National biographies and transnational lives: Tracing connections between slavery and settler colonialism

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The Legacies of British Slave-ownership (LBS) project has helped establish—with unprecedented precision and depth—the ways in which colonial slavery shaped modern Britain.[1] In its original iteration, the project drew on British government records to produce a comprehensive database of the compensation paid to individual slave-owners under the *Slavery Abolition Act 1833*.[2] That database provided biographical sketches of several thousand of the individuals who—successfully or unsuccessfully—claimed government compensation, as well as listing details of the c. 47,000 compensation awards themselves.[3] Drawing on the LBS database, more recent research (including the contributions to this volume) shows that the influence and legacies of chattel slavery reverberated through Australasia's colonies of settlement, just as they affected metropolitan Britain and, of course, Africa and the Americas.[4]

Such explorations of the connections between slavery and settler colonialism are in their infancy and, to date, have favoured biographical approaches, guided not least by the structure of the LBS database. In this article, we seek to explore 'collective biography' as a means of situating lives within a cohort larger than the family but smaller than the entire LBS database, and thus to apprehend the typicality of individual lives. We also consider the opportunities and limitations of existing resources for identifying individuals connected to both settler colonialism and the business of chattel slavery, including particularly the LBS database and dictionaries of biography.

1 Now housed within University College London's (UCL) Centre for the Study of the Legacies of British Slavery (hereafter LBS), accessed 29 September 2021, www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs.

2 *An Act for the Abolition of Slavery throughout the British Colonies 1833* (3 and 4 Wm IV cap. 73) (hereafter *Slavery Abolition Act 1833*).

3 Catherine Hall, Nicholas Draper, Keith McClelland, Katie Donington and Rachel Lang, *Legacies of British Slave-ownership: Colonial Slavery and the Formation of Victorian Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 3, doi.org/10.1017/cbo9781139626958.

4 See, for example, the articles collected in 'Feature: Legacies of Slave Ownership', *History Workshop Journal* 90 (Autumn 2020): 165–252, doi.org/10.1093/hwj/dbaa017, doi.org/10.1093/hwj/dbaa021, doi.org/10.1093/hwj/dbaa015, doi.org/10.1093/hwj/dbaa018.

The LBS database, a form of prosopography that captures lives according to a singular set of outward common features, is especially helpful in recovering the interconnectedness and mobility that were crucial to the overarching structures of Atlantic slavery and settler colonialism. Crucially, its magnitude enables us to see patterns within large populations, such as the movement of slave-owners throughout the empire, and even internal dynamics, such as the structures binding slave-owners to agents.[5] But while prosopography reveals a sense of scale that traditional biography lacks, biography—in the context of a reflexive discussion of the archive—can pinpoint how and why *some* aspects of *some* lives have featured in our historiographies and others only marginally. Moreover, biography's 'illustrative capacity' reminds us of the contingency of lives in their own times.[6] Notably, however, research in the Australian context has focused on a small number of settlers—typically individuals who were more likely than not to be prominent and successful, and who possessed strong, lucrative or proximate links to slavery.[7] Even so, these links were often obscured by the individuals in question, by their descendants and in the historical record.

We wish to cast our net wider, and to gather evidence about less prominent or less successful settler colonisers, about family connections to the slave business that spread over several generations as well as long distances, and about more glancing associations with slavery or indeed with the colonies of settlement. Collective biography, focused on the cohort that linked Atlantic slavery to the Australasian colonies, has the potential to reveal the immediate social worlds sustaining those who moved between the two. Such collective or group biographies of individuals 'held together for a historic moment by a common endeavour, place or ideal', in Barbara Caine's words, could include studies of settlers by colony, extended family, industry or profession, in the manner of those recently commenced.[8] Collective

5 Malcolm Allbrook and Melanie Nolan, 'Australian Historians and Biography', *Australian Journal of Biography and History* 1 (2018): 17–19, doi.org/10.22459/AJBH.2018; Rajae Ankoud, 'An Approach to Studying Elites and Social Groups', *AlMuntaqa* 3, no. 1 (2020): 70–85, doi.org/10.31430/almuntaqa.3.1.0070.

6 Barbara Caine, *Biography and History* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 2, doi.org/10.26777/978-1-137-61117-8.

7 C. J. Coventry took an alternative approach by considering collectively those individuals linked to the colonies of Victoria and South Australia: 'Links in the Chain: British Slavery, Victoria and South Australia', *Before/Now* 1, no. 1 (2019): 27–46, doi.org/10.35843/beforenow.173286.

8 Caine, *Biography and History*, 99. Recently published and ongoing studies using collective biography to trace links between British slavery and the Australian colonies include Ann Curthoys, 'From Montserrat to Settler-Colonial Australia: The Intersecting Histories of Caribbean Slave-Owning Families, Transported British Radicals, and Indigenous Peoples', *History Workshop Journal* 90 (September 2020): 11–32, doi.org/10.1093/hwj/dbaa015; Emma Christopher, 'An Illegitimate Offspring: South Sea Islanders, Queensland Sugar, and the Heirs of the British Atlantic Slave Complex', *History Workshop Journal* 90 (September 2020): 233–52, doi.org/10.1093/hwj/dbaa018; Emma Christopher, 'Far More than Money: British West Indian Slavery, Emancipation, and Australia's Sugar Industry', *Australian Historical Studies* 52, no. 4 (2021): 491–508, doi.org/10.1080/1031461X.2020.1861036; and the Western Australian Legacies of British Slavery project, hosted by the University of Western Australia, of which the authors are part, australian-legacies-slavery.org. For an example of a recent collective biography recovering marginalised experience, see Erica L. Ball, Tatiana Seijas and Terri L. Synder, eds, *As if She Were Free: A Collective Biography of Women and Emancipation in the Americas* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), doi.org/10.1017/9781108623957.

biographies have been especially useful in recovering repressed histories, including those that explicate the experiences of marginalised people as well as those that restore *aspects of lives*, such as slave-ownership or settler violence, that were actively hidden, whether to protect reputations or for legal reasons. Here, researchers look for the actions, responses, thinking and strategies that sustained the cohort. The relationship between British slave-ownership and settler colonialism can to some extent be revealed by biographical studies of individuals who moved between the two because they allow us to witness history at this granular level of ideology and action, a level often obscured by prosopography and database biographies.[9] The downside of collective biography is that its edges are porous, such that it can be difficult to know who to include and who not to include. But in tolerating a degree of imprecision or malleability in the scope of a collective biography, we gain insight into the ideas circulating within and upholding the group, as well as the broader structures governing it.

Collective biography has the potential to provide a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of how settler colonialism drew on the ideological and material legacies of slavery, but requires long-term and painstaking research. We begin that work here, with a frank assessment of well-known historical sources on which the LBS database draws. Through its use of historical records that extend well beyond the official records of compensation awards, the LBS database helps in the construction of cohort analysis, but it also risks replicating the deficiencies, as well as the strengths, of its source material. The LBS database cites the work of numerous family historians, for example, and complicated, transnational and multi-generational genealogical trees are often suggestive of a family's connections with the slave business, especially if they include the certified location of births, marriages and deaths. Moreover, genealogists aspire to a comprehensive knowledge of a family lineage, even while often prioritising well-known individuals. That said, many families are never mapped, while the sheer volume of genealogical research and the variable qualifications and aims of its practitioners mean accuracy is not guaranteed.[10] Dictionaries of national biography are also well-cited within the LBS database. Understanding not only how these dictionaries select subjects, but also analysing how the history of slavery within entries has been framed and sometimes suppressed, is therefore critical to our project. Here, we consider selective dictionaries of national biography—the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (*ODNB*), the *Australian Dictionary of Biography* (*ADB*) and the *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography* (*DNZB*)—as well as the *Dictionary of Western Australians* (*DWA*), which sought to provide a comprehensive coverage of a settler colonial population. We explore the utility of using these resources in concert with one another in order to identify and evaluate connections between Australasian settler colonialism and British chattel slavery.

9 Caine, *Biography and History*, 3–4.

10 Inaccuracies, especially in the age of the internet, are also often quickly and widely replicated.

The LBS database

The Legacies of British Slave-ownership (LBS) database, the inspiration for much of our current research, has been especially useful because its architecture makes it possible to trace not just individual claims—successful, unsuccessful and contested—but also, in many cases, those individuals' family and business connections. Biographical information, drawn from a wide range of resources, therefore complements the official record. As the remit of the LBS project has expanded, its chronological coverage has also extended back from the moment of emancipation. It now incorporates, for example, details of over 12,000 estates in the British Caribbean.[11]

The original LBS database digitised the government records of claims made and money disbursed under the 1833 legislation that abolished slavery in the British Caribbean, Mauritius and the Cape Colony. It included every individual who was compensated because they 'owned' enslaved people on 1 August 1834, when the legislation came into effect, and every individual whose claim was unsuccessful. It detailed agents who lodged claims, and the claims that were contested by mortgagees, heirs and trustees. In its second phase, the database incorporated all identified estates in the British Caribbean between 1763 and 1833, and all 'slave-owners, attorneys, mortgagees and legatees' associated with them in that period.[12] The significance of the database is enhanced by the information that continues to be added to the official records; this includes the addition of biographical details and the creation of links between individuals connected professionally or personally. Such information comes from other contemporary records, including wills and probate records, censuses and newspapers, shipping records and the papers of plantations and individuals. The database also draws on published historical works, including dictionaries of biography and genealogical repositories. While the LBS database is primarily the work of a team of researchers based at what is now the Centre for the Study of the Legacies of British Slavery at University College London, many other researchers and volunteers—including hundreds of family and local historians—have contributed to the database since its launch. The LBS team has observed that networks linking slave-owning individuals to institutions, prominent figures, the church and politics tend to make identification easier for historians.[13] Slave-owners who are more loosely connected to the networks of empire are less traceable, and thus less likely to appear in the LBS database, or appear in it with biographical detail.

11 'Database Updates', LBS database (hereafter LBS), accessed 23 September 2021, www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/project/new2020.

12 'The Database', LBS, accessed 20 September 2021, www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/project/details.

13 'Database Updates: An Important Notice', LBS, accessed 23 September 2021, www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/project/dbupdates; 'Database Updates', LBS, accessed 23 September 2021, www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/project/new2020.

