchtown," *Canada's Digital Collections*, 2018.
[105] Ibid., 11.
[106] Afua Cooper, "The Secret of Slavery in Canada," in *The Hanging of Angélique* (Toronto: HarperCollins, 2006), 100.
[107] Cooper, "The Secret of Slavery," 100.

The Broader History of Slavery in the International Economy, the British Empire, and Nova Scotia

Nova Scotia and Halifax took part in coastal trade with Boston and New York, which was strengthened by Loyalist family connections. This commerce also dealt in enslaved Africans.[108] Upon the Loyalist arrival, the Maritimes developed connections with the trade patterns in the Atlantic world, and joined the trade of products and enslaved people between the West Indies, North America, Europe, and Africa.[109] In the Maritimes, Quebec, and Upper Canada, thousands of Black people were enslaved between 1605 and the 1820.[110]

Cooper explores the history of slavery in Canada in *The Hanging of Angélique*, which describes the life of an enslaved woman convicted of starting a fire that destroyed part of Montreal in 1734. The chapter "The Secret of Slavery in Canada" discusses the history of slavery. Although early Canada's economy was not dependent on slavery, it was a society with enslaved people. Cooper writes, "Contrary to popular belief, slavery was common in Canada."[111] From 1628 to 1833, slavery was a legal, acceptable institution in both French Canada and British North America.[112] New France experienced labour shortages, and in 1701 Louis XIV gave his full consent to Black slavery in Canada.[113] The institution of slavery was patriarchal: the male slaveholder was the head of his extended family, including marriage and blood relatives and enslaved persons.[114] Enslaved people worked a variety of occupations, but most worked as household servants, as farm labourers, or in skilled occupations.[115]

[108] Whitfield, *North to Bondage*, 39.
[109] Ibid., 45.
[110] Whitfield, *Black Slavery in the Maritimes*, 1.
[111] Cooper, "The Secret of Slavery", 68.
[112] Ibid., 70.
[113] Ibid., 75.
[114] Ibid., 76.
[115] Ibid., 77.

In 1760 Britain conquered Canada and three years later, by Treaty of Paris, France ceded Canada to Britain. By this time, over 1,500 enslaved people had landed in Canada.[116] Britain was the strongest maritime power in the world and the most powerful slave-trading nation. Many British-American colonists migrated to the new territory and brought their enslaved labourers with them, increasing Canada's slave population.[117] Newspapers from this era show us that the sale of enslaved people was a feature of life in Canada: they were seen as chattel, and their value depended on physical health, special aptitudes, age, sex, and other factors.[118] Black enslaved women's primary occupation was domestic.[119] They were regularly subjected to sexual assaults by their owners and other white men: if they were impregnated and had children, the children inherited their mothers' status and were also enslaved.[120] As Cooper writes, "One of the most dehumanizing aspects of slavery was the loss of control that Black people, especially women, experienced over their bodies."[121] The American Revolutionary War produced a further expansion of slavery in Canada. Dr. Catherine Cottreau-Robins argues the Loyalist period should be considered Nova Scotia's *age of slavery*.[122] At least 35,000 Loyalists fled to the Maritimes: 5,000 were Black, both enslaved and free, although the majority was legally free.[123]

Harvey Amani Whitfield provides a comprehensive history of slavery in Nova Scotia in his 2016 book *North to Bondage: Loyalist Slavery in the Maritimes*. He notes that the history of slavery in the Maritimes is understudied: it disrupts Canada's image as a haven for American enslaved people. Slavery, according to Whitfield, is not a part of the conventional Canadian

[116] Ibid., 81.
[117] Ibid., 83.
[118] Ibid., 87.
[119] Ibid., 89.
[120] Ibid., 90.
[121] Ibid.
[122] Catherine M. A. Cottreau-Robins, "Searching for the Enslaved in Nova Scotia's Loyalist Landscape," *Acadiensis* 43, no. 1 (2014): 125.
[123] Cooper, "The Secret of Slavery," 90.

