



DOWNING COLLEGE

THE DOWNING FAMILY AND LEGACIES OF ENSLAVEMENT

FOREWORD

Downing College embarked on this research following the establishment of the University's Advisory Group on Legacies of Enslavement in early 2019. Initial research has necessarily focused on the Downing family and the origins of the funds which established the College, following suggestions reported in the press that George Downing, the grandfather of our founder, had owned slaves in the Caribbean. The College was unaware of any such connection, so we wanted to know whether there was any truth to this statement. For this reason, the first phase of our research adopted a narrower focus to identify any direct links of the Downing family with enslavement.

After a thorough search we found no evidence that any of the four generations of Downings, including three Georges, personally owned or traded slaves or owned or profited directly from slave plantations. We did find two letters written in the 1640s – one from the first George Downing and one from his father Emmanuel Downing – advocating the use of slaves and indentured workers for financial gain in the Caribbean and New England. Through modern eyes these letters sit uncomfortably, and we can regret they were written, though sadly the sentiments they expressed were not unusual at the time.

We acknowledge, too, the wider context, in which links to slavery can be seen on a spectrum from active and direct participation at one end to passive and indirect involvement at the other end. So while we found no direct links, we do recognise that as a politician, diplomat and commissioner of customs, George Downing, 1st Baronet (1624/5-84), was operating profitably at the heart of the establishment and would benefit indirectly from England's participation in enslavement. He played his part in sustaining the wider economic system that depended at least in part on slavery, and in protecting the interests of those who were directly involved in the slave trade.

I commend this report as a measured and frank account of the Downing family's links with enslavement. It provides a fully documented assessment and acts as a prompt for reflection and discussion. Future research will explore any connections of the College and its members in the period following its foundation in 1800.

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The Downing Family and Legacies of Enslavement

This report is the result of research by the College Archivist to identify historical links with slavery following the establishment of the University's Legacies of Enslavement enquiry in early 2019.¹ Representing the first phase of research, the report focuses specifically on members of the immediate Downing family associated with the foundation and initial endowment of Downing College.

Although research began in 2019, its speed and progress was significantly hampered by successive lockdowns during the pandemic and the sustained closure and inaccessibility of archives across the UK and abroad. More detailed and methodical research resumed in November 2020, although the reopening of archive services has been more gradual and in many cases was limited until Spring 2021. Research findings up to March 2020 were shared with Dr Sabine Cadeau, one of two research fellows working on the University's Legacies of Enslavement enquiry, at the request of the Master. Unavoidable work undertaken by the College Archivist over the summer of 2020 to migrate the archive catalogues to a centrally managed University archive management system, ArchivesSpace, presented the opportunity to edit and publish a large portion of the early catalogues online, relating to the Downing family, estates and foundation papers. These were made available as a priority for the benefit of Dr Cadeau in identifying potential records of interest once the Archive reopened and remain publicly searchable online².

The Downing family and the foundation of Downing College

The foundation of Downing College, eventually effected in 1800, resulted from the 1717 will of Sir George Downing, 3rd Baronet (c.1685-1749), but not until 36 years after the death of his successor, Sir Jacob Garrard Downing, 4th Bt (d.1764). The vast majority of the family's wealth was accumulated by the Founder's grandfather, Sir George Downing, 1st Baronet (1624/5-84), and derived from his governmental offices under Cromwell and Charles II. These offices included Scoutmaster-General, Teller of the Exchequer, Commissioner of Customs and ambassador to The Hague. The 1st Baronet used his wealth to acquire estates in Cambridgeshire and Suffolk as well as London (including Downing Street) and New England. The 4th Baronet was already very wealthy in his own right before inheriting the Downing estates of his cousin, the 3rd Baronet. His father, Charles Downing, son of the 1st Baronet, had been sometime Comptroller of Customs in Salem and had inherited his father's London and New England³ properties, but the eventual settlement which founded the College, agreed in March 1800 with the heirs of Lady Margaret Downing, the 4th Baronet's widow, took as the basis of its endowment only the previous six years of rents and profits from the devised Downing estates. This huge compromise

¹ <https://www.v-c.admin.cam.ac.uk/projects/legacies-of-enslavement>

² https://archivesearch.lib.cam.ac.uk/repositories/12/archival_objects/659877

³ The farm in Salem, originally owned by Emmanuel Downing, was sold in 1700 by Charles Downing to Thorndike Proctor (son of John Proctor who leased the farm from 1666 to 1692, when he was hung during the Salem Witch Trials). Deed of sale: Salem Deeds Book 17, pp.7-10. See also 'Salem Witchcraft' by Charles Upham, 1867: <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/17845/17845-h/17845-h.htm>.

effectively discounted the additional thirty years of rents and profits after the death of the 4th Baronet in the interests of bringing the lengthy and costly litigation to an end and the formation of the new College several steps closer.⁴

Methodology

Initial research focused on the Founder of the College, Sir George Downing, 3rd Bt, and his grandfather, specifically seeking to identify possible historical sources for the assertion that the Founder's grandfather, Sir George Downing, 1st Baronet, "owned slaves"⁵ and references online that he had travelled to the West Indies "with slaves in tow"⁶. This research identified multiple printed sources, which the College had previously been unaware of, relating to the 1st Baronet's time in New England and comments of both himself and his father relating to slavery and the plantation system (outlined below). However, the research identified no evidence for any ownership of slaves by the 1st Baronet. His uncle's journal (also detailed below) describes his journey through the West Indies in 1645 as a preacher or chaplain to the seamen.

An important part of the research in its early stages was identifying relevant sources of information, in print, archives and online. It took time to establish the best sources of information and understand how best to use them. One of the key resources was found to be the UCL database of the Legacies of British Slave Ownership⁷, searchable by personal names as well as Cambridge Colleges. Searching this database did not identify any direct connections of the Downing Baronets themselves, other than an indirect and distant connection through the second wife of the 1st Baronet's son-in-law, who remarried two years after his death.⁸ (Wider connections of later members of Downing College will form a separate strand of research). The UCL database did identify information relating to the slavery connections of George Alexander Fullerton (son of Dawson Downing of Bellaghy, Londonderry, and heir of Alexander Fullerton of Jamaica), whose portrait is one of several on long-term loan to the College. However, genealogical research commissioned by the owner of the loaned Fullerton portraits in 2017 concluded that this branch of the Downings and the Founder's line may not, in fact, be related.⁹

In addition to initial research into George Downing, (later 1st Baronet)'s time in New England and the circumstances of his travel through the West Indies, related research

⁴ See Stanley French, [History of Downing College](#), p.79.

⁵ As discussed on Radio 4's 'Today' programme, 3 May 2019, and repeated in an article written for the Sunday Times, 5 May 2019: <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/dear-cambridge-if-you-truly-want-to-atone-for-slavery-qldpjthrt> (asserting that the Founder's grandfather "owned slaves in the Caribbean before he built the properties on what we now know as Downing Street.")

⁶ This phrase, initially found on the 1st Baronet's Wikipedia page (since reworded), appeared to have been copied to multiple web pages relating to him.

⁷ <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/>

⁸ Sir Henry Pickering, 2nd Bt, married the 1st Baronet's daughter, Philadelphia (d.1676) and was one of the 1st Baronet's executors in his 1683 will. Two years after the 1st Bt's death, Sir Henry Pickering married Grace Sylvester, co-heiress to an estate in Barbados. *See Annex 1 for Downing family trees.*

⁹ Downing College Archives, DCAR/1/11/3/40

attempted to trace the origins of the wealth accumulated by the 1st Baronet and his successors to try and identify the source of the Downing family fortune – a small portion of which was eventually used to found the College (as outlined above). The College Archivist attempted to trace surviving bank accounts through the various bank archives holding 17th and 18th century account ledgers. Sadly, not all records from this period have survived and only incomplete accounts were identified: the 1st Baronet's account with Edward Backwell for the 7 years between 1663 and 1671 (*see Annex 2*) and the 3rd and 4th Baronet's occasional accounts with C. Hoare & Co (*Annex 5*). The College Archive also holds two account sheets relating to the management of the affairs of Sir George Downing, 2nd Baronet (the Founder's father), by his brother William, 1700-1705¹⁰.

Research has largely involved a combination of online and book research, tracing written references – and attitudes – to slavery, alongside attempts to identify any direct investment by the Downing Baronets or their close family. The gradual reopening of archives from Spring 2021 enabled limited consultation of records elsewhere in addition to those in the College Archive.

