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**The British community of 19<sup>th</sup> century Bahia:  
public and private lives**

**by**

**Louise Guenther  
Visiting Research Associate  
Centre for Brazilian Studies, 2001-2**

**THE BRITISH COMMUNITY OF 19<sup>TH</sup>**  
**CENTURY BAHIA:**  
**PUBLIC AND PRIVATE LIVES**

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**Abstract**

The whole story of international business includes concerted activity in both the public and the private sphere, and this paper is about the group of British wholesale merchants who established themselves in Bahia during Brazil's transition from colony to nation. It describes their everyday lives, at work and at home, giving special attention to the self-protective role of the enclave and its impact upon the development of stable connections - public and private - with the host environment.

## **Resumo**

Este texto analisa as vidas públicas e privadas da comunidade inglesa na Bahia. Após uma breve introdução sobre as origens e principais atividades da comunidade estabelecida no início do século dezenove, a autora aprofunda a análise de seis aspectos essenciais da vida da comunidade. A constituição de identidade e noções de respeitabilidade, ambas essenciais para a criação de uma imagem de credibilidade perante uma população predominantemente Católica, abre a análise, sendo para ambas fundamentais o estabelecimento de instituições tais como uma capela protestante, um cemitério e um hospital britânicos. Segue-se uma análise de questões demográficas, dos casamentos mistos (muito raros) e a vida em família. Posteriormente, é-nos proporcionado um retrato dos interiores das casas, a sua localização, seus jardins, e da vida social no enclave. Segue-se um retrato da vida de trabalho dos empresários, ressaltando-se a transição diária entre a vida privada e luxuosa na zona de Vitória e o escritório ou local de trabalho na Rua da Praia, zona de grande azáfama comercial e onde a pobreza é mais visível. No que diz respeito ao vestuário, a autora verifica o contraste entre o vestir «discreto» dos ingleses, e sua percepção de «mau gosto» na indumentária de seus congêneres brasileiros. No entanto, mais do que o próprio vestuário, o que verdadeiramente diferenciará o inglês do brasileiro, na perspectiva do primeiro, será a «meta-roupa», ou seja, o costume de utilizar roupa restritiva e formalizada em todas as circunstâncias.

A autora mostra como a natureza e influência da comunidade britânica da Bahia mudaram com o passar dos anos. O estabelecimento de relações sociais não terá sido prioridade inicial quando a comunidade era composta principalmente por jovens solteiros que tomavam partido do bloqueio napoleônico aos portos continentais. Mais tarde, além das importações oriundas do Reino Unido, dá-se um envolvimento crescente na exportação de produtos primários brasileiros, incluindo o açúcar baiano, o que implicará uma relação indireta com o tráfico de escravos. O abolicionismo britânico teve o efeito de gerar um clima de hostilidade para com a comunidade entre os anos 40 e 50, o que levaria à revogação de vários de seus privilégios legais. Com o fim da escravatura, a atividade comercial passa a centrar-se no café e na produção fabril no Rio de Janeiro e em São Paulo. A partir da segunda metade do século, os recém chegados serão pequenos comerciantes e engenheiros, estes últimos ligados aos caminhos de ferro. Os que optam por permanecer na Bahia acabam por casar com brasileiros, dissolvendo as estritas barreiras entre a comunidade e os locais, e diluindo a presença «britânica». Chega-se, assim, ao fim do 'século inglês' que lega apenas nomes de lugares, expressões idiomáticas e uma vaga nostalgia baiana por esse passado.