national narrative.[124] Although many Loyalist families brought enslaved people with them when they settled in the Maritime colonies of British North America after the American Revolution, most popular and scholarly accounts ignore enslaved people brought by white Loyalists. American slave owners settled in the Maritimes from 1783 to 1785, and, in creating a culture of slavery, they relied on their experiences from home while also adjusting to a new climate, economy, and population.[125] Whitfield outlines Maritime slavery in its American context, noting that Maritime slaves were a "diverse set of people who had divergent and complex experiences before arriving in the Maritime colonies."[126] Yet the experience of Maritime slavery was largely similar to the experience in New England and the Middle Colonies; slavery included mixed agricultural production, domestic slavery, and multi-occupational slavery.[127] In New York in 1760, enslaved people comprised 11-15% of the population,[128] and enslaved and slaveowners migrated to the Maritimes from New York City.[129]

Before the Loyalist migrations, Africans had been part of Maritime history since the early seventeenth century, beginning with Mathieu da Costa, a translator between the French and Mi'kmaq in 1605.[130] Whitfield states that there were 418 enslaved people on Cape Breton Island between 1713 and 1815, and 90% of them were Black.[131] They became relatively common in British North America after the founding of Halifax.[132] In 1759 the New England Planters (who were offered large tracts of Nova Scotia land by Governor Charles Lawrence) were offered an

[124] Whitfield, *North to Bondage*, 4.
[125] Ibid., 8.
[126] Ibid., 19.
[127] Ibid.
[128] Ibid., 21.
[129] Ibid., 35.
[130] Ibid., 37.
[131] Ibid., 38.
[132] Ibid.

extra fifty acres of land for each Black person they brought.[133] The Planters settled in the Annapolis Valley, the Truro area, Liverpool, and the Saint John River valley.[134]

Slavery existed in the Maritimes before 1776, but it increased markedly after the Loyalist migrations.[135] Documents from Whitfield's recent *Black Slavery in the Maritimes* show advertisements for slaves in colonial newspapers.[136] When Loyalists arrived, the occupations of enslaved Black people included domestic duties, cooking, town duties, and multiple other occupations.[137] Loyalist settlements were scattered throughout Maritimes, ranging from Yarmouth to Sydney and Saint John to Charlottetown. Initially, the majority of enslaved people settled in Shelburne, Saint John, the Annapolis Region, and Halifax.[138] Shelburne failed to become a centre of trade due to its poor soil and the slow granting of land; by the late eighteenth century, "the centre of slaveholding had shifted from the South Shore of Nova Scotia around Shelburne to the more fertile lands of the Annapolis region and Saint John."[139] In rural areas, farms tended to be scattered, but there was more community in areas like Annapolis.

Even before the Loyalist migrations, therefore, the Maritimes had developed "deep and enduring patterns of racism and racial exclusion."[140] Slavery allowed settlers to exploit Black people for a variety of tasks, which was important to the local economy.[141] The Loyalists' arrival increased the number of enslaved people and slave owners, the institution of slavery became far more widespread, and there was a new cultural diversity.[142] As Ruma Chopra notes, Britain

[133] Ibid., 40.
[134] Ibid.
[135] Ibid., 37.
[136] Whitfield*, Black Slavery in the Maritimes*, 2.
[137] Whitfield, *North to Bondage*, 41.
[138] Ibid., 42.
[139] Ibid.
[140] Ibid., 45.
[141] Ibid.
[142] Ibid.