It should be emphasised that this research has of necessity focused on the question of any direct links to slavery. Acknowledgement should here be made of the broader point that the period in which wealth was accumulated by the Downing family was also the period of the growth of the Atlantic slave trade and plantation system, in which the British economy was implicated in forms of economic development making use of enslavement, slave trading and coerced labour. The overall economic significance of slavery to the British economy in this period has been subject to considerable debate. The seminal thesis of the Marxist historian, Eric Williams (1944), that the profits of Atlantic slavery helped to stimulate the Industrial Revolution remains the natural starting-point for discussion, although the existence and nature of any connection has proved controversial.¹¹ Questions of the profitability of slavery (which Williams over-estimated) and the overall place of the plantation system, including the key exports of sugar, tobacco and other commodities, and the markets for British goods in North America and Africa, have been extensively debated and explored.¹² Perhaps the most useful recent approach has been to focus on the long-distance value chains involved in Atlantic slavery, taking account of secondary activities in Britain, such as the processing of sugar and cotton, and exports back to North America and Africa, in order to capture the full extent of related economic

¹⁰ DCAR/1/1/5/1b/3-4 (Downing College Archive)

¹¹ S. L. Engerman, 'The slave trade and British capital formation in the eighteenth century: A comment on the Williams thesis', *Business History Review* 46 (1972), 430-43; B. L. Solow, 'Caribbean slavery and British growth: the Eric Williams hypothesis', *Journal of Development Economics* 17 (1985), 99-115. For a review of this debate, see K. Morgan, *Slavery, Atlantic trade the British economy 1660-1800* (Cambridge, 2001).

¹² D. Eltis and S. L. Engerman, 'The importance of slavery and the slave trade to industrializing Britain', *Journal of Economic History* 60 (2000), 123-44; C. K. Harley, 'Slavery, the British Atlantic economy and the industrial revolution', in *The Caribbean and the Atlantic world economy*, ed. A. B. Leonard and D. Pretel (London, 2015), pp. 161-83; M. Harvey, 'Slavery, indenture and the development of British industrial capitalism', *History Workshop Journal* 88 (2019), 66-88.

activity.¹³ Estimates calculated on this basis by Klas Rönnbäck suggest slavery's increasing significance in the course of the eighteenth century. His figures for the annual value added created by slavery and all related activities amounted to the equivalent of 3.1% of British GDP during the first decade of the eighteenth century, rising to 10.8% a century later.¹⁴ These data help to give a context for the place of slavery within wider British economic development in this formative period.

Sir George Downing, 1st Bt (1623-1684)

In order to investigate the accuracy of assertions that George Downing travelled to the West Indies in 1645 with 'slaves in tow' it was necessary to trace the background to his early life and passage through the West Indies at that point. The widely-referenced primary source is Downing's 1645 letter to his cousin, John Winthrop Jr, reproduced in the published papers of his father, John Winthrop Snr. (*See Annex 3*)

Early life and parents

George Downing was born in Dublin in August 1623, the son of Emmanuel Downing (1585–1659), attorney and clerk of the Inner Temple, and Lucy (1601–1679), sister of John Winthrop (1588-1649), first governor of the colony of Massachusetts Bay, 1630). Emmanuel Downing was the son of an Ipswich schoolmaster and attended Trinity Hall, Cambridge, in 1602. Following the death of his first wife, Anne Ware, he married Lucy Winthrop in 1622. In 1626 he returned from Dublin to London to become an attorney of the Court of Wards. In 1638, at Winthrop's invitation, the Downings emigrated to Salem, Massachusetts, where their minister was Emmanuel's 'cosen', the future regicide Hugh Peter. (George Downing later falsely claimed that his father had been 'banished to New England'). Emmanuel and Lucy remained in the colony until 1655, when George secured his father's appointment as clerk to the Scottish council. They lived in Edinburgh until Emmanuel's death in 1659.¹⁵

The Downings and New England: John Winthrop and his journal

John Winthrop Snr (George Downing's uncle) was elected Governor of the Massachusetts Bay Company at a meeting in Cambridge in 1629 and arrived in New England the following year. Emmanuel Downing had also become a subscriber of the Company, and acted as its advisor from London, sending goods for the settlers (including cattle) and acting as an intermediary with Sir John Coke, the King's Secretary of State. (Charles I acted without Parliament from 1628).¹⁶ In the summer of 1638, George and his parents arrived

¹³ K. Rönnbäck, 'On the economic importance of the slave plantation complex to the British economy during the eighteenth century: a value added approach', *Journal of Global History* 13 (2018), 309-27.

¹⁴ *Ibid.* pp. 323-4.

¹⁵ Scott, Jonathan, 'Downing, Sir George, first baronet', ODNB entry (accessed 2/7/2019) <https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-7981?rskey=TYt7be&result=1>

¹⁶ Simmons, Frederick Johnson, 'Emanuel Downing' (1958): <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015018010937&view=1up&seq=1&skin=2021>

in New England and the following year he joined the first class at the newly-established Harvard College in Cambridge, Massachusetts.¹⁷

John Winthrop's journal and extensive collection of letters have been transcribed and published, now widely available online, and provide a detailed overview of this period and individuals corresponding with or in contact with Winthrop.¹⁸ Emmanuel Downing was a close supporter of Winthrop and the Colony well before the Downing family emigrated in 1638. As they settled in Salem after they arrived, Emmanuel still corresponded with his friend and brother-in-law, the Governor, so letters have survived even after the family arrived in New England.

Sources of income for Emmanuel Downing in New England

Emmanuel had earned more than £700 per year as an Attorney in the Court of Wards and Liveries in London, before private practise. After moving to New England in the summer of 1639 and settling in Salem, he was elected Deputy to the General Court of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, 1639-41, 1644 and 1648. He was also a Magistrate or Judge in the Quarterly Court at Salem (1639-44, 1649) and Recorder of Deeds at Salem.¹⁹ No evidence has been found of Emmanuel Downing owning slaves. His biography notes his mounting debts in New England in the 1640s (during which time he made several trips back to England, in 1644-5 to represent the interests of his nephew John Winthrop Jr's Iron Works, amongst other business) and early 1650s, trying to secure a position before his eventual permanent return in 1655 as Clerk to the Council in Scotland.²⁰

Attitudes of Emmanuel Downing and John Winthrop in Massachusetts about slavery

A 2011 research project into the historical links of Harvard University with slavery commented on the enslavement of Pequot Indians towards the end of the Pequot War in the mid-1630s²¹, during John Winthrop's governorship, and the arrival of the first recorded African slaves in New England: 'Forms of un-freedom in Massachusetts and throughout the New World included indentured servitude of Europeans, enslavement of captured or otherwise displaced Indians, and enslavement of Africans and their descendants... forty-eight Pequot captives were distributed as slaves in Massachusetts, while another seventeen were shipped off to slavery in the West Indies. The ship *Desire*, which carried fifteen Pequot boys and two women to Providence Island in 1637, returned with a cargo that included some of the first African slaves to set foot in New England. If the slaves brought back on the *Desire* were the first to come to Massachusetts from the West Indies they

¹⁷ [Sibley's Harvard Graduates: Biographical Sketches of Those who Attended Harvard College](#) p28.

¹⁸ 'Winthrop's Journal "History of New England" 1630-1649', ed. J. K. Hosmer (Charles Scribner's Sons, 1908) <https://archive.org/details/winthroppsjourna05hosmgoog/page/n8>

¹⁹ Simmons, Frederick J, 'Emanuel Downing', p42 and 53.

²⁰ Simmons, Frederick Johnson, 'Emanuel Downing' (1958)p76 and pp.82-6 for summary of Emmanuel's activities.

²¹ The Pequot War (1636-7) was fought between the Pequot native American Indians and colonial settlers (including the Mass. Bay colony) and their allies. The Pequots were crushed and women and children were often enslaved. Some were given to Englishmen or their New England allies and others were shipped to British colonies in the Caribbean. Winthrop retained some to serve as servants in his household.

would have been remarkable not for being slaves, but for being African.²² John Winthrop reported in his journal that on 26 Feb 1638, “Mr Peirce, in the Salem ship *Desire*, returned from the West Indies after seven months. He had been at Providence, and brought some cotton, and tobacco, and negroes, etc.”²³ Francis Bremer, biographer of John Winthrop, writes ‘There is no evidence that Winthrop himself owned African-American slaves, but that is not conclusive. He did use Indian slaves, and it is known that his son Deane later used African-American slaves on his farm at Pullen Point.’^{24*}

Emmanuel Downing wrote to Winthrop in the summer of 1645, advocating the use of Indian and African-American slaves (and potentially exchanging the former for the latter) in New England:

“A war with the Narranganset [Indians] is verie considerable to this plantation, For I doubt whither yt be not synne in vs hauing power in our hands to suffer them to maynteyne the wo[rship] of the devill, which their Paw waves often doe; 2lie, If vpon a Just warre the Lord should deliver them into our hands, wee might easily haue men woemen and Children enough to exchange for Moores, which wilbe more gaynefull pilladge for vs then wee conceive, for I doe not see how wee can thrive vntill wee get into a stock of slaves sufficient to doe all our buisines, for our Childrens Children will hardly see this great Continent filled with people, soe that our servants will still desire freedome to plant for them selves, and not stay but for verie great wages. And I suppose you know verie well how wee shall maynteyne 20 Moores cheaper then one Englishe servant.