The nature and influence of the British community in nineteenth century Bahia changed as the century progressed. In the years after 1808, when the ports of Brazil were first opened to trade with all friendly nations, the British merchants were predominantly young bachelors, perhaps junior partners in commercial houses. They established themselves in Bahia, as they did in Rio de Janeiro, Recife and elsewhere, in order to sell the excess wares that were being blocked from continental ports under Napoleon's blockade. The development of social relationships with locals was not a priority. Later, as supply and demand for British textiles and luxury goods stabilized and began to grow, the emphasis of British business expanded to encompass shipping of Brazil's primary exports, including sugar from Bahia, alongside indirect financial involvement in the slave trade. By the 1840s and 1850s, Great Britain's abolitionist policies had made the British communities in Brazil more and more unpopular. Many of their legal privileges were withdrawn. At the same time, in Bahia the impending end of the slave trade rendered sugar less attractive as an investment in comparison to coffee and manufacturing in Rio de Janeiro and, increasingly, Sao Paulo, and the best capitalized merchants moved south.<sup>1</sup> In the second half of the nineteenth century, the new British arrivals in Bahia tended to be tradesmen rather than merchants – watchmakers, machinists, or engineers working on the new railroads.<sup>2</sup> The merchant families who opted to stay eventually intermarried with Brazilians, and the strict boundaries of the community gradually dissolved; so that today, virtually nothing remains of the British presence in Bahia but the traces left in place names, idiomatic expressions, and a vague nostalgia among Bahianos for the nineteenth century, "the English century".

The British community was numerically small in relation to the economic and political influence it exerted, and probably reached a maximum of 120 to 150 members by mid-century.<sup>3</sup> A petition from 1819 was signed by fourteen British merchant firms, but by 1828 a different petition was signed by twenty-three firms, which shows that the number of firms had increased by 60 per cent in ten years.<sup>4</sup> However, by 1859 the number of firms had again fallen to twenty-four, almost the

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<sup>1</sup> See Richard Graham, *Britain and the Onset of Modernization in Brazil, 1850-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976) and Alan K. Manchester, *British Pre-Eminence in Brazil, Its Rise and Decline: A Study in European Expansion* (New York: Octagon Books, 1973).

<sup>2</sup> This is apparent from an overview of the "professions" column in the records of Bahia's British Chapel.

<sup>3</sup> The size of the British population during the first half of the century cannot be determined with precision, because the available records are sadly incomplete. The British consulate did not maintain systematic listings of British subjects resident in Bahia, and produced only the occasional petition signed by the most important British merchants. As a result, women, children, and minor employees are almost entirely absent from the consular record. As for Brazilian official sources, the petitions for residency submitted by some British merchants provide some twenty-five names, with additional information on residence, occupation, and marital status. Secondary sources give a few more clues, and the tombstone inscriptions from Bahia's British Cemetery complete the list. Bahia's port authorities did not begin to maintain systematic records of passengers arriving or departing from Bahia until the 1850s, though record-books for the second half of the century are impeccably detailed.

<sup>4</sup> British merchants to Viscount Castlereagh, 25 April 1819, PRO FO 63/249; British merchants to the President of Bahia, 12 May 1828, AEB: Seção de Arquivo Colonial e Provincial: 1189, Presidência da Província, Série Governo, Consulado da Inglaterra 1824-1862.

same as in 1828.<sup>5</sup> This probably reflects the waxing and waning of British commercial interests in Bahia, according to the political and other vicissitudes of the early nineteenth century in Brazil.

## **1. Attitude and adjustment**

The two constant factors in the outlook of British merchants in Bahia were their preoccupations with cultural identity and personal financial gain, and these took different forms as the political and economic context gradually shifted around them. At first it made no difference to business whether the British presented a semblance of “community” to their Brazilian clients, but by mid-century this had become a fundamental aspect of their continuing success and security. The evidence suggests that this process did not happen by itself, but was to some extent a deliberate strategy of the British merchants for ensuring personal and commercial survival on several levels. A review of British attitudes towards Bahia through those decades illustrates this well.