This underscores the contingency of our understanding of how Australasia was linked to the British Caribbean, and the likelihood that this knowledge is presently skewed by an over-reliance on the LBS database. Relocating to the Australasian colonies in the early nineteenth century presented some major disadvantages to free Britons, given their faraway location, sparsely populated settlements, and—in some cases—high proportion of convicts. As such, it was least likely to be undertaken by individuals strongly connected to prominent institutions and social networks, who could maintain their wealth whilst remaining in Britain. The exception to this rule was those who came to the southern hemisphere after being appointed to a lucrative or esteemed position, such as governor, religious minister or judge. It may be for this reason that we see a high proportion of high-profile figures in the population identified by the LBS database with links to both Australasia and Caribbean slavery, as we discuss below. Unlike other former slave-owning elites who might have contemplated migration, the wealth and status generated by slavery for these appointees was not risked by coming to these colonies; they could expect to be professionally advanced by their stay, and they could entertain a reasonable expectation of returning to Britain or another imperial locale. The elite social networks and high-profile lives of such individuals make identification relatively straightforward today.

For these reasons, we think it likely that there were individuals and families who benefited from modest investments in slavery and migrated to the Australasian colonies but do not appear in the LBS database, a situation compounded by the historical selection criteria of national dictionaries of biography, which we address below. Even modest investments in slavery could generate colonial expansion. Stories such as those of Celia and Andrew Scott, Western District pastoralists in Port Phillip (now Victoria), show that where slavery wealth was just enough to pay off a debt, relocate one's family across the world or obtain a land grant, the Australasian colonies represented an attractive option for former slave-owners who constituted Britain's post-emancipation 'overspill'.[14] Ironically, the scale of these causal relationships between slavery and settler colonialism is therefore harder to see when using the LBS than connections that were not as interdependent.

Dictionaries of biography

As we build understanding of links between the British Caribbean and the Australasian colonies, dictionaries of biography assume a vital importance. In their digital form, they provide details of lives and associations in an easily accessible and authoritative way, allowing researchers to search for large volumes of people and piece together networks. However, just as the LBS database of compensation is

14 Alan Lester and Nikita Vanderbyl, 'The Reconstructing of the British Empire and the Colonization of Australia, 1832–8', *History Workshop Journal* 90 (September 2020): 15–17, doi.org/10.1093/hwj/dbaa017.

not the only means of identifying involvement in Britain's slave business, dictionaries of biography are (of course) not comprehensive guides to populations. Three of the biographical dictionaries we examine in this article are national—each adopting slightly different criteria for inclusion, relating to significance or representativeness, but, necessarily, eschewing comprehensiveness. The fourth, the *Dictionary of Western Australians*, set out to provide a complete list of settler colonisers in Western Australia during the first 85 years of colonisation. As discussed below, the recognition that this 'completeness' excluded the Indigenous peoples of Western Australia and non-white immigrants prompted efforts to redress this situation. The various distinctive features of these four dictionaries of biography underline the genre's capacity to explicate a history of slavery and its travelling legacies.

Dictionaries of national biography as a genre

Since emerging in the late seventeenth century, dictionaries of biography have come to occupy a position of prominence and authority within nations, analogous to the rise of identities based on a shared national past and defined population.[15] In recent decades, the form has been adapted to articulate a more complex sense of the national past by foregrounding populations within the nation that have been historically excluded by dictionaries of biography. Examples from Australia include *Indigenous Australia*, *Women Australia* and *People Australia* (all hosted by the National Centre of Biography),[16] as well as those initiated by local historians, such as *Beyond the Pale*, a database of immigrants to Van Diemen's Land who came from places other than Britain.[17] Notably, the nation or colony continues in most cases to provide a framework for these dictionaries of constituent populations. Yet even as the category of biographical dictionary has expanded in recent decades, national dictionaries of biography have experienced a resurgence, despite or perhaps because of the challenges these dictionaries of constituent populations represent.[18]

As part of this resurgence, dictionaries of national biography the world over have moved away from prominence and towards representativeness and transparency as guiding principles in their organisational, paratextual and textual architecture, albeit some more than others. A defining feature of such dictionaries' operations has long

15 Caine, *Biography and History*, 4; Keith Thomas, *The Changing Conceptions of National Biography: The Oxford DNB in Historical Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 4, doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511497582.

16 'Welcome to the National Centre of Biography', The Australian National University (ANU), accessed 1 October 2021, history.cass.anu.edu.au/centres/ncb. Shino Konishi outlines the *Indigenous Australian Dictionary of Biography* project, noting the considerable extent to which First Nations people have been excluded from the *ADB* in her 'An Indigenous Australian Dictionary of Biography', in *True Biographies of Nations? The Cultural Journeys of Dictionaries of National Biography*, ed. Karen Fox (Canberra: ANU Press, 2019), 139–58, doi.org/10.22459/TBN.2019.

17 'Beyond the Pale—World Immigrants to Van Diemen's Land before 1900', accessed 29 November 2021, vdlworldimmigrants.wordpress.com. See also John S. Levi, *The Forefathers: A Dictionary of Biography of the Jews of Australia 1788–1830* (Sydney: Australian Jewish Historical Society, 1976).

18 Caine, *Biography and History*, 4.

been their collective personnel structures, whereby editorial committees and working parties commission entries and updates, as well as select authors, under the guidance of general editors. But whereas these collectives have tended in the past to be made up of an unpublicised group of prominent citizens and academic historians, today there is an effort to reflect the demographic profile of the nation in these bodies and make this perceptible from the outside. This is done in the expectation that it will lead to a more diverse selection of subjects, authors and biographies, and in turn attract a wider audience.[19] Such results can be seen in *Te Ara—the Encyclopaedia of New Zealand*, which in its evolving online form incorporates not only the online *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography* and a digitised version of the 1966 *Enyclopaedia of New Zealand*, but also an array of new entries, many of which are available in both Māori and English translations and especially prioritise Māori lives.[20] Similarly, the twenty-first-century *ODNB* contains many more entries for women, business and labour leaders, colonised subjects, and Black Britons than its twentieth-century predecessor, the *Dictionary of National Biography* (*DNB*). This increased diversity results partly from a significant expansion of lives covered. At first publication in 2004, the *ODNB* included nearly 50 per cent more lives than the 1996 edition of the *DNB*. Entries continue to be added, so that by mid-2021 the dictionary covered more than 64,000 individuals.[21] Expansion in itself, of course, guarantees neither diversity nor representation. In 2019, the *ODNB* included entries for only 296 subjects of 'African heritage' deemed of 'significance to British history': slightly less than 0.5 per cent of the lives represented in the dictionary overall.[22] While twenty-first-century dictionaries of national biography may seek to represent or even mirror the diversity of a nation's population, it is necessarily the case that lives deemed 'remarkable'—especially when viewed collectively—are seldom representative.[23]

19 Melanie Nolan, '"Insufficiently Engineered": A Dictionary Designed to Stand the Test of Time?' and Jill Roe, 'National Collaboration: The ADB Editorial Board and the Working Parties', in *The* ADB*'s Story*, ed. Melanie Nolan and Christine Fernon (Canberra: ANU E Press, 2013), 5–46, 277–298, doi.org/10.22459/ADBS.10.2013; Karen Fox, 'The Cultural Journeys of Dictionaries of Biography', in *True Biographies of Nations? The Cultural Journeys of Dictionaries of National Biography*, ed. Karen Fox (Canberra: ANU Press, 2019), 1–18, doi.org/10.22459/TBN.2019; 'Frequently Asked Questions', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, accessed 30 September 2021, adb.anu.edu.au/faqs.

20 Jock Phillips, 'Notes: The Online Encyclopedia of New Zealand', *New Zealand Journal of History* 37, no. 1 (2003): 80–89; Andrew Brown-May, 'Review: Te Ara: The Online Encyclopedia of New Zealand Website', *New Zealand Journal of History* 42, no. 2 (2007): 227–29; 'About This Site', *Te-Ara—The Encyclopaedia of New Zealand*, accessed 15 February 2021, teara.govt.nz/en/about-this-site; 'Story: Te Ara—a History', accessed 15 February 2021, teara.govt.nz/en/te-ara-a-history; 'Who is Te Ara', accessed 4 October 2021, teara.govt.nz/en/who-is-te-ara.

21 'ODNB Introduction August 2021', downloaded from 'What's New: August 2021', *ODNB*, accessed 20 August 2021, www.oxforddnb.com/newsitem/602/what-s-new--august-2021. In 1900, the *DNB* included nearly 30,000 lives; by 1996, this had risen to 39,000. The 2004 edition of the *ODNB* encompassed 17,000 new lives in addition to revised versions of all 39,000 *DNB* entries.

22 David Cannadine, 'ODNB Introduction, 2019 December', downloaded from *ODNB*, 12 March 2021. Anders Ingram, 'Black Lives in the *Oxford DNB*', published 10 October 2019, updated 8 October 2020 and last modified 9 September 2021, doi.org/10.1093/odnb/9780198614128.013.369302. Other *ODNB* entries cover subjects of 'African heritage' judged to be significant to the history of the Commonwealth.

23 Steven J. Niven's recent analysis of the *African American National Biography* shows how over-represented certain groups of African Americans are in entries that cover subjects born before the 1865 US abolition of slavery, suggesting limits to what the genre of biographical dictionaries can achieve: 'Enslaved People in the *African American National Biography, 1508–1865*', *Journal of Slavery and Data Preservation* 1, no. 2 (2020), doi.org/10.12921/tw8h-c447.

The concern with representation extends in many dictionaries of national biography to reviewing old entries, as we will see. Editors and editorial collectives now pay careful attention to the way omission and euphemism have skewed our understanding of the past, particularly around enslavement and colonial violence, to produce histories that do not align with 'contemporary values', as the *ADB* puts it.[24] In this century, digitisation has made updates and greater transparency feasible—not least by maintaining links to archived versions of entries—yet efforts to redress historical problems have been hamstrung by the costs involved and the media controversies that can sometimes result.[25]

Dictionaries of biography that serve settler colonial nations are especially conscious of their responsibility to reflect those nations' violent foundational histories and their enduring legacies.[26] However, as we examine the legacies of slavery in those same settler societies, their limitations as repositories of imperial, or transnational, histories of violence become apparent. They are, for example, of limited use for highlighting the movement of influence—or wealth—across the empire. Their entries necessarily focus on selected individual lives, rather than networks or families through which the impact of slave-ownership could extend; those selections reflect individuals' significance to (or representational value for) the nation. Entries are also often constrained in terms of length. At best, and even where relevant evidence exists, they provide limited insights into the intergenerational transmission of wealth, or the ways power and wealth were conveyed through complex family relationships.