The ships that shall bring Moores may come home laden with salt which may beare most of the chardge, if not all of yt. But I marvayle Conecticott should any ways hasard a warre without your advise, which they cannot maynteyne without your helpe.”²⁵

George Downing in the West Indies, 1645, and return to UK from New England

In 1643, after George graduated from Harvard, Lucy Downing wrote to her brother (John Winthrop) that George was keen to travel but lack of funds led him to accept an appointment as Tutor at Harvard. (On 27 December 1643 he was appointed, on a stipend of £4 per annum, “to read to the Junior pupills as ye Prsident shall see fitt”).²⁶ In 1645, he “went in a ship to the West Indies to instruct the seamen”, preaching at various island ports and, despite offers to stay on as preacher, he continued in the ship to England (as described in John Winthrop’s Journal – see below). This contemporary description of

²² ‘Harvard and Slavery: Seeking a Forgotten History’ by Sven Beckert, Katherine Stevens and the students of the Harvard and Slavery Research Seminar (2011), p8-9 <http://www.harvardandslavery.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/11/Harvard-Slavery-Book-111110.pdf>

²³ ‘Winthrop’s Journal “History of New England” 1630-1649’, ed. J. K. Hosmer (Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1908) vol1 <https://archive.org/details/winthroppsjourna05hosmgoog/page/n286>

²⁴ Bremer, Francis J, ‘John Winthrop: America’s Forgotten Founding Father’ (OUP, 2003), p314

*This report was completed before the publication of Harvard University’s report ‘Harvard & The Legacy of Slavery’ (<https://legacyofslavery.harvard.edu/report>). The Harvard report (section 3.2) references George Downing’s 1645 letter and the subsequent activities of his cousin Samuel Winthrop, the governor’s youngest son, in the West Indies.

²⁵ ‘The Winthrop Papers, Volume V, 1645-1649’ (The Massachusetts Historical Society, 1947), p38-9

²⁶ de Kay, Ormonde, ‘George Downing: “As Arrant a Rascal as Lives Amongst Men”’, *Harvard Magazine*, Mar-Apr 1981, p.56B (copy in College Library collection, 2.7.31)

George Downing's journey on the ship seems quite different from the online references to him travelling to the West Indies 'with slaves in tow' (with the implication that he was the slave owner or trader). It is clear that he acted as a preacher: additionally, it should be noted that the ship in question had been travelling from New England to the West Indies, rather than from Africa to the West Indies. Separately, George is known to have written a widely-published letter to his cousin while onboard ship in Newfoundland in August 1645, with a frank overview of conditions and plantations on various islands in the West Indies, his own experiences there and advocating the use of indentured [presumably white] "servants" from England to work plantations and raise funds "to procure Negroes (the life of this place)". (*See Annex 3 for the reproduction of this letter in full.*)

George Downing's letter suggests he was returning to New England, although a subsequent entry in his uncle's journal on 10 December 1645 suggests his nephew's plans changed and he clearly returned instead to England:

"The scarcity of ministers in England, and the want of employment for our new graduates here, occasioned some of them to look abroad. Three honest young men, good scholars, and very hopeful, viz. a younger son of Mr Higginson...a younger son of Mr Buckley, and Mr. George Downing, a son of Mr. Emanuel Downing of Salem, Batchellor of Arts also, about twenty years of age, went in a ship to the West Indies to instruct the seamen. He went by Newfoundland, and so to Christophers, and Barbados, and Nevis, and being requested to preach in all these places, he gave them such contents, as he had large offers made to stay with them. But he continued in the ship to England, and being a very able scholar, and of a ready wit and fluent utterance, he was soon taken notice of, and called to be a preacher in Sir Thomas Fairfax his army, to Colonel Okey his regiment."²⁷

[Downing would later betray Okey (who signed Charles I's death warrant) in March 1662, apprehending him in Holland after turning to the service of Charles II following Cromwell's death. This led to Samuel Pepys, who worked in his office, describing him as a 'perfidious rogue'. Okey was convicted of treason and hanged in April 1662.]

Ideological support for slavery by Emmanuel and George Downing in New England

No evidence has been found that either Emmanuel or George Downing themselves used either indentured labour or Indian or African-American slaves, although both clearly advocated the use of both in New England and the Caribbean respectively. The transatlantic slave trade from Africa (Guinea) to Barbados in particular, by English tradesmen, seems to have been relatively newly-established and increasing from the early 1640s²⁸. As Larry Gragg comments in his article on the English slave trade to Barbados, 1627-60: 'New Englanders were frequent participants in this early slave trade.' John

²⁷Winthrop's Journal "History of New England" 1630-1649', ed. J. K. Hosmer (Charles Scribner's Sons, 1908) vol2, p250-1 <https://archive.org/details/winthroppsjournal04wint/page/250>

²⁸ Larry Gragg (1995) 'To procure Negroes': The English slave trade to Barbados, 1627-60, *Slavery and Abolition*, 16:1, p70 (<https://doi.org/10.1080/01440399508575149>) See Beckles, Hilary, 'Plantation Production and White "Proto-Slavery": White Indentured Servants and the Colonisation of the English West Indies, 1624-1645', *The Americas*, Vol. 41, No.3 (CUP, 1985) for early use of white, European indentured servants before the 'transition to large-scale black slavery in the 1640s' <https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/1007098.pdf>

Winthrop noted in his journal in 1645, "One of our ships, which went to the Canaries with pipestaves in the beginning of November last, returned now, and brought wine, and sugar, and salt, and some tobacco, which she had at Barbadoes, in exchange for Africoes, which she carried from" [the Cape Verde Islands].²⁹ Gragg notes that this 1644 slaving voyage was the first of several for New Englanders.³⁰

The Barbados plantation of 'Capt. Downing', 1660s

Although no direct evidence has been found of the 1st Baronet or his father owning slaves, research uncovered a reference to the St Joseph plantation owned by a 'Capt. Downing' in St Joseph, Barbados, in the 1660s. (This had 20 recorded slaves and 2 servants in 1668, before it was sold to a Joseph Issack in 1670.³¹)

Research has so far failed to identify this 'Capt. Downing' or connect him with George Downing, 1st Bt, or his family, although records relating to other surviving sons of Emmanuel Downing are scarce. We know that George Downing returned to England in 1645 and his father returned to Scotland in 1655. Emmanuel did have several sons but, sadly, further research has so far failed to establish their exact whereabouts and activities after this point. (*See family trees, Annex 1*). The biography of Emmanuel Downing by Frederick Simmons gives biographical details of some additional members of the family, including son Joshua 'who later lived in Barbados' and was 'very eager for sea employment' but may have died before 1668 and Robert ('Robin', bapt. 1628), who 'was a seafaring man at Barbadoes and between Ireland and England...Possibly he was lost at sea in 1653. There is no mention of him after 1651'.³²

Discussions online³³ and often conflicting genealogical sources available via the Ancestry website leave some room for doubt and confusion, possibly not helped by the family's move from the UK to Massachusetts. A request for records from the Barbados Archives sadly failed to shed any additional light on the identification of Captain Downing and any potential connection to him. Research has shown that Downing was a name with some wider currency in New England and the West Indies in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and care is therefore needed in approaching any reference to an individual with the surname 'Downing'.³⁴

²⁹ James K. Hosmer (ed.), *Winthrop's Journal: 'History of New England', 1630-1649*, II (New York, 1908), p. 227.

³⁰ Larry Gragg (1995) 'To procure Negroes': The English slave trade to Barbados, 1627-60, *Slavery and Abolition*, 16:1, p73

³¹ Beccles, Hilary MacDonald, 'White Labour in Black Slave Plantation Society and Economy: A Case Study of Indentured Labour in Seventeenth Century Barbados' (PhD Thesis, University of Hull, 1980)

<https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/2732011.pdf>

³² Simmons, Frederick Johnson, 'Emanuel Downing' (1958), p86

<https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015018010937&view=1up&seq=5>

³³ <https://www.rootschat.com/forum/index.php?topic=445401.18> (Robert Stedall's research in this area, relating also to the Downing-Fullerton branch, whose Downing portraits are on long-term loan to the College).