In 1803, before the opening of the ports, a British merchant named John Turnbull visited Bahia briefly during a trip around the world. He expressed great excitement about the resources that Brazil could offer England in the war against Napoleon, not only as an outlet for merchandise, but also as a base for ship-building operations and the production of needed goods such as rice. In Turnbull’s view, the war on the Continent and the recent loss of the American colonies increased Brazil’s importance to British interests.<sup>6</sup> Turnbull saw Brazil as a country bursting with potential, bound to become independent, and, considering Portugal’s precarious situation at the time, more or less up for grabs. Especially interesting is his conviction that the merest nudge from the British government was all that would be needed to persuade these Brazilians to begin producing whatever was required by British markets.<sup>7</sup> Additionally, he urged his readers to consider how the growing Spanish and French influence in Brazil might yet ruin all of these possibilities: “Some further circumstances occurred to convince me, that a clandestine intercourse, very prejudicial to the interest of Great Britain in time of war, is maintained between the Spaniards and the Portuguese.” And when he asked a band of local musicians to perform *God Save the Queen*, he and his group were treated to *La Marseillaise* instead, much to his annoyance.<sup>8</sup>

Turnbull’s concluding statement about Brazil tells of the intensity of interest that may have been growing in the minds of many British merchants at that time:

Brazil must, in every respect, be considered as a new country. We must sow

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<sup>5</sup> British Merchants of Bahia to Consul John Morgan, 20 October 1859, AEB: Seção de Arquivo Colonial e Provincial: 1195, Presidência da Província, Série Governo, Consulado da Inglaterra 1837-1888.

<sup>6</sup> John Turnbull, *A Voyage Round the World in the Years 1800, 1801, 1802, 1803 and 1804, in which the Author Visited Madeira, the Brazils, Cape of Good Hope, the English Settlement at Botany Bay and Norfolk Islands in the Pacific Ocean* (2nd. ed. London: E. Maxwell, 1813), 30, iv.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 37.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 24, 36.

before we can expect to reap. The maturer wisdom of [Great Britain], our greater knowledge of the nature of commerce and cultivation, must suggest the means to the Portuguese inhabitants and government; and the community of interest will insure us their cordial co-operation. No country under heaven...is better suited [in resources and location] than Brazil, both to render itself and allies great and rich.<sup>9</sup>

When Brazilian ports opened to British imports at favorable duty rates five years after Turnbull's visit, the same frenzied excitement seemed to dominate the thinking of British merchants, who rushed in to take advantage of this new market as a way to overcome the hardship imposed by Napoleon's continental blockade. One account which covers the 1810s is that of John Luccock, a cloth merchant from Leeds who came to Rio de Janeiro in 1808 for exactly those reasons. He describes how British manufactured goods were unloaded, willy-nilly, into a port with totally inadequate facilities; so that the boxes of merchandise ended up splayed across the adjacent beaches, where breakage, spoilage and theft took their toll.<sup>10</sup>

Luccock's story, which was published shortly after his return to Britain, is illuminating. He had agreed to remain in Brazil for a maximum of ten years, until 1818, which he did; but he was able to bring over his wife and children in 1812. He died just eight years after returning home, at age 53, believing that his health had been ruined in Brazil. Olga Pantaleão has described Luccock's experience as typical of most of the *inglezes* during this early period.<sup>11</sup> However, Luccock was married, and had had his family as well a British manservant near him for most of that time.<sup>12</sup> In the earliest years of the British presence in Brazil, most merchants went to Latin America as bachelors to seek their fortunes and establish themselves professionally, intending (like Luccock) to return to Britain as soon as possible. However, many stayed on, and so the various British communities began to grow.

W. P. Robertson, writing in 1843 about his experiences as a merchant in Latin America in the previous decades, referred to "the highly irregular living of unmarried Englishmen, during the first years of their settlement at Buenos Ayres." He explained that this situation "gradually gave way to the softening and humanizing influence of female society; so that in 1818 or 1819 we had sobered down to a very well conducted community."<sup>13</sup> This early nineteenth-century situation of the merchants' "highly irregular" lives, its gradual "softening" through the incorporation of women, and the development of a recognizably British community, is the subject of this paper.