Imperial lives and national shame — slavery in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*

During the twentieth century dictionaries of national biography did more to obscure than to reveal historical connections to the business of slavery, whether in Britain or its former colonies of settlement. As a growing body of scholarship on Britain's national biographical dictionaries reveals, this resulted from a combination of how individuals were selected for inclusion; the length and focus of entries; and dictionaries' use of 'strategies of euphemism and evasion originally adopted

24 'Cultural Advice', *Australian Dictionary of Biography* (hereafter *ADB*), accessed 28 September 2021, adb.anu.edu.au.

25 Frank Bongiorno, 'Reframing Australian Portraits', *Meanjin* 78, no. 2 (2019): 88–94, meanjin.com.au/essays/reframing-australian-portraits/; Lawrence Goldman, 'We Have Been Here Before: "Rhodes Must Fall" in Historical Context', in *Dethroning Historical Reputations: Universities, Museums and the Commemoration of Benefactors*, ed. Jill Pellew and Lawrence Goldman (London: University of London Press, 2018), 135, 137, doi.org/10.14296/718.9781909646834; Nicholas Draper, 'British Universities and Caribbean Slavery', in Pellew and Goldman, *Dethroning Historical Reputations*, 93.

26 The *ADB* makes the commitment that '[o]lder articles are being reviewed with a view to bringing them into line with contemporary values but the original text will remain available for historical context'. 'Cultural Advice', *ADB*, accessed 28 September 2021, adb.anu.edu.au.

by the slave-owners themselves'.[27] In 2014, the LBS architects, Catherine Hall, Nicholas Draper and Keith McClelland, observed how the *ODNB* minimised and obscured connections to slavery and especially slave-ownership. Although including entries for:

> hundreds of Britons who themselves owned enslaved people or whose families owned enslaved people; almost none is identified as a slave-owner. The vast bulk of relevant entries continue to reflect (consciously or otherwise) the strategies of the slave-owners of the early nineteenth century, who evaded the very term 'slave-owner'.[28]

Their analysis noted that while terms related to 'slave-owner' returned barely two dozen entries within the *ODNB*, the more euphemistic 'planter' and 'proprietor', when combined with geographical terms relating to the Caribbean colonies, together returned several hundred individuals.[29] Thus, slave-owners and others who profited from slavery were represented in the dictionary, but they were not recognised as such.

The *ODNB* has begun to remedy this situation via the inclusion of new biographies arising from the work of the LBS project, which make more explicit and prominent use of descriptive terms including 'slave-owner'. This led in 2016 to the addition of over 30 new entries including the 'West India merchant, slave owner, and collector', Samuel Boddington;[30] the 'slave owner and politician', Christopher Codrington;[31] and, in a rare reference to a female slave-owner, Cecilia Douglas, 'West India planter, slave owner and art collector'.[32] Most of the slave-owners added in 2016 benefited from compensation for the loss of their enslaved property at the point of emancipation; a handful more featured because their near descendants were compensated.

The *ODNB*'s use of the occupational category 'slave owner' from 2016 onwards is a small acknowledgment that Britain's imperial past benefited particular sections of British society, while being immensely damaging for those enslaved. The 2016 additions, however, marked only the beginning of a process that could be

27 Catherine Hall, Nicholas Draper and Keith McClelland, 'Introduction' in Hall et al., *Legacies of British Slave-ownership*, 1, see also 2, 27–28. See also Fox, *True Biographies*; Bongiorno, 'Reframing Australian Portraits'; Paul Longley Arthur, 'Re-imagining a Nation: The *Australian Dictionary of Biography* Online', *European Journal of Life Writing* 4 (2015): 108–24, doi.org/10.5463/ejlw.4.163; Paul Longley Arthur, 'Digital Biography: Capturing Lives Online', *Auto/Biography Studies* 24, no. 1 (2009): 74–92, doi.org/10.1080/08989575.2009.10846789; Iain McCalman, Jodi Parvey and Misty Cook, eds, *National Biographies and National Identity: A Critical Approach to Theory and Editorial Practice* (Canberra: Humanities Research Centre, ANU, 1996), hdl.handle.net/1885/210328.

28 Hall, Draper and McClelland, 'Introduction', 1–2, 27.

29 Hall, Draper and McClelland, 'Introduction', 27n1.

30 Nicholas Draper, 'Boddington, Samuel (1766–1843)', *ODNB*, last modified 6 October 2016, doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/107427.

31 Nicholas Draper, 'Codrington, Christopher Bethell (1763–1843)', *ODNB*, last modified 6 October 2016, doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/107410.

32 Stephen Mullen, 'Cecilia Douglas (1772–1862)', *ODNB*, last modified 6 October 2016, doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/66964.

considerably more substantial and substantive. For example, searching the *ODNB* in 2021 for entries including the term 'slavery' generated 52 articles, yet 49 of those articles focus on individuals who are notable because of their *opposition* to slavery.[33] Despite the work of the LBS team, and despite the fact that Britain's involvement with Atlantic slavery and the Atlantic slave trade extended over 250 years, while the campaigns against them lasted little more than 50, the *ODNB* explicitly identifies twice as many abolitionists as it does slave-owners. As Christopher N. Warren has remarked, 'the *ODNB* in aggregate speaks with a double voice'.[34] The well-known and insistent self-portrayal of Britain as an 'anti-slavery nation' from the 1830s is extremely difficult to displace.[35]

Dictionaries of national biography convey far more than the individual biographical entries they contain: their structures, search facilities and conventions about terminology, for example, all affect the version of the national past they depict. The *ODNB* has begun the process of foregrounding Britain's involvement in the slavery business, but progress is not guaranteed.

Dictionary of New Zealand Biography

New Zealand shares its emancipation-era British settlement with several of the Australian colonies, and also possesses a tractable and digitised dictionary of national biography—with approximately 3,000 biographies, the *DNZB* is a less than a quarter the size of its Australian counterpart. The comparison of the *DNZB* with the *ADB* serves to identify common constraints on dictionaries of national biography as a source. We searched the *DNZB* for evidence of connection with chattel slavery and compared the results to a search for 'New Zealand' in the LBS database. We then repeated this process for the larger *ADB*, allowing us not only to discern patterns of connection between settler colonialism and the slave business, but also to trace movement and links between the Australasian colonies.

Searching within the full text of the *DNZB* for terms with the roots 'planter' and 'slave' led to a limited pool of individuals with connections to Atlantic slavery. Of 51 distinct results for the terms 'slave', 'slaves' and 'slavery', only four were related to Atlantic slavery. Twenty-eight referenced Māori slavery; two slavery in the

33 Forty-nine of the 52 entries were added before 2016. Search conducted 5 March 2021.

34 Christopher N. Warren, 'Historiography's Two Voices: Data Infrastructure and History at Scale in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography (ODNB)*', *Journal of Cultural Analytics* 3, no. 1 (2018): 3.

35 Catherine Hall, 'The Slavery Business and the Making of "Race" in Britain and the Caribbean', *Current Anthropology* 51, no. S22 (2020), doi.org/10.1086/709845; Richard Huzzey, *Freedom Burning: Anti-Slavery and Empire in Victorian Britain* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2012), doi.org/10.7591/9780801465819. In a similar vein, Hall, Draper and McClelland have written of the *ODNB*'s portrayal of slave-owners as 'vulnerable, the real victims', 'Introduction', 2.

Pacific; while 16 uses were rhetorical.[36] Forty-eight distinct biographies referencing 'plantation' or 'planter' included only two connected with Atlantic slavery.[37] Similarly, in almost every case, searches within the *DNZB* for place names connected to chattel slavery—the names of Caribbean colonies, Mauritius, the 'Indies'—led to incidental connections; only six were related to Atlantic slavery.[38]

Together, the connections to slavery revealed by the *DNZB* produce a fragmented story. One of the entries was for an emancipated slave, David MacNish, who was born in Jamaica in 1812 or 1813 to an enslaved mother and a slave-owning father. Manumitted by his father in 1820, MacNish was educated in Scotland and London, before inheriting 'a substantial fortune' on his father's death in 1827. MacNish emigrated to South Australia in 1838, where he acquired land, and then, in 1840, to New Zealand, where he married a Māori woman, Te Ani, at Whaingaroa.[39] More common are entries for politicians, officials, naval officers and soldiers, who benefited from or were embedded within the business of slavery. These include New Zealand's first governor, William Hobson, whose trajectory within the Royal Navy—and indirect profit from the slave business as a result—looks not dissimilar to that of James Stirling, first governor of Western Australia.[40] Moreover, Hobson's wife, Eliza Elliott, was the daughter of a Scottish West India merchant.[41] Major-General Charles Gold, the most senior military figure in New Zealand from 1846 to 1860, served in British Guiana and the Caribbean between 1830 and 1837, the years immediately surrounding emancipation.[42] In each of these cases, we see how family, marriage, occupation and education embedded an individual in an imperial milieu that was imbued with associations to slavery, pre-dating their arrival in the nascent colony of New Zealand.

36 Full-text searches conducted 10 February 2021, 'Dictionary of New Zealand Biography', *Te Ara: The Encyclopaedia of New Zealand* (hereafter *DNZB*), teara.govt.nz/en/biographies. For 'slave/slaves': 39 results, of which 24 discuss Māori slavery; 2 relate to Pacific slavery; and 11 rhetorical uses. For 'slavery': 18 results, 6 duplicates from 'slave/slaves', of remaining 12: 4 relate to Māori or Moriori slavery; 5 are rhetorical.

37 Full-text searches of *DNZB*, conducted 10 February 2021. Other imperial plantations, including in the Pacific, India, Sri Lanka, Papua New Guinea and Queensland, accounted for 12 results; Māori forms of agricultural production for 6; and other forestry and agriculture, 23. For 'planter', 17 results: 4 in agriculture and forestry; 3 in the Pacific; and 4 Indian or Sri Lankan. For 'plantation', 34 results (including 3 duplicates from planter): 19 forestry related; 6 regarding Māori plantations and agriculture; 2 Queensland sugar; 3 Pacific and 1 Papuan.

38 As the *DNZB* search engine does not recognise phrases (e.g. a search for 'Cape of Good Hope' returns every individual hit for each of 'Cape', 'Good', and 'Hope') its utility is diminished.