³⁴ An Ancestry search for 'Downing' in Barbados around this period identified at least 10 different men and women of that surname living on the island in the late 17th century. 'Caribbeana', The Digital Library of the

George Downing and the accumulation of wealth following his return to England, 1645

On returning to England, George Downing (later 1st Baronet) began a long and successful political career, serving both Cromwell and later, following the Restoration, the King, and holding a series of well-paid roles which contributed to the rapid accumulation of wealth. The various sources of George's growing wealth accrued in the service of Cromwell and the King are well-documented³⁵. In contrast to his annual salary of £4 at Harvard, his early appointments as Scoutmaster-General and Teller of the Receipt in the Exchequer paid him £865 pa, according to "A Narrative of the Late Parliament", published in 1657. His appointment as Cromwell's Minister to Holland in 1652 came with an additional salary of £1,100³⁶ and so, two years later, he was able to marry Frances Howard, sister of the 1st Earl of Carlisle and great-great-granddaughter of the 4th Duke of Norfolk. In July 1663, Downing was created a baronet by King Charles II (in recognition of his part in the capture of the regicides) and given £1000.³⁷

An appointment as commissioner of customs in 1671 brought an additional salary of £2,000 pa, but that same year he was put in the Tower for returning from Holland early. A letter from a Mr. Lingard describes Downing as "a bold, rapacious, and unprincipled man, who under Cromwell had extorted by menaces considerable sums, in the form of presents, from the Dutch merchants".³⁸ Yet, despite his growing wealth, he was described by Samuel Pepys as "stingy" and a long letter from his mother in April 1674 describes his unwillingness to help her financially. In need of necessities, she writes that "Georg will not hear of for me: and that it is only [covetousness] that maks me aske more. He last summer bought another town near Hatly, called Clappum, cost him 13 or 14 thousand pound, and I really [believe] one of us 2 are indeed [covetous]."³⁹ The surviving historical sources detailing the 1st Baronet's financial rewards after his return to England provide clear evidence for the accumulation of his personal wealth after 1645 as a result of his administrative positions and political connections.

As Resident in The Hague and Commissioner of Customs, Sir George Downing, 1st Bt was heavily involved in protecting British trade interests against the Dutch. Throughout the 1670s, he was an adviser to the Lords of Trade and Plantations and, in the words of Charles Wilson: "Downing's name appears, after 1656, in connexion with every important

Caribbean, (Vol. 2, p.54) also lists a Lieut. Thomas Downing in Jamaica in 1658:
<https://www.dloc.com/UF00075409/00002/69j>.

³⁵ See <https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-7981>

³⁶ [Sibley's Harvard Graduates: Biographical Sketches of Those who Attended Harvard College](#) p32

³⁷ His mother (by then in East Hatley with her son's family) wrote to her nephew, John Winthrop Jr, in Feb 1663: "I suppose you have heard how his Majesty made him Knight Baronet and gaue him a thousand pounds as a token of his favor. My son George has another son wh. he called William, Ye Prince of Orange was his Godfather."

³⁸ [Sibley's Harvard Graduates: Biographical Sketches of Those who Attended Harvard College](#) p44

³⁹ [Sibley's Harvard Graduates: Biographical Sketches of Those who Attended Harvard College](#) p37

Act affecting navigation and colonial trade for more than a century."⁴⁰ Even if not directly involved in the slave trade or colonial plantations, therefore, George Downing, 1st Bt, was closely involved in protecting the interests of those who were.

Sir George Downing, 2nd Baronet (c.1656-1711, Baronet from 1684)

In comparison to his father and son, much less was known about the activities of the 2nd Baronet when this research into the Downing family's activities began. His life was especially mysterious after the death of his wife in 1688, although both early historians of the College, H. W. Pettit Stevens and Stanley French, alleged that the cause of her death was partly due to her husband's 'unkindness' and 'conduct'. (Unfortunately, neither provided sources for these statements.) The 1st Baronet's eldest son was described by the History of Parliament as 'feeble-minded'⁴¹, but little was known of the basis for this. The 2nd Baronet was known to have been excommunicated in 1695 for adultery and living 'incontinently' with Priscilla Payne/Paine, with whom he had two illegitimate children (John, b.1695, and Priscilla, b.1698)⁴². Much of what follows, therefore, is new information discovered about the 2nd Baronet's later life and his mental health. (This is especially significant given other information which came to light during the course of this research, relating to an apparently different man of the same name active during this period in Barbados, as outlined in Annex 4.)

George joined his father as a Teller of the Exchequer in 1680 and in 1683 married Lady Catharine Cecil, daughter of James Cecil, 3rd Earl of Salisbury. They had one son (George – later 3rd Bt and Founder of Downing College) before Lady Catharine's death in 1688 and afterwards their son was raised by his maternal aunt and uncle. In March 1689, Sir George (2nd Baronet) was discharged from his lucrative post as a Teller (which he should ordinarily have held for his lifetime) for certain 'misdemeanours'.⁴³ He appears to have been living in Muswell Hill, presumably with Priscilla Payne, from c.1698 until at least 1708/9.⁴⁴ In January 1699 a former servant 'of Muswell Hill' petitioned for payment of wages from Sir George.⁴⁵ A Chancery document, C10/307/22, in January 1708 (1709) describes 'Sir George and his family then residing at Muzwell Hill' and his son George (later the 3rd Baronet) managing his affairs. Whether the 2nd Baronet was capable of managing his own affairs seems debatable. The Chancery document above clearly describes his son as taking charge of arrangements to provide for his father's family and various other surviving

⁴⁰ Wilson, Charles, *Profit and Power* (pp102-3), in Scott, Jonathan, 'Good Night Amsterdam. Sir George Downing and Anglo-Dutch Statebuilding', *English Historical Review*, Vol. 118 (Oxford University Press, Apr 2003)

⁴¹ <https://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1660-1690/member/downing-sir-george-1623-84>

⁴² DCP/STE/1/1 Bishop of Ely visitation records (Downing College Archives) and Ancestry baptism records, 1698.

⁴³ British History Online: Entry Book, March 1689 (Calendar of Treasury Books, Vol 9, 1689-92, <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-treasury-books/vol9/pp4-19> 15 March to 6 April 1689)

⁴⁴ <https://hornseyhistorical.org.uk/grove-lodge-muswell-hill/> although this contains some errors. A Deed of Sale at Haringey Archives and Museums Service shows Grove Lodge was owned by William Downing up to his death in 1705 when ownership transferred to his brother, George.

⁴⁵ [MI/SP/1699/01/006](https://www.metropolitan.gov.uk/MI/SP/1699/01/006) (London Metropolitan Archives)

records would appear to confirm the 2nd Baronet was not of sound mind during this period. A surviving letter written by the 2nd Baronet in 1697 to John Ellis (British Library, Add. MS 28881 ff.459r) denies any knowledge of the reason for him losing his lucrative position as a Teller of the Exchequer, although official records at the time of his dismissal describe his refusal to make payments 'with contempt and obstinacy'.⁴⁶ Significantly, when his son (later the 3rd Baronet) and his wife unsuccessfully petitioned the House of Lords for a divorce in 1715, their petition described the 2nd Baronet at the time of their marriage around 1700 as 'alive, but accounted not of sound judgement'.⁴⁷

Although no surviving bank account for the 2nd Baronet has been identified with the various bank archives holding customer accounts from this period, the College Archive holds two account sheets relating to Sir George's account with William Downing (his brother) between 1700 and 1705⁴⁸. These appear to relate to the payment of rents and general management of the 2nd Baronet's business by William and the purchase of land in Croydon. The 2nd Baronet's 1688 will in the Archive (transcribed and reproduced in *The Griffin* in the 1930s) appears to contain nothing of particular interest or relevance to the subject of this research.

Reference should be made to Annex 4 for details of a 'George Downing' who died in Barbados in 1700/01 and has been identified as the likely investor in four slave voyages to the island in the final three years of his life. No connection – through family or business - has been identified between this man in Barbados and the 2nd Baronet in England. They appear to have shared only the same name.

Sir George Downing, 3rd Baronet (c.1685-1749), Founder of Downing College

No direct links or investment in slavery have been identified in relation to the Founder of the College. The 3rd Baronet's 1717 will at the National Archives⁴⁹ (requested in connection with the 300th anniversary of the Founder's will in 2017) does not contain anything to suggest investment in the slave trade or plantations, referring only to his estates in Cambridgeshire, Bedford and Suffolk and no stock holdings.