legally protected slavery in British North America in 1790 by encouraging importation of immigrants who owned slaves.[143] Pachai and Bishop offer a different perspective in their 2006 book, *Historic Black Nova Scotia*. They note slavery's lack of legalization, state that it was "relatively short-lived," and argue that slavery ended in 1808 when a bill to legalize it failed to pass into law.[144] According to Pachai and Bishop, since there were no plantations in Nova Scotia, slavery was not an economic necessity; they argue that Nova Scotia showed a "softer side" of slavery.[145] Although institutional slavery and racism were firmly entrenched, slavery was contested regularly by legislators, judges, lawyers, and religious groups.[146] Enslaved people were also far from powerless, and "they regularly negotiated aspects of their bondage or made a bid for freedom through flight."[147]

In 1797 courts began to rule in favour of enslaved people. There were some instances in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick of local courts granting freedom to enslaved people,[148] though slavery in the Maritimes had never been specifically legalized. At this point, enslaved people and slave-owners faced a conundrum: "In a place where slavery did not exist in terms of statutory law, how could it be either ended or reinforced?"[149] Judges such as Blowers and other forces slowly worked away at making slavery more difficult for slave-owners. White abolitionists, and superior court judges diminished the power of slaveholders by various judicial decisions and personal manumissions.[150] Finally, in 1834, the British Parliament abolished slavery.[151]

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[143] Ruma Chopra, *Almost Home: Maroons between Slavery and Freedom in Jamaica, Nova Scotia, and Sierra Leone*, (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2018).
[144] Pachai and Bishop, *Historic Black Nova Scotia,* 8.
[145] Ibid.
[146] Whitfield, *North to Bondage*, 8.
[147] Ibid., 62.
[148] Cooper, "The Secret of Slavery," 104.
[149] Whitfield, *North to Bondage*, 85.
[150] Ibid., 87.
[151] Cooper, "The Secret of Slavery," 104.

According to Whitfield, enslaved people created their own culture "within the parameters of their white environment."[152] They forged independent spaces of community, employing traditions of their African heritage and experiences of New England and the Middle Colonies to form a unique culture in the Maritimes.[153] Cultural activities such as Negro Election Day and the Pinkster Festival became integral parts of the culture of enslaved people in the Maritimes.[154] Whitfield places particular emphasis on the agency of enslaved people. While slavery was a brutal and exploitative institution, it is a "mistake to assume that enslaved people had no agency or ability to determine certain aspects of their lives."[155] Enslaved people were not passive victims but rather struggled against racism to create their own culture and community.[156]

Whitfield and Cottreau-Robins each discuss the methodological difficulties of studying post-1783 slavery in Maritimes. Ambiguous terminology in historical documents is a principal difficulty: enslaved people are often called "servants" in written records.[157] Calculating the number of enslaved people is also difficult, because the documentation can be unclear and sometimes contradictory.[158] Free Blacks also suffered re-enslavement, while enslaved people were sometimes able to gain freedom by challenging slavery's legal status in court. As a result, as Whitfield notes, there were "sliding scales of slavery and freedom."[159] Cottreau-Robins argues that an interdisciplinary approach, including archaeology, is necessary for the study of Loyalist slavery.[160] These scholars agree that slavery in the Maritimes contributed to the construction of "race" as a social and political concept. The result, Whitfield writes, was "to define the place

[152] Whitfield, *Black Slavery in the Maritimes*, 11.
[153] Ibid.
[154] Ibid., 12-13.
[155] Ibid., 17.
[156] Ibid.
[157] Whitfield, *North to Bondage*, 10-12.
[158] Ibid., 11.
[159] Ibid., 13.
[160] Cottreau-Robins, "Searching for the Enslaved," 125.

and status of Black people."[161] The Loyalist arrival instigated a political and ideological framework that brought existing ideas of race and enabled discrimination against Black people, which endures in Nova Scotia today.[162] At the same time, vibrant and independent communities formed to resist discrimination and to create a resilient African-Nova Scotian culture.[163]

The History of African Nova Scotians, African Canadians, and Racism in Nova Scotia and Canada