39 Jeff Downs, 'MacNish, David', *DNZB*, updated September 2013, accessed 10 February 2021, teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/1m31/macnish-david.

40 Georgina Arnott, 'Slavery, Trade and Settler Colonialism: The Stirling Family and Britain's Empire, c. 1730–1840', this volume.

41 K. A. Simpson, 'Hobson, William', *DNZB*, accessed 11 February 2021, teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/1h29/hobson-william.

42 Michael Fitzgerald, 'Gold, Charles Emilius', *DNZB*, accessed 11 February 2021, teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/1g13/gold-charles-emilius.

The *DNZB* also reveals connections to the slave business at a remove of one generation. The father of Otago politician and landholder Mackay (Scobie) Mackenzie, for example, made his fortune in British Guiana, although most of it was lost before emancipation.[43] Samuel Martin, a well-known early newspaper editor and land speculator in New Zealand, had a link to British Guiana that appears as a footnote in his *DNZB* entry. Having left New Zealand in 1844, Martin was appointed as a magistrate in British Guiana, but died within three months of arrival in 1848. Martin presumably chose to move to British Guiana as his brother, Nicol, was a well-established doctor and politician in the colony. As the LBS database reveals (but not the *DNZB*), Nicol Martin had received nearly £300 compensation for his emancipated slaves in the 1830s.[44]

As this sketch suggests, the *DNZB* details a small number of interesting connections to pre-emancipation chattel slavery—in the order of a dozen individuals. The LBS database, however, suggests a larger pool of those who claimed compensation after emancipation were connected to New Zealand, some of whom were influential. The LBS database yields 132 records mentioning New Zealand, relating to 46 distinct individuals.[45] Some are incidental—a portrait of one man hangs in the Christchurch Art Gallery[46]—but 35, representing 28 distinct families, are more substantial.

Three of those noted in the LBS database as having New Zealand connections also have entries in the *DNZB*: Mary Anne Barker (née Stewart), Alfred Domett and Churchill Julius. Barker's colonial careering, especially alongside her spouse Frederick Broome, is well-known; the *DNZB* notes she was born in Jamaica.[47] Alfred Domett was an early New Zealand settler, commissioner of Crown lands, politician and, finally, premier during the Taranaki War. His *DNZB* entry mentions an 1830s' visit to the West Indies, and also records that his father, Nathaniel, was a ship owner.

43 Scobie Mackenzie (1845–1901) arrived in Otago in 1870, having spent nearly a decade in Victoria and New South Wales. In Otago he began as a station manager, but soon became a sizeable leaseholder himself before moving into politics. Tom Brooking, 'Mackenzie, Mackay John Scobie', *DNZB*, accessed 11 February 2021, teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/2m18/mackenzie-mackay-john-scobie. His father was Roderick Mackenzie and is likely the Roderick M'Kenzie (rendered in the LBS database as McKenzie) awarded £601 for two British Guiana claims. 'Roderick McKenzie', LBS, accessed 30 September 2021, www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/person/view/8531.

44 K. A. Simpson, 'Martin, Samuel McDonald', *DNZB*, updated May 2020, accessed 21 March 2021, teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/1m20/martin-samuel-mcdonald; 'Nicol Martin', LBS, accessed 21 March 2021, wwwdepts-live.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/person/view/8169. Four other Martin brothers had also migrated to the West Indies: David Alston, 'Slaves and Highlanders', accessed 4 December 2021, www.spanglefish.com/slavesandhighlanders/index.asp?pageid=670536.

45 Searching the 'Notes' field in the LBS database for 'New Zealand' generates links to 45 individuals; searching the 'Address' field yields one additional individual. Search conducted 29 November 2021.

46 'Thomas Budgen MP', LBS, accessed 4 October 2021, www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/person/view/2146662513.

47 Cherry Hankin, 'Barker, Mary Anne', *DNZB*, updated January 2012, accessed 21 March 2021, teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/1b5/barker-mary-anne; 'Mary Anne Broome (née Stewart)', LBS, accessed 21 March 2021, www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/person/view/2146630331. See also, Alexandra Hasluck, 'Lady Broome', *Historical Studies, Australia and New Zealand* 7 no. 27 (1956): 291–302, doi.org/10.1080/10314615608595068; Ann Curthoys and Jeremy Martens, 'Serious Collisions: Settlers, Indigenous People, and Imperial Policy in Western Australia and Natal', *Journal of Australian Colonial History* 15 (January 2013): 121–44, hdl.handle.net/1885/22613.

But the LBS also makes explicit the link between the Domett connection to the Caribbean and the family's involvement in slavery; it reveals Nathaniel Domett's unsuccessful compensation claims for slaves in Jamaica and Nevis, where several estate owners were indebted to him. Alfred Domett's Caribbean visit at the time of emancipation was quite likely connected to his father's liabilities.[48] Churchill Julius, Anglican bishop of Christchurch from 1890 to 1925, benefited from slavery at a greater remove. His *DNZB* entry mentions his father, Frederic, a Surrey-based surgeon, but goes back no further.[49] In fact, Frederic's respectability derived from wealth inherited from his great-grandfather who was a significant St Kitts slave-owner. By the time of Churchill's birth in 1847, the passage of generations had whitewashed this tainted inheritance, but not reduced its importance for the family's fortunes. Other evidence from the LBS database confirms that the *DNZB* is limited to a distance of one generation when documenting slave wealth.[50]

The LBS database reveals evidence, too, of individuals who invested wealth they had derived from the slave business in New Zealand, but who are not recognised in the *DNZB* for various reasons. Some merchant houses, for example, reoriented their business from the Caribbean to the Antipodes. The most significant example so far identified is the Bristol-based mercantile company Miles, Kington and Co. After emancipation, the firm shifted its focus from the West Indies to Australia and New Zealand. Senior partners Philip John Miles and his nephew, Thomas Kington, derived tens of thousands of pounds from compensation claims, but it was members of the next generation who moved to the colonies of Victoria and New Zealand.[51] Kington's son, Philip Oliphant Kington, went to Melbourne in 1855, where, apart from establishing a branch of the family mercantile firm, he was elected to the Melbourne Chamber of Commerce and the committee of the Melbourne Cricket Club.[52] In 1857, another branch of the firm was established in Lyttelton, New Zealand, where it 'played an important role in developing New Zealand's colonial trade', by 1863–64 responsible for exporting more than 60 per cent of the Canterbury

48 'Nathaniel Domett', LBS, accessed 21 March 2021, www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/person/view/2146630697.

49 Colin Brown, 'Julius, Churchill', *DNZB*, accessed 21 March 2021, teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/2j8/julius-churchill; 'William Julius', LBS, accessed 21 March 2021, www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/person/view/2146647659.

50 For example, James Alexander Bonar (1840–1901), who is recorded in the *DNZB* as politician, merchant, shipping agent and company director: Francis Minehan, 'Bonar, James Alexander', *DNZB*, accessed 1 October 2021, teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/2b32/bonar-james-alexander. The £3,563 compensation for 211 enslaved people paid to his grandmother, Maria Robertson, just before Bonar's birth, is too removed to be mentioned in his *DNZB* entry. Bonar moved to Australia in 1854 with his parents, Sophia (née Robertson, died 1858) and Archibald, and then to New Zealand with his father in 1863. 'Maria Robertson (née Innes)', LBS, accessed 1 October 2021, www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/person/view/19094.

51 Miles was associated with claims totalling £62,649; Kington with claims totalling £36,280. 'Philip John Miles', LBS, accessed 21 March 2021, www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/person/view/19118; 'Thomas Kington the younger', LBS, accessed 21 March 2021, www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/person/view/44502; Kenneth O. Morgan, 'Miles, Philip John (1774–1845), Banker, Slave Owner, and Politician', *ODNB*, accessed 21 March 2021, doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/107409.

52 'Melbourne Chamber of Commerce', *Courier* (Hobart), 31 May 1855, 2; 'Victoria', *Launceston Examiner*, 3 November 1855, 5.

wool clip and occupying a handsome building in central Christchurch.[53] The *DNZB* is not well placed to capture such connections, even though they were substantial, because the main players remained personally removed from New Zealand.

Other individuals significant to New Zealand's colonisation are recognised in the LBS database as recipients of substantial compensation, but not accorded an entry in the *DNZB*. Sir Samuel Osborne Gibbes (1803–1874), for example, was compensated more than £6,500 for nearly 300 enslaved people in Barbados and St Vincent. Gibbes lived in Barbados for the 12 years prior to emancipation, but then returned to Britain, sold his Caribbean plantations, and emigrated to Australia in 1850, before moving to New Zealand in 1855. In New Zealand, Gibbes served as Master of the first Masonic Lodge in Auckland, and spent eight years in the Legislative Council. He named his Whangarei estate 'Springhead' after his former Barbados plantation.[54]

A similar story of early New Zealand colonists, who acquired significant landed estates and entered colonial politics—all backed by money inherited from their slave-owning father—could be told of the brothers Robert Stokes junior (1809–1880) and John Milbourne Stokes (d. 1880).[55] The brothers' wealth derived from Jamaica, where their father, Robert Stokes senior, was a plantation owner and chief clerk in the Jamaican Post Office. When Stokes senior died in 1819, the brothers inherited his estate Abbey Court Pen. They dissolved the estate, moving to Britain where Robert junior trained as an architect and John Milbourne as a doctor. Robert was appointed to the New Zealand Company's survey staff in 1839, and arrived at Port Nicholson in January 1840, carrying out surveys in the Wellington–Hutt Valley district. He resigned from the company in 1842 to go into private business.[56] He was a publisher of books and newspapers, and a Justice of the Peace. He served on the Provincial Council (1857–67), and the New Zealand Legislative Council from 1862 to 1879; and was also a member of the University of New Zealand's Senate between 1871 and 1878.[57] John Milbourne Stokes arrived in New Zealand as a surgeon on the *Aurora* in 1840. With Robert he took up land in the Hawke's Bay district of New Zealand—the Milbourne and Manganuka estates—which extended over nearly 30,000 acres. Both brothers were predeceased by their wives and returned to Britain, dying within a few months of one another in 1880. Robert

53 See also M. Mosley, *Illustrated Guide to Christchurch and Neighbourhood* (Christchurch: J. T. Smith & Co., 1885), 161–62; 'Messrs Miles & Co., Hereford Street, Christchurch', Christchurch City Council Libraries, accessed 1 October 2021, christchurchcitylibraries.com/heritage/photos/disc12/img0065.asp.