Detailed research has not been possible to identify the dates of accumulation of the various parts of the Downing estates. The College Archive holds a vast –but incomplete - number of title deeds relating to the estates and the catalogue for the majority of these has been made available online as part of this project by the College Archivist⁵⁰. The incomplete customer accounts for the 3rd Baronet with C. Hoare & Co in London (*Annex 5*) do not appear to contain any information of relevance to this research.

Stock investments?

⁴⁶ <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-treasury-books/vol9/pp4-19> 15 March 1689

⁴⁷ <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=osu.32437122578053&view=1up&seq=147&skin=2021> (p.31)

⁴⁸ DCAR/1/1/5/1b/3-4

⁴⁹ National Archives, DEL/10/118, accessed 2017.

⁵⁰ https://archivesearch.lib.cam.ac.uk/repositories/12/archival_objects/659877

No stock certificates have been found in the archive in relation to any of the Downing Baronets. There is no searchable database – and an incomplete set of records - of Royal African Company subscribers. No reference to any such investment by the 1st Baronet has been identified⁵¹, but it has not been possible to check original surviving records at the National Archives.

Similarly, the subscriber records of the South Sea Company, held by the Parliamentary Archives, are not digitised or otherwise searchable remotely. The College Archivist identified a notebook of South Sea subscribers held by the LSE Archive in London⁵². This contains a list of all subscribers investing at least £3000 and no Downings were listed or, it would seem at this stage, any other identifiable individuals connected with the College. It would be necessary to refer to the original subscription records at the Parliamentary Archives to conduct a thorough search relating to investors of less than £3000.⁵³

After the South Sea Bubble, the South Sea Company continued until 1853, although it sold most of its rights to the Spanish government in 1750.⁵⁴ The Slave Voyages online database lists 70 ships owned by the Company which sailed after the Bubble, between 1721 and 1740⁵⁵. In the aftermath of the financial upheaval caused by the South Sea Bubble, the Bank of England bought £4 million of South Sea stock to reduce the South Sea capitalisation and, in 1723, the capital of the company was divided into a joint-stock (to be called South Sea Annuities) and a capital trading stock. The former was a bond issue, bearing interest at 5% to 1727 and 4% thereafter, and became known as 'Old South Sea Annuities' following a further division of the capital stock in 1733 which also created 'New South Sea Annuities'.⁵⁶ From their creation in 1723, the South Sea annuities 'became the obligation of the British government, with the South Sea Company just the administrator.'⁵⁷ The surviving South Sea annuities ledgers at the Bank of England are large in size and quantity, with no index, and so it was only possible to request remote sample searching by the Bank's archivists. None of the Downing Baronets were found in the Old South Sea Annuities ledgers for the sample dates, 1723-1733 and the years around the 3rd and 4th Baronets' deaths (1749 and 1764, respectively). One stock account was identified during this sampling exercise for Charles Downing, brother of the 2nd Baronet and father of Sir Jacob Garrard Downing, 4th Bt, at the time of his death in 1740. His stock holding, purchased after 1733 and to the value of £1065 18s 5d, was sold after his death by his

⁵¹ See also Annex 2 for details of the 1st Baronet's surviving account with goldsmith banker Edward Backwell, including payment 'per' Robert Vyner, goldsmith banker.

⁵² LSE Archives, SR/83

⁵³ A copy of a memoir of a relative of Mary Forester, wife of the 3rd Bt, in the Archive says that she lost money investing in the South Sea Company, but kept this from him as she did not want her estranged husband intervening (DCPP/FREN/1/2/15)

⁵⁴ <https://www.britannica.com/event/South-Sea-Bubble>

⁵⁵ <https://www.slavevoyages.org/voyage/database>

⁵⁶ Cherry, Donald L., 'The South Sea Company, 1711-1855', *Dalhousie Review* (1933): https://dalspace.library.dal.ca/bitstream/handle/10222/62193/dalrev_vol13_iss1_pp61_68.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=ypp 65-6

⁵⁷ Odlyzko, Andrew, 'Newton's financial misadventures in the South Sea Bubble', *Notes and Records*, 73, pp.29-59 (2019) <https://royalsocietypublishing.org/doi/pdf/10.1098/rsnr.2018.0018> p.48.

executor, the 4th Baronet. However, an investment in Old South Sea Annuities in the mid-1730s should be seen in the context of the information above as opposed to the very different situation up to the Bubble of 1720.

Sir Jacob Garrard Downing: The last Downing Baronet

Sir Jacob Garrard Downing, 4th Baronet, was the son of Charles Downing (d.1740, son of Sir George Downing, 1st Bt) and Sarah, daughter and coheir of Jacob Garrard, 1st son of Sir Thomas Garrard, 2nd Bt of Langford, Norfolk⁵⁸. Charles Downing was Comptroller of Customs in Salem, Massachusetts (where Jacob was born) and inherited the 1st Baronet's properties in London (including Downing Street) and New England, described as 'vastly rich'⁵⁹ when he died.

The only bank accounts for the 4th Baronet, with C. Hoare & Co (*Annex 5*), do not appear to contain anything of relevance to this research, apparently referencing only the purchase and sale of normal Bank of England annuities.

Jacob was his father's only son, so he was wealthy in his own right before inheriting the Downing family estates following the death of his cousin, the 3rd Baronet, in 1749. Sir Jacob's personal wealth, inherited from his father and distinct from the Downing estates he later inherited from the 3rd Baronet, was not included in the settlement which created Downing College, which was based only on the 3rd Baronet's estates and the previous six years of rents and profits from them.

Conclusion

No evidence has been found of any investment connected directly with slavery and the finances of the four Downing baronets other than, more indirectly, the Old South Sea Annuities held by the 4th Baronet's father at the time of his death, although this investment should be viewed in the context outlined above and was not included in the financial settlement which eventually led to the foundation and endowment of Downing College in 1800. No such investments are apparent from the wills of the four Downing baronets, but it has not been possible to conduct a more speculative and lengthy search of surviving records of institutions such as the Royal African Company and South Sea Company held at archives in London. As outlined in Annex 4, the discovery of a 'George Downing' who invested in four slave voyages to Barbados around 1700 appears to be an entirely different man – and family – to the 2nd Baronet and branch of the family which endowed Downing College. The fact that the name Downing was found to have some general currency in the Caribbean during this period shows the care needed when investigating potential connections.

⁵⁸ No reference to the Garrards in the UCL Slavery database.

⁵⁹ Gentleman's Magazine, Vol X, 1740, p.204

<https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=hvd.hw2940&view=1up&seq=218>

In relation to the 1st Baronet and his family's time in New England, no evidence has been found that either Emmanuel or George Downing (the Founder's grandfather) used either indentured labour or Indian or African-American slaves, although they clearly advocated the use of both. There is evidence that John Winthrop Snr, the 1st Baronet's uncle, and his son used Indian and African-American slaves in New England as outlined above.⁶⁰

Even if not directly involved – or investing in – the slave trade or plantations, Sir George Downing, 1st Bt, was instrumental in protecting the interests of those who were. He defended trade and shipping interests against the Dutch as Resident in The Hague and Commissioner of Customs. He was adviser to the Lords of Trade and Plantations and, from 1656, influenced “every important Act affecting navigation and colonial trade for more than a century.”⁶¹

December 2021

Approved by Governing Body on 6 May 2022.

⁶⁰ This report was completed and approved before the College was aware of the publication of Harvard University's report 'Harvard & The Legacy of Slavery' (<https://legacyofslavery.harvard.edu/report>) on 26 April 2022. The Harvard report (section 3.2) references George Downing's 1645 letter and the subsequent activities of his cousin Samuel Winthrop, the governor's youngest son, in the West Indies.

⁶¹ Wilson, Charles, *Profit and Power* (pp102-3), in Scott, Jonathan, 'Good Night Amsterdam. Sir George Downing and Anglo-Dutch Statebuilding', *English Historical Review*, Vol. 118 (Oxford University Press, Apr 2003)

Annex 1: Downing family tree, 1585-1764

1) **Emanuel Downing** (1585-1659, Trinity Hall (1602))

m. (1) **Anne Ware** (d. c.1620)

Children: James Downing (b.1615), Susan (c.1617), Mary (c. 1620)

(2) (1622) **Lucy Winthrop** (1601-1679), sister of **John Winthrop** (Trinity (1603), first Governor of Colony of Massachusetts Bay, 1630).