In Ruma Chopra's recent book, *Almost Home: Maroons between Slavery and Freedom in Jamaica, Nova Scotia, and Sierra Leone*, she states that 549 Trelawney Town Maroons arrived in Halifax in July 1796.[164] Pachai and Bishop, in their 2006 book, *Historic Black Nova Scotia*, provide a brief history of the Maroons: the Spanish brought enslaved Africans to Jamaica in 1517, but when the British conquered the island in 1655, some enslaved people "took to the hills to maintain their independence as a proud and martial people."[165] They became the Maroons. Though the locals were subjected to British rule, the Maroons resisted, and, after a period of struggle, a peace was negotiated. Colonial officials later shipped the most resistant group, the Trelawney Maroons, to Nova Scotia.[166] As their livelihood was supported by the Jamaican government, the Maroons could address Nova Scotia's labour needs.[167] Governor John Wentworth had personal and official interest in these Maroons, particularly with building the Citadel Hill fortifications.[168] Wentworth also had a Maroon mistress named Sarah Colley.[169] He

[161] Whitfield, *North to Bondage*, 6.
[162] Cottreau-Robins, "Searching for the Enslaved," 125.
[163] Whitfield, *North to Bondage*, 6.
[164] Chopra, *Almost Home*.
[165] Pachai and Bishop, *Historic Black Nova Scotia*, 13.
[166] Ibid.
[167] Chopra, *Almost Home*.
[168] Pachai and Bishop, *Historic Black Nova Scotia*, 13.
[169] Ibid., 15.

settled the Maroons on a plot of land in the Preston area and in a house named Maroon Hall, and employed some Maroons at Government House in Halifax.[170] The majority resisted Wentworth's efforts and refused offers to become indentured labourers, to attend church, or to attend school.[171] Some Maroons settled on a farm in Boydville, present-day Middle Sackville, which was called Maroon Hill. About sixty Maroons lived in Nova Scotia by 1799.[172] In 1800, 551 Maroons joined the exodus to Sierra Leone.[173]

Pachai and Bishop discuss another group, the Black Refugees. The Black Refugees came to the Maritimes after the War of 1812, when a proclamation by the British invited enslaved and free Black people to emigrate with their families, either to "join the British forces or be sent as free settlers to British territories.[174]" Between 1813 and 1816, about 2,000 American Blacks, free and enslaved, arrived in the Maritimes: by end of 1816, there were 1,619 Black Refugees in Nova Scotia. They settled in the areas of Preston, Hammonds Plains, Halifax, and Beechville.[175]

As Adrienne Lucas Sehatzadeh notes, each wave of settlers has contributed to Nova Scotia being home to Canada's largest indigenous Black population.[176] One location where early African Nova Scotians settled was Crichton Avenue in Dartmouth.[177] This area was known as "Coloured Meeting Road" until 1892, when it was renamed as Crichton Avenue, though it was always known as "the Avenue" by its residents.[178] In 1926, twelve Black families totaling 82 residents lived in the community, and by the 1950s, this number had grown to 132 residents.[179]

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[170] Ibid.
[171] Ibid., 14.
[172] Ibid.
[173] Ibid.
[174] Ibid., 16.
[175] Ibid.
[176] Adrienne Lucas Sehatzadeh, "A Retrospective on the Strengths of African Nova Scotian Communities: Closing Ranks to Survive," *Journal of Black Studies* 38, no. 3 (2008): 407.
[177] Sehatzadeh, "A Retrospective," 408.
[178] Ibid.
[179] Ibid., 409.