54 'Sir Samuel Osborne Gibbes 2nd Bart.', LBS, accessed 21 March 2021, www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/person/view/6802.

55 'Robert Stokes junior', LBS, accessed 21 March 2021, www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/person/view/2146650521; 'John Milbourne Stokes', LBS, accessed 21 March 2021, www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/person/view/2146650523.

56 'Stokes, Robert' from *An Encyclopaedia of New Zealand*, ed. A. H. McLintock (1966), accessed 6 September 2021, *Te Ara—the Encyclopaedia of New Zealand*, teara.govt.nz/en/1966/stokes-robert.

57 'Attorney General's Office', *Wellington Independent*, 13 August 1861, 7; *Evening Post* (Wellington), 18 February 1871, 2.

described John in his will as a 'sheep-farmer, late of New Zealand'.[58] Again, neither has a *DNZB* entry, though Robert Stokes was included in A. H. McLintock's 1966 *Encyclopaedia of New Zealand*—which has been digitised as part of the *Te Ara* project, but not updated. The 1966 entry omits any reference to slavery or the Caribbean, recording instead that 'very little is known of Robert Stokes' antecedents and early life'.[59]

The disparities between the *DNZB* and the LBS database indicate some of the limitations of dictionaries of national biography in revealing connections between the slave business and the foundation and formation of Australasia's settler colonies. As well as the questions of terminology that affect both the *DNZB* and the *ODNB*, they struggle to capture either the intergenerational or the trans-imperial transmission of wealth. They are also, necessarily, selective.

The business of slavery and Australia: Tracing connections to slavery through the *ADB* and the LBS

Comprised of approximately 13,000 individual biographies, the *Australian Dictionary of Biography* is, as noted, more than four times as large as the *DNZB*. Similarly, a search for 'Australia' (encompassing all the nineteenth-century Australian colonies) in the LBS database returns just over four times as many individuals as one for 'New Zealand'. The *ADB*'s approach to the business of slavery mirrors that of the *DNZB* and the *ODNB*: of 78 entries returned by the search for 'slave' and 'slavery' almost half are for abolitionists and those otherwise involved in the suppression of slavery. As in the *DNZB*, about half of the remainder are rhetorical or incidental references to slavery. Only two entries are for emancipated Africans; one is for an African slave trader, and one is for an importer of Pacific Islanders.[60] Just one individual in the *ADB* is described as owning a slave: Governor Lachlan Macquarie, whose 'faithful Indian manservant' George Jarvis was 'formerly his slave boy'.[61]

58 Tombstone for Margaret Stokes (wife of Robert Stokes, of Wellington, who died 1 August 1852) and Susannah Stokes ('wife of John Milbourne Stokes, who died April 25th 1871'), 'Details for STOKES Margaret', Friends of Bolton Street Cemetery, accessed 6 September 2021, boltoncemetery.org.nz/burial-list/detail/7207/. 'Our London Letter', *Evening Star* (Wellington), 6 March 1890, 3; 'News Items', *Poverty Bay Herald*, 5 February 1903, 4.

59 'Stokes, Robert' from *An Encyclopaedia of New Zealand*, ed. A. H. McLintock (1966), accessed 6 September 2021, *Te Ara—the Encyclopaedia of New Zealand*, teara.govt.nz/en/1966/stokes-robert.

60 Full-text search conducted 26 March 2021, *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, adb.anu.edu.au. For 'slave/slavery': 78 results, 38 of which relate to people opposed to slavery; 19 are rhetorical; 6 relate to administrators of slave colonies; 5 refer to 'slave-like' conditions in the twentieth century; 2 refer to 'slave-like' conditions in the nineteenth century; 2 relate to emancipated slaves; 1 relates to an African slave-trader; 1 relates to an importer of Pacific labour; 1 relates to emancipation-induced financial misfortune; 1 relates to support for slave-owners; 1 relates to the descendant of an enslaved person, and 1 relates to a slave-owner.

61 N. D. McLachlan, 'Macquarie, Lachlan (1762–1824)', *ADB*, accessed 29 September 2021, adb.anu.edu.au/biography/macquarie-lachlan-2419.

The *ADB* uses parenthetical commas when describing Jarvis's enslavement: this is demonstrative of how even the small number of its entries that do acknowledge slave-ownership or a West Indian past diminish these aspects of a life by referring to them only fleetingly. This supports the qualitative analysis previously carried out on *ADB* entries for individuals, such as Western Australian chief justice Archibald Burt, known to have connections to the slave business.[62]

A significant portion of the individuals who are listed in the LBS database as associated with Australia do, like Burt, have *ADB* entries because of their prominence. Around 60 of the nearly 190 individuals produced by a search for 'Australia' in the LBS database, or one-third of this cohort, have an *ADB* entry.[63] Overwhelmingly, these entries do not use the words 'slave' or 'slavery', and only rarely use the word 'planter', and thus are only identifiable as a group because of the LBS project. The *ADB* entry for the Supreme Court judge and owner of Como House (today a property of the National Trust) Sir Edward Eyre Williams (1813–1880) shows that even when the term 'planter' is used, entries can obscure the significance of slave-ownership to a life, including that portion of it spent helping to establish the Australian colonies. The LBS database reveals that Williams was awarded compensation for 26 enslaved people in Trinidad, while his father Burton Williams received compensation for 80 enslaved people in the Bahamas. Moreover, it shows that Burton Williams had established sugar plantations in Trinidad for himself and his four sons in the early 1820s and that in 1821 the family together held 450 enslaved people in the Bahamas.[64] These figures suggest a withdrawal from Caribbean slavery in the 1820s, something which may have contributed to Edward Eyre Williams's decision to try his luck in Port Phillip in 1841. The single acknowledgement of slavery in Williams's *ADB* entry is contained parenthetically in a context that emphasises his links to England: 'born in England, sixth son of Burton Williams, a planter of Trinidad, West Indies, and his wife Jane, née Hartley. He was educated in England …'.[65] While the reference to his 'planter' father gives the reader at least some notion of Williams's connection to slavery, the remaining portion of the entry asserts that it was of no consequence by failing to return to the point.

62 Georgina Arnott and Bain Attwood, 'Looking the Other Way: Henrietta Drake Brockman's *Younger Sons* and Denial in Australian History', *History Australia* 17, no. 1 (2020), doi.org/10.1080/14490854.2020.1717349: 134–51; Clinton Fernandes, *Island off the Coast of Asia* (Melbourne: Monash University Publishing, 2018), 13–15; Nicholas Draper and Rachel Lang, 'Appendix 1: Making History in a Prosopography', in Hall et al., *Legacies of British Slave-ownership*, 267–68.

63 Searching the 'notes' and 'address' fields in the LBS database for 'Australia' generates links to 186 individuals; using the names of the Australian colonies and major cities adds another two people to the list. Search conducted 26 September 2021.

64 'Edward Eyre Williams' and 'Burton Williams', LBS, accessed 2 October 2021, www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/person/view/44601, www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/person/view/1483.

65 Robert Miller, 'Williams, Sir Edward Eyre (1813–1880)', *ADB*, accessed 2 October 2021, adb.anu.edu.au/biography/williams-sir-edward-eyre-4855.

Across the *ADB*, entries for individuals identified within the LBS database accentuate ties between the Australian colonies and the United Kingdom, and relegate to the margins aspects of a life that were geographically situated in Britain's slave colonies. The acknowledgement that an individual's birthplace was in the West Indies, for example, is often the sole allusion within an *ADB* entry to a strong family connection to slavery. Significant periods of time spent in the Caribbean are overlooked in favour of ancestral links to the British Isles. The effects of this are exacerbated by the way entries in dictionaries of biography are gendered: locations linked to male family members are more likely to be explicitly mentioned than those linked to women.[66] The *ADB* entry for stockbroker and journalist Robert Elias Wallen (1831–1893) encapsulates all these features. The *ADB* gives Wallen's birthplace as Trinidad, before documenting his attendance at Foyle College in Ireland and employment, from 1848, by 'a firm of American merchants in Liverpool, England'. His father, Francis Robertson Wallen, is described as 'of Donegal, Ireland'; his mother simply as 'Catherine, née Hobson'. Francis Wallen emigrated to the colony of Victoria in 1852, as did Robert and at least one of his brothers; in Melbourne they established the mercantile firm F. R. Wallen and Sons. The *ADB* lists the Wallens' cultural heritage as 'Irish'.[67] This serves to disguise the fact that Francis Wallen was awarded compensation for enslaved people in Trinidad, while his father-in-law, Charles Gibbons Hobson, was a resident slave-owner in Dominica who received just under £2,000 compensation.[68] Such reconfigurations of a life's compass are also discernible in entries for prominent Anglican minister Robert Allwood (1803–1891); businessman and Melbourne mayor Godfrey Downes Carter (1830–1902); and successful shipping and insurance agent Charles Edward Bright (1829–1915), among dozens more.[69] This can produce what are at face value somewhat inexplicable life stories that a contemporary reader without knowledge of Britain's slavery empire might struggle to comprehend: literally, the shift from agriculture to a judicial life, halfway across the globe, is bewildering. But of course entries for men such as Williams, written in 1976, carried the assumptions of their time, place and author, at least two of which were that slavery was an unremarkable part of Britain's empire and that it did not produce discernible legacies across that empire.

66 Recent revisions to the *ODNB* that insert such information about a (male) subject's female relations underline how partial many other entries remain. Compare, for example, Geoffrey Bolton, 'Musgrave, Sir Anthony', *ODNB*, last updated 11 March 2021, doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/19658, with the 23 September 2004 version of the same article: doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/19658.

67 A. R. Hall, 'Wallen, Robert Elias (1831–1893)', *ADB*, accessed 30 September 2021, adb.anu.edu.au/biography/wallen-robert-elias-4793.

68 'Francis Robertson Wallen', LBS, accessed 30 September 2021, www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/person/view/29483; 'Charles Gibbons Hobson', LBS, accessed 30 September 2021, www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/person/view/10024.

69 K. J. Cable, 'Allwood, Robert (1803–1891)'; Henry Rosenbloom, 'Carter, Godfrey Downes (1830–1902)'; J. Ann Hone, 'Bright, Charles Edward (1829–1915)', *ADB*, accessed 2 October 2021, adb.anu.edu.au/biography/allwood-robert-1701, adb.anu.edu.au/biography/carter-godfrey-downes-3174, adb.anu.edu.au/biography/bright-charles-edward-149.