Children⁶²:

- **George Downing (1623-1684), 1st Baronet** (*see below*) b.1623, Dublin
- Lucy b. c.1625
- Joshua Downing (b. 1627, m. Frances 1657 in Glasgow) Collector of the Port of Glasgow, 1653; 'after the Restoration of Charles II he may have returned to Barbadoes, where he was previously in 1648'.⁶³
- Robert (Robin) Downing (b.1629) 'He was a seafaring man at Barbadoes and between Ireland and England...Possibly he was lost at sea in 1653. There is no mention of him after 1651'.⁶⁴
- Adam (b.1631)
- *Henry? (1630-1698?) – mentioned elsewhere but not listed in Simmons' biography of Emmanuel Downing*
- Anne (b.1633)
- Martha (b.1636)
- Dorcas (b. Salem, Massachusetts)
- John (b. 1640, Salem-1694)

⁶² Simmons, p7

⁶³ Simmons, p86. No further information/records have been identified to confirm this.

⁶⁴ Simmons, p86

<https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015018010937&view=1up&seq=5>

2) **George Downing** (1623-1684), **1st Baronet** (knighted 1660)

m. (1654) Frances Howard, sister of Charles Howard, 1st Earl of Carlisle* (1628-1685) and daughter of Sir William Howard of Naworth Castle and Mary (*née* Eure, daughter of William Eure, 4th Baron Eure). Frances was the great-great granddaughter of the fourth Duke of Norfolk.

Children (3 sons, 5 daughters):

- George Downing (c.1656-1711), 2nd Baronet (1684) (*see below*)
- William Downing (1663-1705), died without issue
- Charles Downing (d.1740); Comptroller of Customs, Salem; married Sarah Garrard, Daughter/ coheir of Jacob Garrad, son and heir of Sir Tho. Garrad, 2nd Baronet of Langford, with whom he had two children, including Sir Jacob Garrard Downing, 4th Bt
- Frances (d.1681); married John Cotton, heir of Sir John Cotton, 3rd Bt; her husband died before his father, leaving title to their son Sir John Cotton, 4th Bt;
- Philadelphia (d.1676), married Sir Henry Pickering, 2nd Bt (1656-1705) (3 daughters). *After her death, Sir Henry Pickering, 2nd Bt, married (1685) Grace, dau. and coheir of Constant Sylvester of Barbados (with plantation⁶⁵) Pickering was a member of the Barbados assembly from 1693-4 and member of Barbados Council in 1705 until his death there. (Also MP (Morpeth) 1685-9 and, from 1698, MP for Cambridgeshire).*
- Mary (d.1728), married Thomas Barnardiston; mother of Thomas Barnardiston
- Lucy, married (1) Sir Richard Bulkeley, 2nd Bt, and (2) William Worth. No surviving children.

MP for Edinburgh 1654, Carlisle 1656 and 1659, Morpeth 1660, 1661 and 1679

* NB: Distinct from the previous 1st and 2nd Earls of Carlisle, James Hay (c.1580-1536) and his son, James. In 1627, the 1st Earl of Carlisle (James Hay) was granted all the Caribbean islands, including Barbados. The peerage became extinct on the death of James Hay, 2nd Earl of Carlisle, childless in 1660. Charles Howard, brother of Frances Howard, was created 1st Earl of Carlisle in 1661 and so this branch is entirely separate from his predecessors.

⁶⁵ Possible link to Pickering plantation in Barbados: <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/estate/view/10220>. See also <http://easthamptonlibrary.org/wp-content/files/pdfs/history/lectures/20011018.pdf>

3) **George Downing (c.1656-1711), 2nd Baronet (from 1684)**

m. (1683) Lady Catherine Cecil (d.1688), daughter of James Cecil, 3rd Earl of Salisbury, and his wife Lady Margaret (Manners, daughter of the Earl of Rutland)

Children:

- George Downing (c.1685-1749), 3rd Baronet (from 1711)

Lived 'incontinently together' (at East Hatley and Muswell Hill) with Priscilla Payn(e)/Paine (d.1700). Sir George and Priscilla were excommunicated in July 1695, a decision upheld for 'adultery' on a second visitation in November 1695.⁶⁶

Two illegitimate children:

- *John (1695-1774)⁶⁷*
- *Priscilla (b. 8 July 1698)⁶⁸*

4) **George Downing (c.1685-1749), 3rd Baronet (from 1711)**

Raised from a young age by maternal aunt and uncle after the death of his mother.

m. (1700) secretly, his cousin Mary Forester.

They separated by 1704 and her request for a divorce in 1715 was refused by the House of Lords. They therefore remained married until her death in 1734, no children. George did not remarry (*although he had an illegitimate daughter with his housekeeper, Mary Townsend. A 1727 codicil to his will made provision for both Mary and her daughter*).

Sir George Downing, 3rd Bt d. 9 July 1749. His will (1717) named four male relatives as heirs (with the foundation of a Cambridge College in his name as the last resort).⁶⁹ His cousin, Sir Jacob Garrard Downing, inherited the estates and became the 4th Bt.

MP for Dunwich 1710-1715, 1722-1749

5) **Jacob Garrard Downing (c.1717-1764), 4th Baronet (from 1749)** (Emmanuel (1734))

Born c.1717, the only son of Charles Downing (d.1740, son on 1st Bt) and Sarah Garrard (daughter and coheir of Jacob Garrard, 1st son of Sir Thomas Garrard, 2nd Bt of Langford, Norfolk)

m. (1750) Margaret Price, daughter of Rev. John Price of Barrington

No children.

⁶⁶ DCP/STE/1/1 (Downing College Archives)

⁶⁷ Paine family tree, Stanley French papers, DCP/FREN/1/2/8 (Downing College Archives)

⁶⁸ Hornsey and Haringey parish registers, via Ancestry.co.uk

⁶⁹ See <https://www.dow.cam.ac.uk/about/downing-college-archive/archives-college-history/300-years-founders-will>

MP for Dunwich, 1741-7, 1749-61, 1763-4 (NB: 2 seats in Dunwich. The 3rd Bt sold the second seat to his cousin in 1741)⁷⁰.

UCL/Slavevoyages database: nothing for Garrard/Garrad/Garard or Bowyer and Whittington (Lady Margaret Downing's 2nd husband and nephew and her heirs).

⁷⁰ See <http://bernardoconnor.org.uk/Everton/Footpaths/Dunwich%20-%20the%20Rotten%20Borough.htm>

Annex 2: Sir George Downing, 1st Bt's account with Edward Backwell (NatWest Archives)

(Ref. EB/1/1/139)					
1663 Sr Geo. Downinge Dr			1663 Sr Geo. Downinge Cr		
Mar 31	To Mr Woodroffe ⁷¹	165:00:00	Mar 28	By gold	150:00:00
Aug 24	For a Cup & Cover...	05:02:6		By ballance carried [forward]	ex. 15-05:02:06
		170:02:06			170:02:06

(Ref. EB/1/2/446)					
Sr Geo. Downinge Dr			Sr Geo. Downinge Cr		
	To ballance as [<i>illeg.</i>]	05:02:6		By ballance carried to Leger	5:2:6

(Ref. EB/1/3/420)					
1664 Sr George Downing Dr			Sr Geo. Downing Cr		
	To Balance from Ledger	5:2:6			
Feb 15	To Mr Woodroffe	500:00:00		By Ballance carry f to Leger	505:2:6
		505:2:6			

(Ref. EB/1/4/161)					
1665 Sr George Downing Dr			Sr Geo. Downing Cr		
Jan 18	To Mr Nicholas Osborne ⁷²	1000:00:00	Jan 17	By my note	1000:00:00
Feb 13	To Mr Kent	400:00:00	Feb 8	By my note	400:00:00
Feb 26	To Mr John Colvill ⁷³	220:00:00	Feb 17	By Mr Edward Godfrey of Ware	220:00:00
Mar 10	To ditto part of £500	233:3:00	Mar 9	By note	500:00:00
Mar 12	To ditto full of £500	266:17:00			

⁷¹ [Beresford, *The Godfather of Downing Street*](#) (p91) refers to Woodroffe, Downing's servant and a former soldier, in 1658 and the 1st Bt's 1683 will (reproduced as an appendix of the same) leaves £20 to Edmund Woodroffe, "one of my clerks in the office in the Exchequer" (p299)

⁷² Mentioned several times in Samuel Pepys' diary. Unclear who. Nicholas Osborne (1620 – 18 April 1696), [Clerk of the Crown of Ireland?](#) Cashier to Sir Dennis Gawden? (See Mar 25 1671, <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-treasury-books/vol3/pp795-809#highlight-first>)

⁷³ Goldsmith banker

1666 ⁷⁴ Apr 30	To ditto	1000:00:00	1666 Apr 25	By note	1000:00:00
May 14	To Mr Osborne's man	100:00:00	May 9	By note	100:00:00
May 16	To Mr Colville	700:00:00	May 10	By note	700:00:00
May 19	To ditto	200:00:00	May 17	By Mr Willis note	200:00:00
June 12	To Mr John Hawkes [per] Sr Robert Vyner ⁷⁵	1300:00:00	June 2	By Lewis Harding Esq [per] note	1300:00:00
July 27	To part of £200	100:00:00	July 20	By note	200:00:00
July 27	To full of £200 [per] Mr Ric ^d Cooke	100:00:00	Aug 3	By note	100:00:00
Aug 18	To ?that of y ^r 16th	700:00:00	Aug 16	By note	700:00:00
Aug 25	To Mr Horneby	100:00:00			
		6420:00:00			6420:00:00