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<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 38.

<sup>10</sup> Herbert Heaton, "A Merchant Adventurer in Brazil." *Journal of Economic History* 6, no. May (1946), 1; John Luccock, *Notes on Rio de Janeiro and the Southern Parts of Brazil...* (London: Leigh, 1820); Olga Pantaleão, "A presença inglesa," in *História Geral da Civilização Brasileira*, II/1. Sérgio Buarque de Hollanda, ed. (São Paulo: Difusão Européia do Livro, 1965), 74.

<sup>11</sup> Pantaleão, 64-99.

<sup>12</sup> "In 1816 [Luccock] visited England...and could now afford to take back a manservant." Heaton, 23; see also Wanderley Pinho, "A Bahia, 1808-1856," in *História Geral da Civilização Brasileira*, II/1. Sérgio Buarque de Hollanda, ed. (São Paulo: Difusão Européia do Livro, 1967), 291.

<sup>13</sup> W. P. Robertson and J. P. Robertson, *Letters on South America* (London: John Murray, 1843), 119.

Before the steamship and telegraph, which were only introduced in the 1850s and 1870s respectively, communications usually took two months to travel each way between Brazil and Britain. Under these circumstances, the isolation experienced by the British community of Bahia was quite real. Its members had to rely upon their own resources to maintain a sense of identity and cohesion, and to signal the separateness of that identity to the surrounding host society. The first problem in this respect was to establish its physical presence and social legitimacy. Large, luxurious homes were purchased or built in a very beautiful area just outside of the main town, which was called Corredor da Victoria, or Vitória in the modern spelling. The name does not refer to Queen Victoria, but to the mile-long road connecting the Forte de São Pedro, on Campo Grande, to the Igreja da Vitória, one of Salvador's oldest churches. Vitória is still one of the best neighborhoods in Bahia today.

Many British merchants acquired property throughout the Victoria, in the main town, and in the interior of the state. Records at the Arquivo do Estado da Bahia show numerous real-estate purchases by British subjects throughout the early nineteenth century. For a list of real estate properties bought and sold by individuals known to be British, see Appendix. Some, like those in Cachoeira or Juazeiro, were in distant rural areas. The record shows that for the early part of the century, British subjects bought and occupied rather than sold or leased out property, showing a process of settlement and growth that would reverse itself later in the century. Although prices are not listed for sales or rentals, two mortgage transactions suggest that British subjects were willing to make substantial investments in real estate (two and four contos, 2:000\$000 and 4:000\$000, respectively). Such investments may have served to strengthen British merchants' ties to the Brazilian community, while enhancing their influence in the local economy.

## **2. Identity and respectability**

The next problem was to establish the respectability and especially the trustworthiness, in the eyes of a fervently Catholic population, of a foreign group made up mostly of Protestants. In 1812, the explorer and proto-journalist Charles Fraser wrote to Lord Castlereagh from Porto Seguro in the southern part of the province of Bahia, about the alarming ideas that the Brazilians whom he had met entertained with respect to the British:

...a Nation of Foreigners & Heretics whom the... Infallible Mother Church had uniformly taught them to regard with that peculiar degree of horror & detestation with which we contemplate the Inhabitants of the Infernal Regions...<sup>14</sup>

The same issue came up in a narrative written by the British merchant Henry Koster, who had grown up in Portugal and also was interested in the Brazilian point of view. In 1816 he published these comments about the British merchants of Pernambuco, among whom he had lived for several years:

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<sup>14</sup> Charles Fraser to Viscount Castlereagh [*sic*], 14 April 1812, Public Record Office, Foreign Office papers, PRO FO 63/149.