Connections between individuals in the *ADB* and the business of slavery are obscured too by the prominence given by dictionary entries to profession and position over sources of wealth. Henry Barkly, for example, appears in the *ADB* as governor of Victoria. In this entry his father, Aeneas, is described as of Ross-shire in Scotland and 'sometime a West Indian merchant', while Barkly's official service as governor of British Guiana and Jamaica is duly recorded.[70] What is missing, however, is any sense of the scale and value of the Barklys' Caribbean wealth. Henry's mother was the daughter of a Jamaican planter, while his father, Aeneas, was party to successful claims for compensation exceeding £125,000 (most with his business partner Henry Davidson). Henry Barkly received more than £6,500 compensation for enslaved people in British Guiana on his own account and inherited his father's estate after the latter's sudden death in 1836. Henry continued to own plantations in British Guiana after emancipation.[71] While Barkly's case is extreme, *ADB* entries for Sir Anthony Musgrave, governor of South Australia and of Queensland;[72] Sir Henry Edward Fox Young, governor of South Australia;[73] and Sir John Young, governor-general of New South Wales—all of whom are listed in the LBS database—similarly prioritise official positions over direct family benefit from slavery in the Caribbean.[74] This pattern is repeated for many less senior office holders in government service.

In these apparently innocuous ways, connections to both slavery and the locations in which slavery was concentrated, are downplayed. Such effects are further magnified where the *ADB* has entries for successive generations of a family. In these cases, references to slavery become ever less specific. The Cameron family, who had important interests in British Guiana, provide an example. With a business partner, Donald Charles Cameron (1781–1848) received about £45,000 compensation under five awards in British Guiana, and owned the estate Barcaldine in Argyll, Scotland.[75] His nephew Donald Charles Cameron (1814–1872) moved from British Guiana where he had managed a sugar plantation in Berbice to Victoria in 1852. Donald Junior's family, including his son John Cameron (1847–1914), accompanied him to Victoria and took up land at Native Creek and Berremboke, before moving northwards in the 1860s to a Queensland station they named

70 B. A. Knox, 'Sir Henry Barkly (1815–1898)', *ADB*, accessed 30 September 2021, adb.anu.edu.au/biography/barkly-sir-henry-2936.

71 'Aeneas Barkly', LBS, accessed 30 September 2021, www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/person/view/28744; 'Henry Barkly', LBS, accessed 30 September 2021, www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/person/view/10612.

72 H. J. Gibbney, 'Musgrave, Sir Anthony (1828–1888)', *ADB*, accessed 30 September 2021, adb.anu.edu.au/biography/musgrave-sir-anthony-4283/text6929; 'Sir Anthony Musgrave', LBS, accessed 30 September 2021, www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/person/view/2146630325.

73 H. J. Gibbney, 'Young, Sir Henry Edward Fox (1803–1870)', *ADB*, accessed 30 September 2021, adb.anu.edu.au/biography/young-sir-henry-edward-fox-4902/text8207; 'Sir Henry Edward Fox Young', LBS, accessed 30 September 2021, www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/person/view/2146630357.

74 John M. Ward, 'Young, Sir John (1807–1876)', *ADB*, accessed 30 September 2021, adb.anu.edu.au/biography/young-sir-john-4905/text8213; 'Sir John Young, 1st Baron Lisgar', LBS, accessed 30 September 2021, www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/person/view/2146645295.

75 'Donald Charles Cameron', LBS, accessed 30 September 2021, www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/person/view/8315.

Barcaldine Downs after the family's Scottish seat. Both John, who became prominent as a pastoralist, politician, and leader of pastoralists against organised labour, and his son, Sir Donald Charles Cameron (1879–1960), have *ADB* entries. John's entry notes his father's management of the Berbice sugar plantation without making any mention of slavery or slave wealth. Donald's, however, simply notes that John was 'born in British Guiana'.[76]

But what of the nearly 130 references to 'Australia' within the LBS database that do not connect to individuals with *ADB* entries? Some of these men and women were not prominent enough to warrant an entry in the nation's dictionary of biography, although a few—like the multiple generations of Melbourne lawyers all named Raynes Dickson, descended from the Liverpool slave trader William Dickson;[77] or the pioneering parson, Willoughby Bean, discussed below—might have been included. Many of the individuals identified within the LBS database as most closely linked to the Australian colonies were not themselves beneficiaries of compensation under the *Slavery Abolition Act 1833*. Rather, many benefited from the business of slavery as merchants, financiers, attorneys or civil servants. Further information about the Antipodean expansion of the Bristol-based firm Miles, Kington and Co. emerges from a search in the LBS database for Australia. This includes the presence of Edward Astley Cave (of another Bristol banking family) in Melbourne in 1857, where he was most likely working for the firm's newly established branch. One of Cave's sisters had married a Bristol-based partner of Miles, Kington and Co.; another wed one of Philip John Miles's sons. The Cave siblings' paternal grandmother, Penelope Cave, née Oliver, came from an Antiguan slave-owning family. While she died in 1815, her share of compensation for 137 enslaved people was passed down through her widower, John Cave of Brentry.[78]

Others with connections to the Australian colonies named in the LBS database but not in the *ADB* had owned enslaved people, but had either dissolved their estates before emancipation, or had their compensation channelled straight to creditors. Thus, for example, in 1836 Elizabeth Bean (née Haffey) inherited £2,000 and half the residuary estate of her uncle, Henry Haffey, who had sold St Vincent estates in 1827.[79] Bean's son, Willoughby, emigrated to New South Wales in 1824, taking up land at Brisbane Water on the Central Coast. He married in 1838 and returned

76 D. B. Waterson, 'Cameron, John (1847–1914)', *ADB*, accessed 30 September 2021, adb.anu.edu.au/biography/cameron-john-1167/text9309; S. W. Wigzell, 'Cameron, Sir Donald Charles (1879–1960)', *ADB*, accessed 30 September 2021, adb.anu.edu.au/biography/cameron-sir-donald-charles-5473/text9301.

77 William Dickson (1775–1847) was both a Liverpool-based slave trader and the son of the slave trader William Dickson (1740–1802). William Dickson junior had a son, Raynes Waite Dickson (born 1815), whose son, also Raynes Waite Dickson (1844–1928), was a lawyer in Melbourne, as was his son (Raynes White Stanley Dickson, born 1871) and his grandson (Raynes White Adrian Dickson, died 1970). 'William Dickson (1775–1847)', LBS, accessed 26 September 2021, www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/person/view/46329.

78 'John Cave of Brentry', LBS, accessed 29 September 2021, www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/person/view/40869.

79 'Henry Haffey', LBS, accessed 30 September 2021, www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/person/view/2146642765.

to Britain in the mid-1840s. After studying theology at Lampeter, Bean moved to Victoria in 1848, serving as South Gippsland's first resident Anglican minister, then minister at Inverleigh, near Geelong, and finally, as chaplain of the Yarra Bend Asylum in Melbourne.[80] In many cases, then, it was the children and grandchildren of people embedded in the business of slavery who turned towards the southern hemisphere in the middle decades of the nineteenth century, and this cohort is not well represented in the *ADB* for reasons we explore in the conclusion. As these portraits of Australian individuals with links to slavery show, slave-owners and their networks assumed important functions in the early stages of Australian colonisation, functions to which they took the money, ideas, skills and connections that they had inherited from the British West Indies.

The *Dictionary of Western Australians*

Unlike the biographical dictionaries discussed so far, the *Dictionary of Western Australians* (*DWA*) represents a constituent population within today's nation, a population first delineated in 1829 when Governor James Stirling led the British colonisation of the western third of Australia. To that colony came colonists with diverse and diffuse connections to British slavery and Indian Ocean indentured labour, reflecting the broader reorientation of British investment from the western to the eastern and southern parts of the empire following the *Slavery Abolition Act 1833*.[81] For settler colonisers with Caribbean connections, these structural shifts appear to have been a factor in their migration. These include James Stirling, Charles Dawson Ridley and James Walcott, all discussed in this issue, as well as Archibald Burt and Mary Anne Barker.[82] Since the colonisation of Western Australia was sponsored by private investment and implemented by free colonists with capital, the nature of its original design is suggestive of the interests of these early backers. Stirling's first schemes for the colonisation of Western Australia drew on the architecture of slavery in the Americas and envisioned a labour force of Indian and Chinese 'half-castes' on contracts of indenture. In the second iteration of this scheme, explicit references to American labour models were dropped but Stirling retained the plan to import Asian contract labour to produce, at a distance from the white population, tropical

80 Alasdair Brooks, Susan Lawrence and Jane Lennon, 'The Parsonage of the Reverend Willoughby Bean: Church, State, and Frontier Settlement in Nineteenth-Century Colonial Australia', *Historical Archaeology* 45, no. 4 (2011): 1–19, doi.org/10.1007/bf03377303; *Geelong Advertiser*, 5 September 1865, 3; *Ballarat Star*, 25 March 1870, 4.

81 Lester and Vanderbyl, 'Reconstructing of the British Empire', 1–2; Clare Anderson, 'After Emancipation: Empires and Imperial Formations', in *Emancipation and the Remaking of the British Imperial World*, ed. Catherine Hall, Nicholas Draper and Keith McClelland (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2014), 113–27, doi.org/10.7228/manchester/9780719091834.003.0007.

82 Jane Lydon, 'A Secret Longing for a Trade in Human Flesh: The Decline of British Slavery and the Making of the Settler Colonies', *History Workshop Journal* 90 (September 2020): 189–210, at 199.

crops such as cotton at a lower cost than American slave-produced cotton.[83] While these schemes were never executed on a widespread scale, aspects of the disciplinary regimes established within the British Caribbean, including whips and chains, were transferred to Western Australia, where they were used in the pastoral and maritime industries to punish and constrain First Nation and South Asian peoples.[84]

Connections between British slavery and Western Australia are largely absent from existing historical accounts, as Jane Lydon writes in this issue. Researchers seeking to recover these connections are fortunate to have access to the only comprehensive dictionary of biography known to exist for an Australian state or territory. There is no official estimate of the *DWA*'s size; we tentatively venture that in its final, 10-volume edition, it encompasses upwards of 50,000 lives, a far more comprehensive coverage than most dictionaries of *national* biography.