(Ref. EB/1/5/449)					
1667 Sr George Downing Dr			Sr George Downing Cr		
June 20	To that of [?] June	1000:00:00	June 5	By note	1000:00:00
	To Ballance from Ledger	5:2:6	June 5	By him at y ^e Excheq ^r	26:10:10

(Ref. EB/1/8/243)					
Sr George Downing Dr			Sr George Downing Cr		
Jan 9	To ?6 M ^o Interest of £6000 Due 5 November [per] Nr Woodroft	180:00:00	May 6	By so [much?] at Consideration	6000:00:00
Feb 27	To principal £6000 Inter £107.10 per ditto	6107:10:00		By Interest Account	287:10:10
	To ballance [borne?] to Leger	2500:00:00	Feb 22	By note to pay at 14 d ^a	2500:00:00
		8787:10:00			8787:10:00

(Ref. EB/1/9/220)					
Sr George Downing Dr			Sr George Downing Cr		
April 29	To Mr Stanhop that of y ^e 21 [°?]	200:00:00		By ballance from Leger [°S] Folio	2500:00:00

⁷⁴ Until 1752 the legal start of the year was March 25

⁷⁵ Sir Robert Vyner, 1st Baronet, (alternatively [Viner](#)) (1631 – 2 September 1688), Goldsmith banker, [Lord Mayor of London](#) 1674-5, Director of Royal African Company. (There seem to be limited records for the Royal African Company for this early year at the National Archives (T70) and no stock ledgers for the 1660s.)

June 3	To that 21 ^o February	2500:10:00	Aprill 21	By note	200:00:00
		2700:00:00			2700:00:00

Annex 3: Letter from George Downing (later 1st Baronet) to his cousin, John Winthrop Jr, written onboard a ship in Newfoundland, August 1645

"I hope you have received my letter by Mr. Young, wherein as neer as I am able I have sett down the state of the Indyes. We were there from the 12th of Feb: to the 27th of July, in which tim I endeavoured as farr as I was able to understand the state of things in all kinds. I was twice at the Barbados, thrice at Antegua, many times at Nevis, but most at Christophers, last at Santa Cruce. If you go to Christophers, you shal see the ruins of a flourishing place. The reasons I might sett down but it would be too tedious. If you go to Barbados you shal see a flourishing Iland many able men. I believe they have bought this year no lesse than a thousand Negroes; and the more they buie, the better able they are to buye, for in a yeare and halfe they will earne (with gods blessing) as much as they cost. If you go to Antegua you shall meet with a very understanding courteous gentleman, Captn Ashton governour of the Iland, with whom I am intimate, his love towards me was singular, and I knowe he will be wondrous glade to see you and to give you any encouragement the Iland affords, if you go to Nevis, you shal meet with a discret man Governour Lake, who likewise was importunate with me to stay there, and indeed had I conjectured of your coming I should hav stayed either ther or at Antegua.

...[re Santa Cruce] this is a brave Iland as bigge as the Barbados as healthy as any Iland in the Indyes, ther was about three hundred English as many French, and a quantity of Dutch. the French had a fort. the Dutch likewise had a strong fort and a Governour, and the English lived under Dutch: so the Dutch and French did grievously (as the English say) oppresse the English, would not suffer any English vessel to com and trade at the Iland. now the land was first the Englishes, whereupon they sett upon the French with a fury, putt them to the worst, and sent them all off the Iland. they sett likewise upon the Dutch, tooke their fort their Governour was kild with a wound, and so they have now the whole Iland in possession, and have received a Governour. If this Iland be well settled it will be of great Consideration, espetially because tis so neer the Spaniard...

a man that will settle ther must looke to procure servants which if you could get out of England for 6 or 8 or 9 yeares time onely paying their passages or at the most but some smale above, it would do very well, for so therby you shall be able to doe something vpon a plantation, and in short tim be able with good husbandry to procure Negroes (the life of this place) out of the encrease of your owne plantation.

I praye God in mercy direct you and blesse you and let your prayers go along with us, and I hope that if you undertak that voyage I may see you in the Indyes, for we are now bound home, and shal goe neer in our return to touch the Indyes and so for New England".⁷⁶

⁷⁶ 'The Winthrop Papers, Volume V, 1645-1649' (The Massachusetts Historical Society, 1947), p42-5

Annex 4: George Downing of Barbados (d.1700/1)

As the first phase of research had focused mainly on the 1st and 3rd Baronets, when the second phase of research began in earnest at the start of November 2020 with the second lockdown, this led to a chance and surprising discovery of a ‘George Downing’ in a ‘Directory of Independent Slave Traders, 1672-1712’ found online.⁷⁷ Cross-referencing this with the slavevoyages.org database⁷⁸ and interrogating the data in a different way identified four voyages listing a George Downing as one of the ship’s owners:

<u>Vessel name</u>	<u>Journey began</u>	<u>Date arrived</u>	<u>Owners</u>	<u>TNA refs</u>
Unity	Dec 1700	July 1701	Edward Lascelles ⁷⁹ George Downing	CO33/13; T70/351, 62
Other sources listed: Donnan,II,29: Donnan, Elizabeth, <i>Documents Illustrative of the Slave Trade to America, vol. 3</i> (Washington, DC, 1930-35)				
Mary	May 1700	Jan 1701	Benjamin Bullard ⁸⁰ Edward Dyer George Downing	CO33/13; T70/350, 72
Other sources listed: Donnan,II,26: Donnan, Elizabeth, <i>Documents Illustrative of the Slave Trade to America, vol. 3</i> (Washington, DC, 1930-35)				
Diamond Gally	Aug 1699		Edward Lascelles George Downing	T70/350, 40
Mary	May 1699	Feb 1700	Edward Dyer George Downing Paul Carrington ⁸¹	CO33/13; T70/350, 38; T70/175,167

⁷⁷ Pettigrew, William A., *Freedom's Debt: The Royal African Company and the Politics of the Atlantic Slave Trade, 1672-1752* (University of North Carolina Press, 2013), Appendix A, p229

<https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/CAM/reader.action?docID=4322204&query>

⁷⁸ <https://www.slavevoyages.org/voyage/database>

⁷⁹ It seems likely that this Edward Lascelles was Edward Lascelles of Stoke Newington (d.1727), the son of Peter Lascelles who, with his brothers, was active in Barbados from the 1680s until his return to England in 1701. See Smith, S. D., *Slavery, Family and Gentry Capitalism in the British Atlantic: The World of the Lascelles, 1648-1834* (CUP, 2009), Ch.3 pp46-51. (https://www.cambridge.org/core/services/aop-cambridge-core/content/view/5BA0BCA86F8126EE659EA274AF2C392C/9780511497308c3_p43-53_CBO.pdf/rise_of_the_lascelles.pdf). He married Mary Hall of Barbados and their daughter Mary became the 2nd wife of Daniel Lascelles of Stank, MP for Northallerton (1655-1734) in 1702. He was, therefore, great-grandfather of the 1st Earl of Harewood. Edward Lascelles’ two sons died without issue and so his estate was divided between his three daughters’ families (including the Lascelles) after a series of legal disputes. That said, it seems that on the death of Edward Lascelles Jr, he owed money to the son of Daniel Lascelles (Ch. 3 above, pp52-3).

⁸⁰ Merchant of Barbados – various papers at National Archives (see <https://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/details/r/C10494153>) but nothing relating to Sir George Downing, 2nd Bt

⁸¹ Likely to be Paul Carrington, born c1665 St Philip, Barbados. Died 17 Nov 1716 at sea. (Son of Dr Paul Carrington and Sarah Houghton, Husband of Margaret Thompson, Thomazine Carrington and Henningham Codrington. Father of Ann (mayo), William, Sarah, John, Robert and 9 others. Brother of Nathaniel, Ann and Alice. ‘Large shipping merchant; sugar plantations in St Philip’ (<https://www.geni.com/people/Paul-Carrington-Jr/349244998760012660>). See also <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/estate/view/697>.