Without any outward appearance of religion, how are we to expect that the people of Brazil are to regard us as any thing better than what we were represented to them as being in former times? -- as pagans, animals, and horses -- *pagoens, bichos, and cavallos*, this is literally true...<sup>15</sup>

Koster's interests were obviously those of an *homo economicus*. A bad image is bad for business, and in a religious country, *any* outward appearance of religion will be better than none at all, even if the religion in question is itself despised by the locals. Throughout Brazil, the British at first had had to bury their dead in unconsecrated ground. In Bahia, only in 1813 was permission granted for a small Protestant cemetery to be built off the Ladeira da Barra, a scenic spot overlooking the bay, just beyond the Corredor da Vitória. A British hospital was opened in 1815, and was housed under the same roof as a Protestant chapel for several decades.<sup>16</sup> The Brazilian Emperor's permission for non-Catholic services, however, included certain conditions: the building had to resemble a normal house, and no form of proselytizing was allowed.

By 1845, roughly half of the British community regularly attended Anglican church services, in a building large enough to accommodate a hundred.<sup>17</sup> By 1853, a yellow fever epidemic had forced the British hospital to relocate to the peninsula of Bonfim. At about the same time, the Anglican chapel came to be housed in a handsome classical building on Campo Grande, which was then a large military practice field located where the Victoria road meets the Fort of São Pedro on the edge of the old town.

Koster's recommended strategy for respectability appears to have paid off. In 1993 the Bahian historian, Thales de Azevedo, wrote a newspaper article about the need to preserve the British cemetery. He lamented the demolition (in 1975) of the British chapel on Campo Grande, which he described as "the most significant marker of the British presence among us, the beautiful old St. George's Church... one of the city's most valuable monuments." The visible presence of national institutions not only enabled the British businessmen to appear respectable to the Brazilians: at the same time it served to remind them of their own identity as different, reifying their separateness in a manner almost perversely positive.

Until about 1823 there was no Anglican chaplain in Bahia, so a degree of improvisation was necessary for the enactment of community rituals. The British consuls were equal to the task and began to solemnize the community's marriages, in a spirit of plucky self-reliance in isolation. One of the consuls even

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<sup>15</sup> Henry Koster, *Travels in Brazil* (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown, 1816), 400. Emphasis in original.

<sup>16</sup> Maria Graham, née Dundas, afterwards Lady Calcott. *Journal of a Voyage to Brazil, and Residence There during Part of the Years 1821, 1822, 1823* (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, Brown, and Green, 1824), 141.

<sup>17</sup> The community numbered about 120, so 60 attended regular services. Daniel P. Kidder, *Sketches of Residence and Travels in Brazil, Embracing Historical and Geographical Notices of the Empire and Its Several Provinces* (Philadelphia and London: Sorin & Ball and Wiley, 1845), 25. The difficulty of accurately calculating the number of British subjects in Bahia during the first half of the nineteenth century is explained in note 3.



compared himself to a commander of a British ship of war on the high seas.<sup>18</sup> Along with the existence of the British burial ground, chapel, and hospital, such marriages were a fundamental means for re-creating the respectable British middle-class family context on Bahian soil. However, when the very professional consul William Pennell decided in 1823 to check and make certain that he had the legal authority to perform these marriages, he was sharply rebuked by George Canning, who replied that only a religious official, whether British or Brazilian, could legally preside over the marriages of British subjects in Brazil.<sup>19</sup> He was unmoved by Pennell's protests that Catholic priests in Bahia would never consent to perform a Protestant marriage, and insisted that Pennell cease the practice at once.