The *DWA*'s capacity to help reveal connections between Western Australia and unfree labour within the British empire is closely tied to its own unique history. It was launched in 1979 to recover a history of early Western Australia colonisation that works of national history had failed to record.[85] Led by acclaimed local historian Rica Erickson, the *DWA* was devised in the lead-up to the sesquicentenary of the British colonisation of Western Australia, which its publication commemorated. Over five volumes, the first edition aimed to capture both free and transported arrivals to the colony during the first 85 years of colonisation in short, factually based list entries.[86] As with the second 10-volume edition, published to coincide with another anniversary of colonisation in 1988, the first edition set its sight on comprehensiveness. This was made possible by the modest size of the early colonial population, which reached around 5,000 by 1850.[87] Erickson's team strove to include all arrivals to the colony through an exhaustive search of government correspondence, newspapers, shipping records, South Australian immigration lists, official and parish accounts of births, deaths and marriages, and even graveyards.[88] The volunteer labour that this depended on in a pre-digital environment was

83 Lydon, 'A Secret Longing'; R. T. Appleyard and Toby Manford, *The Beginning: European Discovery and Early Settlement of Swan River Western Australia* (Perth: University of Western Australia Press, 1979), 42–44.

84 Jane Lydon, *Anti-Slavery and Australia: No Slavery in a Freeland?* (London: Routledge, 2021), 145–48, doi.org/10.4324/9780429445187.

85 'Rica Erickson', The Library and Information Service of Western Australia, accessed 27 September 2021, slwa.wa.gov.au/erickson/pages/home.html.

86 Rica Erickson, introduction to *The Bicentennial Dictionary of Western Australians*, *pre-1829–1988*, ed. Rica Erickson (Perth: University of Western Australia, 1987), 5–7.

87 Erickson, introduction to *The Bicentennial Dictionary*, 5.

88 Rica Erickson, preface to Pamela Statham, comp., *Dictionary of Western Australians, 1829–1914*, vol. 1, *Early Settlers 1829–1850* (Nedlands, WA: University of Western Australia Press, 1979), 5; for 'South Australian immigration lists', Pamela Statham-Drew, email interview, 1 October 2021.

considerable. Volume editor Pamela Statham, herself unpaid, drew on the volunteer labour of her mother and two aunts to complete her colour-coded subject cards, a large quantity of which were accidentally thrown out at one stage.[89]

But even as this first edition was in production, questions of representativeness stalked it. Erickson became 'concerned at the dearth of "ethnic" and Aboriginal representation', remembered anthropologist and subsequent *DWA* compiler Neville Green, and commissioned Anne Atkinson to edit a volume on Asian immigrants. Green recalls an attempt by Erickson to integrate First Nations people and non-British arrivals into this first edition, something that did not eventuate.[90] Anthropologist Sylvia Hallam, who would go on to compile a volume titled *Aborigines of the Southwest Region*, remembers it differently. Her account underlines the enormous logistical challenges dictionary editors face when transitioning to become more representative works, a situation compounded at this point in the *DWA*'s lifespan when researchers were working voluntarily, and their research method depended almost exclusively on uncovering the 'facts' produced by the colonial record that, as we have argued, typically conceals the lives of Indigenous, enslaved and otherwise marginalised people.[91] Hallam recalled asking volume editor Pamela Statham before 1979: 'Are you including Aborigines?' Statham reportedly replied: 'Well, no. Too difficult … we can't list Aborigines along with Europeans.' When Hallam insisted 'you should have Aborigines included', Statham apparently countered: 'OK, then. You do it!'[92] Dictionaries of biography are, of course, never wholly intentional texts, constructed to manifest certain histories in the way that other historical works are. Even the *DWA*, overseen by one general editor and modest in scope, could not pivot quickly enough to embrace a changing conception of the population. And yet, it remains possible to trace in these editorial decisions, and the slow evolution of these works, an understanding of what constitutes history within them.

Does the *DWA*'s historical understanding allow us to uncover the repressed histories of violence that it was itself, at least partly, partner to? Interestingly, yes. The second edition, published in 1988 with the support of the Bicentennial Authority, made a history of colonial violence much more traceable than the first edition. But in its complete 10-volume form, the *DWA* was something of Jekyll and Hyde. Its first four volumes preserved the historical fiction of a singularly free, European population by updating and expanding those parts of the 1979 iteration that charted non-Asian free arrivals to the colony up to 1888. These volumes were simply titled *The Bicentennial Dictionary of Western Australians*, organised alphabetically by surname and later published online. Volumes 5 to 10, on the other hand, received

89 Statham-Drew, email interview.

90 Neville Green quoted in Bob Reece, 'The Aboriginal Volumes of *The Dictionary of Western Australians*', *Records of the Western Australian Museum Supplement* 79 (2011): 68–74, doi.org/10.18195/issn.0313-122x.79.2011.068-074.

91 For reference to uncovering 'facts', see Erickson introduction to Statham, *Dictionary of Western Australians*, 5–6.

92 Sylvia Hallam quoted in Reece, 'The Aboriginal Volumes', 70.

subtitles such as 'Aborigines of New Norcia, 1845–1914' and were focused on three further groups: Asian arrivals until the introduction of the White Australia policy; First Nations people by region, from the point of settlement; and convict arrivals. All remained tethered to the point of British settlement because of their reliance on colonial records. Together, the 10 volumes represent a complex, even competing, vision of the past—something like Christopher N. Warren's 'double voice'—and call to mind Maria Tumarkin and Chris Healy's observation that, across societies 'remembering and forgetting … find ways of co-existing in complex and little-explored ways'.[93]

The effect of the 'Aboriginal volumes', as they came to be known, was the enabling of First Nations people to trace genealogies severely disrupted by colonialism and find evidence to support Native Title claims. Anthropologist Peter Sutton told Green: 'if only the other states had similar biographical dictionaries of Aboriginal people, the task of anthropologists and historians in Native Title would be so much easier'.[94] While based on the colonial record, these volumes helped researchers locate individuals and build a more complete picture of early Western Australia.[95] As *Indigenous Australians* expands and First Nation entries in the *ADB* increase, the Aboriginal volumes of the *DWA* become ever more valuable as comparative sources.

Using the *DWA* to trace the legacies of British slavery has alerted us to another paradox of the form: the *DWA*'s emphasis on the moment of British arrival makes it an especially useful source for recovering lives as they transitioned between various imperial locales. A sample search for Indian place names in the online version of the *DWA*, ostensibly covering non-Asian arrivals in the first 59 years in approximately 30,000 entries, shows that about 3 per cent (or in excess of 900 entries) record ties to India. These entries tell of East India Company men taking up land or military appointments in Western Australia and Indian Ocean trade, particularly in horses.[96] Approximately 1 per cent contain a reference to Mauritius, detailing short return trips suggestive of trade and one-way travel by ex-army families.[97] Entries such as that for Charles Barton, described simply as 'Esquire', help animate

93 Chris Healy and Maria Tumarkin, 'Special Issue: Social Memory and Historical Justice: Introduction', *Journal of Social History* 44, no. 4 (2011): 1009.

94 Neville Green in Reece, 'The Aboriginal Volumes', 72.

95 The Aboriginal volumes were based on the records of British missionaries, explorers, administrators and anthropologists. Sources included the files of the Colonial Secretary's Office (1829–87), major Western Australian newspapers, and the papers of the Resident Magistrate, Prisons Department, Police Department, New Norcia Mission, and those of individuals such as Phillip Parker King, Collet Barker and Alexander Collie. Neville Green in Reece, 'The Aboriginal Volumes', 69, 72.

96 Search conducted 22 February 2021, Erickson, *The Bicentennial Dictionary of Western Australia, pre-1829–1988*, www.friendsofbattyelibrary.org.au/the-bicentennial-dictionary-of-western-australians.html. Of the 2,296 entries in the A and B sections, 75 include a reference to one or more of the following terms: India/Indian, Bombay, Calcutta and Madras.

97 Search conducted 22 February 2021, Erickson, *The Bicentennial Dictionary of Western Australia, pre-1829–1988*, www.friendsofbattyelibrary.org.au/the-bicentennial-dictionary-of-western-australians.html. Of the 2,296 entries in the A and B sections, 26 include a reference to Mauritius.

the world of Indian Ocean indentured labour and trading in their bluntness and adherence to verifiable information, and represent opportunities for further research: 'Arr. 6.2.1858 per *Caduceus* from Bombay with 47 Indians & 2 Parsee carpenters to choose a consignment of horses'.[98] By contrast, mid-century entries for the *DNZB* or the *ADB*, which emphasise significance to the nation and to a lesser extent the United Kingdom, often obscure other imperial connections reflected in the conditions of arrival and subsequent movement produced by trade and professional careers. The *DWA*'s lack of interest in interpreting lives and its concern with establishing accurate facts—including a settler's arrival date, ship name, point of departure, land grant, professional status, immediate family members and any departures—translates into compressed, easily surveyable entries for researchers seeking to geographically situate a life.

Where a link to slavery is revealed by another source, the *DWA* can expand knowledge of a subject's reason for migration and early activity within the colony. By way of example, the LBS database indicates that Carriacou slave-owner Peter Pegus's natural son, also named Peter Pegus, was born in Grenada and became a 'pioneering settler' in Western Australia.[99] Both the 1979 and 1988 editions of the *DWA* confirm that the younger Pegus arrived in Western Australia in 1829, the first year of the official British colonisation of Western Australia. Together the editions show that he was an ex-Indian army captain who was given land in the new colony, a trajectory that the *DWA* indicates was repeated hundreds of times in the first 59 years of the colony.[100] Furthermore, the *DWA* specifies that his land grant was 14,000 acres in the Avon Valley and that he became a superintendent of the Native Tribes. As Jeremy Martens argues, the Avon Valley was the site of extensive extrajudicial violence from the early 1830s.[101] By digitally searching for 'Pegus' in all sections of the *DWA*, it is also possible to learn the names of Pegus's servants and family members. Here, the *DWA* provides rich detail concerning the life of a Caribbean slave-owner's son in other contested imperial sites.[102]

The *DWA* can also be used to help *identify* slavery links, not just confirm them. It may even facilitate the recovery of a complex network of associations between British slavery and Western Australian colonial expansion. Using the online version of the *DWA*, covering the first 59 years of non-Asian arrivals, it is possible

98 'Barton, Charles', B Section, *The Bicentennial Dictionary of Western Australia, pre-1829–1988*, accessed 3 October 2021, www.friendsofbattyelibrary.org.au/files/B.pdf.