More detailed information is available on each voyage via the database by clicking on individual vessel names. Each voyage appears to have reached its destination.⁸²

In the light of this new information, research then focused on trying to ascertain whether or not this George Downing connected with various merchants in Barbados was the 2nd Baronet. At this stage, the existence of Downings in Barbados in the late 17th and early 18th century was unknown, but research via Ancestry quickly showed that there were several families of that name living on the island during this period, including a 'George Downing', buried in February 1700:

The screenshot shows the Ancestry.co.uk search interface. The search filters are set to 'downing' with a radio button selected for 'Exact' matching. The search results are displayed in a table with 11 entries. The table columns are: View Record, Name, Event Type, Event Date, Event City, and Relatives. The results include burials for Mary Downing (1670), John Downing (1684), Jno Downing (1692), Thomas Downing (1693), John Downing (1788), Thomas Downing (1700), George Downing (1700), Urselaw Downing (1668), Wm Downing (1668), Thomas Downing (1654), and Edward Downing (1665). The entry for George Downing (1700) lists relatives as William and Mary.

View Record	Name	Event Type	Event Date	Event City	Relatives
View Record	Mary Downing	Burial	4 Feb 1670	St Michael	
View Record	John Downing	Burial	29 Aug 1684	St Michael	
View Record	Jno Downing	Burial	4 Mar 1692	St Michael	
View Record	Thomas Downing	Burial	27 Sep 1693	St Michael	
View Record	John Downing	Burial	3 Sep 1788	St Michael	
View Record	Thomas Downing	Burial	8 Oct 1700	St Michael	
View Record	George Downing	Burial	1 Feb 1700	St Michael	
View Record	Urcelaw Downing	Marriage	21 Mar 1668	St Michael	Thomas
View Record	Wm Downing	Marriage	26 Apr 1668	St Michael	John
View Record	Thomas Downing	Marriage	9 Sep 1654	Christ Church	Grace
View Record	Edward Downing	Baptism	15 May 1665	Christ Church	William, Mary

As two of the four voyages departed apparently after this man's death, it initially looked doubtful that the Barbados George Downing could be the investor in the slave voyages. However, the realisation that, in 1700, the New Year began on 25 March - so May and December 1700 in the old calendar effectively came before February 1700 – meant that the Barbados George Downing was very much alive when all four voyages sailed. His death shortly afterwards may also explain the lack of further investment after this date. The various lockdowns and closures of archive services in the UK and Barbados significantly delayed the progress and conclusion of research, but the various records which eventually came to light, outlined below, all supported the fact that the investor in the Barbados voyages was, in fact, almost certainly the George Downing living on the island at that time

⁸² <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=pst.000009721524&view=1up&seq=99&q1=mary>

Donnan, *Documents Illustrative of the Slave Trade to America*, v2, p31-2, lists the 10% duties for ships (bound to the coast of Africa from Barbados) during this period paid to the Customs House. p29 lists numbers transported for two of these ships.

and not the 2nd Baronet, who was at that time, by the admission of his own son, 'not of sound judgement'.

Sources in support of George Downing of Barbados investing in the four slave voyages:

- 1) All other identified investors of the four voyages were based in Barbados rather than England (see footnotes above).
- 2) A surviving letter from George Downing of Barbados, 17 May 1700, to Samuel Finney re the recovery of debts from the estate of Joseph Higinbotham (Cheshire Archives, DFF/4/13) shows that he was still alive at this point (when the third voyage sailed) and that his death, in February 1700, did come after this point according to the March 25th start of the new year.
- 3) The will of George Downing of Barbados, entered 13 February 1700 (ie 1701)⁸³, lists his sisters as Margaret, Mary and Elizabeth Downing ('in the kingdom of England') and his brothers as John and James Downing. These siblings do not correlate with any known branch of the family as descended from Emmanuel Downing, the 1st Baronet's father (*Annex 1*). (It has not been possible to conclusively identify this separate family via Ancestry searches.) His will includes bequests of more than £345 before the residue of his estate and authorises his executors to "sell & dispose of all my Negro Slaves Goods, Chattells and estate w'tsoever in this Island". It is, therefore, clear that the Barbados George Downing was both wealthy and owned slaves on the island at the time of the four voyages in question.
- 4) The National Archives Duty Journal entries, listed as sources in the slavevoyages.org database (T70/350 and /351 above) and checked by the College Archivist, give the investor's name only as 'George Downing' (various spelling) without any title, where other 'Sirs' are listed as such in the database.
- 5) The National Archives Colonial Office Shipping Returns for Barbados (CO33/13 above) and checked by the College Archivist, list all four ships as Barbados-owned rather than England or other countries (of which there are many).
- 6) The account of Sir George Downing, 2nd Bt, with his brother William between 1700 and 1703 in the College Archive contains no references to any transactions identifiable as relating to these voyages or the other investors.⁸⁴

It is therefore the conclusion of the College Archivist that the four slave voyages listing 'George Downing' amongst their owners are highly likely to have been the investments of the unconnected George Downing of Barbados (d. 1700/01) rather than the 2nd Baronet in England.

Sources

Donnan, Elizabeth, *Documents Illustrative of the Slave Trade to America, vol. 3* (Washington, DC, 1930-35)

<https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=pst.000009721524&view=1up&seq=96>

⁸³ Barbados Archives, RB6/43/215 (transcript available).

⁸⁴ DCAR/1/1/5/1b/3

Smith, S. D., *Slavery, Family and Gentry Capitalism in the British Atlantic: The World of the Lascelles, 1648-1834* (CUP, 2009)

<https://www.cambridge.org/core/books/slavery-family-and-gentry-capitalism-in-the-british-atlantic/7370DEC66724BCD6591540DE9A5A1B71>

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Lascelles Slavery Archive database

Ancestry.com

Caribbeana: <https://www.dloc.com/UF00075409/00003/allvolumes>

Annex 5: The 3rd and 4th Baronet's accounts with C. Hoare & Co

The following transcripts, with references, were provided by the Bank's archivist, 17 Nov. 2021:

Downing, George, Sir, 3rd Bt, 1714 (Customer Ledger/folio no: 17/125)

Debit	Credit
22 Jan 1713/4 To my note 21 Jan £69-5-0	20 Jan 1713/4 By mony rece'd p note £69-5-0
8 June 1714 To my note 2 June £100	2 June 1714 By 3 notes 100 each £300
12 June 1714 To my note 2 June £100	4 June 1714 By note £100
12 June 1714 To my note 2 June £100	
12 June 1714 To my note 2 June £100	

Downing, George, Sir, 3rd Bt, 1720 (Customer Ledger/folio no: 22/246)

Debit	Credit
4 June 1720 To my Note 27 Feb £62	27 Feb 1719/20 By mony rece'd p note £62
6 July 1720 To my Note 3 May £20	3 May 1720 By Note £20

Downing, George, Sir, 3rd Bt, 1724 (Customer Ledger/folio no: 26/26)

Debit	Credit
20 April 1724 To note 25 March £10	25 March 1724 By notes 25+25+10 £60
23 April 1724 To note d'o £25	6 June 1724 By note £20
12 June 1724 To note d'o £25	
16 June 1724 To note 6 June £20	

Downing, George, Sir, 3rd Bt, 1748-9 (Customer Ledger/folio no: 48/333)

Debit	Credit
30 Sept 1749 To note April 9 1748 £106-2-6	9 April 1748 By note £106-2-6

Downing, Jacob Garrard, Mr (Customer Ledger/folio no: 36/184)

Debit	Credit
24 Jan 1735/6 To note 13 Jan £31-10-0	13 Jan 1735/6 By notes 50 + 30 g's £84
5 Feb 1735/6 To note d'o £52-10-0	

Downing, Jacob Garrard, Sir; Legard, Digby, Sir, 5th Bt
(Customer Ledger/folio no: 65/221)

Credit

7 May 1762 By John Bagnall Esq for 2 l'rs of Att'y 8s

7 May 1762 By £2,500 3% Red'd Bank Ann'ys at 70 p' C't & 1/8 Brok'e ded'd £1,746-17-6

7 May 1762 By 801-16-6 D'o at 69 1/2 p' C't & d'o £556-5-5

7 May 1762 By 8,300 D'o at 69 3/8 & D'o at £5,747-15-0

[Total] £8,050-17-11

Debit

23 March 1762 To L're of Att'y to sell & receive Div'ds on £11,601-16-6 Reduced Bank Anny's 4s

23 March 1762 To D'o for D'o on Long Ann'ys 4s

3 May 1762 To £100 p' ann New transferable Long Ann's @ 21 3/4 Year's purchase £2,175

6 May 1762 To £269-14 p C't Long Ann's at 21 3/4 year's purchase £5,865-19-6

6 May 1762 to 1/8 p' C't Bro'k on 8040-19-6 D'o £9-18-5

[Total] £8,050-17-11

(No entries for Legard in the UCL Database)