The sudden realization that all of the marriages of British subjects that had taken place in Bahia (to say nothing of the funeral ceremonies) were invalid precipitated a crisis of legitimacy for the community, at least for its uppermost members. One can see how the "softening influence" of family life really depended upon important rigidities, essential for sustaining self-respect -- self-image -- in the highest strata of this micro-society. For example, both Boothby and Johnston, of the firm Boothby Johnston, the second most important British firm in Bahia at that time,<sup>20</sup> had been married in Bahia by William Pennell. As he put it,

Mr. Boothby is desirous to do whatever is necessary to give a legal sanction to his Marriage. Mr. Hardman & Mr. Johnston (two Merchants now resident in the Brazils, who were married by me) will I am persuaded from my personal knowledge of their character, be desirous to pursue the same honourable conduct.<sup>21</sup>

The word "character" in this context seems to function as a key term linking private to public respectability, hence also to social position within the business hierarchy. Pennell went on to explain that several children had already been born from these unions, and urgently asked Canning to decide whether a second marriage ceremony in Scotland might "be sufficient in these cases, to make the offspring already born, legitimate; or whether the defect can be cured by any other remedy."

This tangled situation displays the intimate connections between the most personal and the most impersonal areas of life, with the business arena uneasily located somewhere in between. There is something absurd about a distant government official holding the power to destroy or legitimate the personal worth of a man in the privacy of his marital bed thousands of miles away. Nevertheless, it was precisely the sacrifices necessary for sustaining such boundaries that kept the expatriate community aware of who they really were, no matter how exotic the situation might happen to be. Pennell's careful phrasing almost seems to suggest that Johnston and Hardman were not quite as keen as Boothby to enact a second wedding in Scotland, but if necessary Pennell would take it upon

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<sup>18</sup> "The celebration of Marriages by the Commanders of HM's Ships of War, & others, not being clergymen, afforded also an argument, from analogy, in support of the same inference." Pennell to Canning, 22 August 1823, PRO FO 63/262.

<sup>19</sup> Pennell to Canning, 23 July 1823, PRO FO 63/262.

<sup>20</sup> Foreign Office, PRO FO 63/230, FO 63/240, FO 63/249.

<sup>21</sup> Pennell to Canning, 22 August 1823, PRO FO 63/262.

himself to persuade them. "Character," legitimacy, law, personal and collective respectability, and the survival of the community as such -- the survival, in effect, of British business interests in Brazil, as carried out by these particular people -- were all interconnected in ways that were fairly well understood.

### **3. Demography, intermarriage, and family life**

As the various members of the British families married among themselves and occasionally with Brazilians, the community grew both in size and stature throughout the first half of the nineteenth century. The most useful archival source for demographic and family history is to be found at the British chapel of Bahia, in a series of parchment books recording the baptisms, marriages, and burials of British and other Protestant residents from 1836 to 1873. The marriage records in particular had suffered water damage so that the data is incomplete; but nevertheless it is possible to reconstruct a qualitative picture of family and community life from these records.<sup>22</sup>

Cross-referencing names from all available sources (residency and naturalization applications, merchant signatures from official petitions, gravestone inscriptions, and secondary literature) with the baptism records allows for a rough calculation of fertility. Between 1836 and 1863, 62 children born to known British subjects, out of which about 60 per cent were girls and 40 per cent were boys. The twelve family trees that I was able to reconstruct show that each mother had an average of five children, and about one out of every ten babies died before reaching the age of five.

In that same period, 42 known members of the British community died and were buried in the British cemetery. Two-thirds were male and one-third were female.<sup>23</sup> There were deaths in every age range, one-eighth occurring after the age of 70; the oldest, Mr. Charles Roberts, was 90 when he died, in the year 1850. The record shows an occasional female death in prime childbearing years. Three suicides are recorded, two of them having been young men who were working as clerks in British firms.

Intermarriage with Brazilians was limited, particularly during the first half of the century. The archives of the Catholic *Cúria Metropolitana de Salvador* did not yield a single British name in its marriage records for the Victoria parish during the early nineteenth century, although in part this may be due to the practice of translating English names into Portuguese on Brazilian documents -- Michael

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<sup>22</sup> The parchment forms were double-sided, and one quadrant of the book recording marriages had been erased by the water. As a result we have the names, dates, ages, and professions for about one half of the population, but not their fathers' names, father's occupations, or witnesses. For the other part of the population the situation is reversed.