The community was different from white communities in its lack of city services, such as streetlights, indoor plumbing, and pavement, as "the pavement ended where the Black community began."[180] The town dump was also relocated to the Avenue in the 1940s.[181] This story resembles the history of Africville, Nova Scotia's best-known Black community, destroyed by the city in the 1960s.[182] Africville was established in the 1840s, and was a vibrant African Nova Scotian community located in the north end of Halifax, on the shore of the Bedford Basin.[183] Africville never received proper infrastructure like sewers and safe water.[184] Between 1969-1970 it was destroyed and its residents relocated in the name of urban renewal and progressive politics.[185] Sehatzadeh explains the sense of community and strength that residents shared in African Nova Scotian neighbourhoods: the "poverty, difference, and the geographical and social boundaries" were defining elements of the collective memory of community members, creating a lasting sense of solidarity.[186]

Scholarship on modern racism should be considered in assessing the history of slavery. Isaac Saney, in seeking to understand the origins of racism, notes that for most of world history, slavery was not linked to skin colour.[187] The racialization of slavery and the development of the biological concept of "race" are constructs made "to justify African bondage and – later – the colonial and imperialist projects."[188] In the early years of slavery, class divided people more than race; white servants were often treated as poorly as enslaved Africans.[189] In the seventeenth and

[180] Ibid.
[181] Ibid.
[182] Tina Loo, "Africville and the Dynamics of State Power in Postwar Canada," *Acadiensis* 39, no. 2 (2010): 23.
[183] Loo, "Africville," 23.
[184] Ibid., 25-26.
[185] Ibid., 28.
[186] Sehatzadeh, "A Retrospective," 411.
[187] Isaac Saney, "The Origins of Racism," *Shunpiking Magazine*, no. 38 (2005): 2.
[188] Saney, "The Origins of Racism," 2.
[189] Ibid., 3.

eighteenth centuries, labourers, servants, and enslaved people worked together to appeal for justice, but the ruling elite was "thrown into panic by the prospect of continued and widespread joint white-black rebellion."[190] The ruling class then specifically drew a colour line between freedom and slavery, and declared that all white people were superior to people of African descent.[191] They drew up slave codes, laws providing benefits to white servants, and other deliberate policies to maintain their hierarchy.[192] The racialization of slavery and the development of white supremacy was an explicit response to the issue of labour solidarity. The idea of the "white race" was constructed to act as an instrument of social control.[193] In looking to the future, as Saney states, when we can understand the history and legacy of racism, when we understand why this ideology was constructed, "then, and only then, are we better able to overcome them in the present conditions."[194]

Conclusion

Several themes emerge from the existing literature on the history of King's College. We have considered scholarship on its history in New York and Nova Scotia, its founding figures, the Loyalists and Black Loyalists, slavery in the Maritime colonies, and the Black experience in Nova Scotia. It is clear that slavery has traditionally not been part of the Canadian historical narrative, as evidenced by the period in which slavery did not exist in the literature, including histories of King's College in Nova Scotia. There are specific connections to King's College's origins in New York and Columbia's historic links to the slave trade. We know that the

[190] Ibid.
[191] Ibid., 4.
[192] Ibid.
[193] Ibid.
[194] Ibid.

institution of slavery shaped the status of Black people in British North America, and we know that the Loyalist era entrenched slavery and racial discrimination in the Maritimes. There are also themes of methodological difficulties in the study of slavery in Canada, and a need for an interdisciplinary approach when researching the history of enslaved people.

In reviewing the literature, we have found that no peer-reviewed literature that specifically ties the institution of King's College in Nova Scotia to slavery, although articles have been published in the media drawing these connections.[195] There are implicit links, such as the histories of its founding figures, the scope of Loyalist slavery, the structure of the economy, and the development of institutional racism. We should look deeper and research further to explore the ways in which the University of King's College in Nova Scotia was associated with the history of slavery, the slave trade, and racism. F.W. Vroom includes this epigraph at the beginning of his chronicle of King's College: "Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost." We hope that this inquiry will continue the work of gathering up the fragments, so as to recover the stories of slavery hidden in history.

[195] El Jones, "The Slippery Slope! Morning File, Saturday, August 11, 2017". *Halifax Examiner*, August 11, 2017. Available at: https://www.halifaxexaminer.ca/featured/the-slippery-slope-morning-file-saturday-august-19-2017/.

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