99 'Peter Pegus', LBS, accessed 30 March 2021, www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/person/view/2146637485.

100 Approximately 1 per cent of the 2,296 entries in the A and B sections relate to Indian army men gaining land grants in Western Australia during the first 59 years of colonisation. If this trend were repeated over the entire dictionary, it would equate to between 200 and 300 men.

101 Jeremy Martens, 'Pastoralism, Aboriginal Labour and the Shift towards Convict Transportation in Western Australia', seminar paper presented to *Writing Slavery into Australian History* seminar series, 11 March 2021.

102 'Pegus, Peter', in Statham, *Dictionary of Western Australians*, vol. 1, 263; 'Pegus, Peter', P section, *The Bicentennial Dictionary of Western Australia, pre-1829–1988*, accessed 30 March 2021, www.friendsofbattyelibrary.org.au/the-bicentennial-dictionary-of-western-australians.html.

to recover a small number of links to British slave-ownership in the Caribbean. While less than 0.3 per cent of entries in our sample search included the terms planter/plantation, slave/slavery or place names in the West Indies, this nonetheless indicates that a further 50 to 100 links between slavery and Western Australia might emerge from this small cohort of arrivals. Here, the LBS database can be used to contextualise and expand references in the *DWA*. By way of example, the *DWA* shows that Western Australian colonist Maria Schaw was born in Jamaica, married Tasmanian-born master pearler Edward Butcher, and died in Western Australia's Guildford in 1914. Though acknowledging she was the daughter of Major Charles Schaw, it does not reveal his connection to the Caribbean, instead describing him as 'of Tasmania', where he had been a police magistrate. The LBS database further records that Maria's mother was Anna Frances Schaw (née Cockburn) and that both she and Charles came from slave-owning Jamaican families. Together they received £196 compensation for eight enslaved people. The *ADB* also has an entry for Charles Schaw, which notes his West Indian military career, but not that he was also a slave-owner. *The ADB* does provide information that helps build a picture of the settler colonial legacies of Caribbean slave-ownership, recording the 'lavish' renovations he made to his already extensive house, Schawfield, in Van Diemen's Land. The LBS database reveals that this name was also that of his father's Jamaican property. In this instance, the *DWA* was crucial in linking Western Australia to a slave-owning family.[103]

The *DWA* is not a perfect tool for revealing slavery links. Rarely is information included on lives before Western Australia, and extended family members, inheritance and other familial contributions to income are often absent from entries. Importantly, the *DWA*'s reliance on colonial records and its lack of contextualising history privilege the perspective of the colonial administration, which was unlikely to animate slavery links in a post-emancipation environment. Despite these limitations, and the *DWA*'s original ambition to commemorate British colonisation, it offers opportunities for recovering connections across the empire and may be a better means of identifying links to slave-ownership than the more discursive, but also more selective *DNZB* and *ADB* in their current states.

103 'Schaw, Maria Susan' and 'Schaw, Charles', S section; 'Butcher, Edward', B section, *The Bicentennial Dictionary of Western Australia, pre-1829–1988*, accessed 30 March 2021, www.friendsofbattyelibrary.org.au/the-bicentennial-dictionary-of-western-australians.html; 'Anna Frances Schaw (née Cockburn)', LBS, www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/person/view/42734, and 'Charles Schaw', LBS, www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/person/view/20992, accessed 28 September 2021; 'Schaw, Charles (1785–1874)', *ADB*, accessed 30 March 2021 and 28 September 2021, adb.anu.edu.au/biography/schaw-charles-2634.

Conclusion

As with so much contemporary historical work, researchers must read both against and along the archival grain to recover the histories of enslavement, settler colonialism and the connections between them.[104] Individuals implicated in the business of slavery—whether directly, or through their families—were seldom open about this once they made their way to other parts of Britain's empire.[105] The settler colonial nations emerging in Australia and New Zealand in the early twentieth century did not acknowledge, let alone trumpet, such unsavoury connections in their nascent and forgetful national histories. Instead, these colonies positioned themselves as free of both enslavement and the taint of chattel slavery. Neither claim, of course, was true. Detailed study of the relationship between Britain's Antipodean settler colonies and the business of slavery remains in its infancy, but already we can point to the many tentacles of money, ideology and connection that stretched from the Caribbean to the Antipodes and helped shape Australasian settler colonialism. This article has explored how historians can harness and connect existing repositories of digitised historical information to advance understanding of these processes—exposing both the opportunities and the challenges presented by dictionaries of biography and the LBS database.

The Legacies of British Slave-ownership database identifies more than 230 individuals as possessing links to the Australasian settler colonies, an increase of at least 50 on equivalent searches carried out in 2017, and a number that will continue to grow as the database is updated.[106] A minority of these individuals have an entry in a dictionary of national biography—about 30 per cent of those connected by the LBS database to Australia appear in the *ADB*, and about 10 per cent of those linked to New Zealand have an entry in the *DNZB*. Our comparison of results from the LBS database with those of the *ADB*, the *DNZB* and the *DWA* revealed that in many cases the entries in biographical dictionaries omit or obscure connections between individuals and slavery. A combination of past editorial decisions and the accepted conventions of the genre mean that dictionary entries seldom look back beyond a single generation, tend to highlight professional careers and official appointments over sources of wealth, prioritise locations in the British Isles over those in the British West Indies, and are more likely to follow the paternal than the maternal line in a family. How should such knowledge inform future historical practice and, indeed, editorial decisions made by both dictionaries and the LBS database?

104 Ann Laura Stoler, *Along the Archival Grain: Epistemic Anxieties and Colonial Common Sense* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009), doi.org/10.1515/9781400835478; Perry, *Colonial Relations*, 3, 5.
105 Catherine Hall, 'Writing History, Making "Race": Slave-owners and Their Stories', *Australian Historical Studies* 47, no. 3 (2016): 365–80, doi.org/10.1080/1031461x.2016.1202291.
106 For 2021 figures, see nn. 44, 62. Search for 'Australia' in 'Notes' section conducted 10 September 2017, LBS, www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs.

Shaped by a unique combination of history, ambition and resources, each biographical dictionary has a different capacity to reveal links between slavery and settler colonialism. The *DWA*, with its ambition to document an entire population, has necessarily sparse entries: these have proved especially ill-placed to animate business networks or reach back into an individual's life before they departed for Western Australia. However, its comprehensive nature, and emphasis on the small, recorded details of a life—including arrivals and departures—make it invaluable for tracing connections between Western Australia and other parts of the British Empire, particularly in the Indian Ocean arena. Echoing the findings of Hall et al. regarding the *ODNB*, our analysis reveals how the *ADB* and *DNZB* prioritise discussion of opposition to slavery over involvement in it, and deploy euphemisms—such as 'planter' instead of 'slave-owner'—that replicate the strategies of slave-owners themselves. Users need to look beyond such euphemistic terminology, whether occupational or geographical, and to use these dictionaries in tandem not only with the LBS database, but also state records, historical newspapers, repositories of comprehensive factual biographical details, and genealogical sources. In particular, we recognise the importance of online archives of historical sources such as the National Library of Australia's Trove and New Zealand's Papers Past.

Our research suggests that the cohort of Australasian settler colonisers who had links to slavery was not only larger but also more diverse than those who appear in dictionaries of national biography. In particular, our analysis of the LBS database highlights that a greater number of women, pastoralists and artisans served to link the Caribbean to the Australian colonies and New Zealand. These findings remain tentative; much more research will be necessary to establish an indicative, let alone a comprehensive, account of these connections, mapping patterns of thought, actions and networks within this cohort, in the manner of collective biographies of slave-owners and the enslaved elsewhere. More work, too, is needed to clarify the degree to which particular family fortunes and commercial ventures in Australasia were based on the business of slavery.

Moreover, this study also throws the architecture and contents of the LBS database itself into relief. Central to the database are the records of the 47,000 claims for compensation made under the *Slavery Abolition Act 1833*, but arising from more diverse and interpretative sources are the biographical notes that illuminate the lives of several thousand of those who made a claim or had some other involvement with the business of slavery between 1763 and 1833. For many individuals, and particularly those with common names, no biographical details have yet been added. But for those for whom further information is provided, it is often drawn from the digitised dictionaries of national biography that have been scrutinised in

this article.[107] Thus additional prominence—in the form of fuller biographies—is given to the types of individuals included in such dictionaries, while revisions to the dictionaries themselves are now being made on the basis of links to slavery highlighted by the LBS project. While these connections advance our historical understanding, they also serve to warn us of the risk that systemic biases in biographical dictionaries might be magnified in the LBS database.

Not least in their digital form, dictionaries of national biography serve more than a national audience; as this article has shown, they feed into a global history of imperialism. Collective biographies, contextual essays, hyperlinks and the avoidance of occupational and geographic euphemisms could make the slavery business more visible in these dictionaries—and this work has already begun. The *ODNB* is drawing explicitly on the LBS database, for example, to revise entries from its 2004 first edition.[108] The *ADB* will incorporate revised entries for some slave-owners based on work now in progress. The practice, observed by both the *ODNB* and the *ADB*, of retaining links to archived biographies from revised entries helps scholars chart this progress; dictionaries might consider adding explanatory notes or links to revised entries explicating what prompted these revisions and the schedule or criteria according to which revisions are undertaken. Christopher N. Warren observed that the *ODNB* in its aggregate form speaks in a 'double voice',[109] but it might be more helpful to picture these dictionaries speaking in multiple tongues, now sometimes literally, articulating visions of the past that interact in complex and illustrative ways with old and revised entries.

Dictionaries of biography are enormous collaborative works, sensitive to fluctuating practical, financial and political challenges. It may well be that they will continue to both remember and forget, never articulating a cohesive vision of the past. Nonetheless, we should keep asking, what work can dictionaries of national biography do? What do they want to do? And how might we bring the two closer together?

107 It is worth noting that this use—347 LBS database entries for individuals list an *ODNB* article among their sources; 75 list an *ADB* article; only 1 cites the *DNZB* through *Te Ara*—pales in comparison to the LBS use of ancestry.com, which is cited among the sources used for the entries on 2,448 individuals in the database.

108 Compare Geoffrey Bolton, 'Musgrave, Sir Anthony', *ODNB*, last updated 11 March 2021, doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/19658 with 23 September 2004 version.

109 Warren, 'Historiography's Two Voices', 3.

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