<sup>23</sup> This does not count sailors or their wives, who died in port or at sea and were buried in the sailors' ground, for these were not members of the British community in the social sense that I am studying here. The same goes for the fairly high mortality suffered by engineers and railroad workers who came to work on the Bahia and São Francisco railroad after 1850, and who died in a yellow fever epidemic. The British community erected a plaque in its cemetery in their honor, identifying them as a separate group, as it were.

Rooks was changed to Miguel Rochas, for example.<sup>24</sup> And the surviving British chapel records show only two instances of a British man marrying a Brazilian woman: Andrew Comber married Maria Emilia Freitas in 1835, and Silvanus Earp wed Maria Amália de Sá Bittencourt in 1850. The Combers went on to have four children, one of whom, Charles William, grew up to marry Eleanor, the daughter of British merchant Joseph Porter, in Bahia in 1864. This suggests that the Comber family aligned itself more closely with the British side than the Brazilian. In 1867 Joseph Porter's son married Hannah Helena, the daughter of Johnson Bielby (of Johnson Bielby & Company), whose own sister Maria Eliza had married merchant Francis White MacKay in 1855, when he was still a clerk.

That series of marriages brought together the Bielby, Mackay, Porter, and Comber merchant families in just three generations. Another series created close kinship ties among the prominent families Schwind, Benn, and Dutton in less than twenty-six years. The small size of the merchant group renders such patterns difficult to explain, except in terms of a group of people who saw themselves as separate from the local community, and made a concerted effort to remain that way, raising their children with the expectation that they would not marry out. Still, British-Brazilian intermarriage may have occurred more frequently than these sources show. The British vice-consul James Wetherell noted in the 1840s that "when some of the Brazilian [women] are married with foreigners, particularly Englishmen, [their married name] has a curious effect, eg.: -- "Donna Maria Gusmaô [*sic*] Eulalia de Silva e Jones."<sup>25</sup>

The community's child-raising practices were similar to those of British expatriate communities elsewhere, in that those who could afford to send their children to boarding schools in Britain often did so. Some probably had private tutors; as there was no British school. Nevertheless, several of these children returned as adults to live in Bahia. Daughters, in particular, may have preferred to live in Bahia rather than return permanently to Britain; Wetherell commented on the much higher prestige that young English ladies enjoyed within the expatriate community, compared to what they might expect in the home country. Foreign ladies, from their scarcity, are treated with considerable deference, and I think enjoy themselves much, although during a portion of the day-time they are left to their own resources. They meet with much attention, and I do not wonder at their wishing to return after having been at home. In England they have not that same undivided attention paid them, but abroad they can be little *queens* if they like.<sup>26</sup>

However, the records also demonstrate that many British children who were born in Bahia did not remain, or return, to marry there. The probate inventory<sup>27</sup> of the wealthy doctor John Ligertwood Paterson shows that in 1882, when he died, all of his heirs were in England, though two of his children had

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<sup>24</sup> As a result, the incidence of Protestant-to-Catholic conversions among the British of Bahia cannot readily be evaluated. Arquivo Municipal de Salvador: *Registro de Naturalização de Estrangeiros, 1833 a 1884*, Vol. 155-2.

<sup>25</sup> James Wetherell, *Brazil: Stray Notes from Bahia: Being Extracts from Letters, &c., During a Residence of Fifteen Years* (Liverpool: Webb and Hunt, 1860), 93.

<sup>26</sup> Wetherell, *Brazil*, 116. Emphasis in original.

<sup>27</sup> Arquivo do Estado da Bahia (AEB): Seção Judiciária: Inventário 03-1349-1818-05, John Ligertwood Paterson, 9 May 1883.

been born in Bahia.<sup>28</sup> Meanwhile, none of the four children born in Bahia to Dr. Alexander Paterson (who probably was John's brother) seems to have married there, so he too must have sent them to be educated in Britain. When the British merchant George Mumford died in 1862, his probate inventory mentioned his longtime companion Maria Constança Ebbe and their eight children, five of whom were being educated in Europe at that moment.<sup>29</sup> On the whole, this pattern of social integration as a separate community within the local society resembles that followed by the British communities of Buenos Aires, Santiago, and Nova Lima in Minas Gerais (where the St John d'el Rey Mining Company operated the Morro Velho gold mine) during the nineteenth century.<sup>30</sup> Over successive generations, the Brazilianization of the community would be inevitable, though some British identity markers would persist for decades.<sup>31</sup>

#### **4. Life in the British enclave**

The British merchants' households probably were large and bustling, with children, slaves, family, and associates dropping by for visits, as well as frequent outings to vacation homes. The American missionary Daniel Kidder mentioned in his narrative from 1845 that the English chaplain in Bahia, Rev. Parker, had a family home in Victoria and also a summer residence in Rio Vermelho, on the sea coast a few miles beyond the entrance to the bay.<sup>32</sup> Many of the British may have had such homes, perhaps as a mark of status. Dr. Robert Dundas, who attended the British community for twenty-three years as medical superintendent of the British Hospital at Bahia, tells of a family struck with typhus while on holiday at their seaside property in São Lázaro. The household was said to consist of "Mr R.," his wife, his brother-in-law, an English housekeeper, and five black servants, who were probably slaves;<sup>33</sup> so in this household, three adults were served by a staff of six.

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<sup>28</sup> In 1887 a bust of Dr. Paterson was erected in a park near Victoria, bearing the following inscription in English and Portuguese: "As a testimony of friendship, esteem, and gratitude, this monument was erected by the public to the memory of John Ligertwood Paterson, on this site which was granted by the municipal council of the City of Bahia, President Dr. Augusto Ferreira França, and President of the Province Counsellor Pedro Luiz Pereira de Souza."

<sup>29</sup> AEB: Seção Judiciária: Inventário 01-199-352-02, George Mumford, 29 March 1862.

<sup>30</sup> Oliver Marshall, *English-Speaking Communities in Latin America* (London: MacMillan and St. Martin's Press, 2000); John Mayo, *British Merchants and Chilean Development, 1851-1886* (Boulder and London: Westview Press, 1987), 20; Vera Blinn Reber, *British Mercantile Houses in Buenos Aires, 1810-1880* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1979), 48; Marshall C. Eakin, *British Enterprise in Brazil: the St. John d'el Rey Mining Company and the Morro Velho Gold Mine, 1830-1960* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1989), 243.

<sup>31</sup> The probate inventories of the merchant John Andrews (1862), his widow Emilia Viana Andrews (1896), and later of their daughters, show that Emilia sent the girls to Paris and London soon after John's death. After returning to Bahia, one married a Brazilian, and the other the son of a German merchant. AEB: Seção Judiciária: Inventário 06-2566-3066-05, Inventário 01-70-89-02.

<sup>32</sup> Kidder, *Sketches*, 24.

<sup>33</sup> Robert Dundas, *Sketches of Brazil, Including New Views on Tropical and European Fever with Remarks on a Premature Decay of the System Incident to Europeans on Their Return from Hot Climates* (London: John Churchill, 1852), 221.

An example from the diplomatic correspondence shows that Consul William Pennell, who was probably the best-documented British resident of early nineteenth century Bahia, had brought with him two daughters -- one of whom was old enough to escort Maria Graham around town during her visit in 1821<sup>34</sup> -- and two nephews, who worked in merchant firms and also held jobs at the consulate.<sup>35</sup> Pennell's wife is never mentioned, so it is likely that he was a widower, and that his daughters (with or without an English housekeeper) would have had the responsibility for running the home, supervising the slaves,<sup>36</sup> managing the entertainment duties associated with the consul's position, and caring for him during his illnesses in a tense time of delicate political maneuvers associated with the political independence of Brazil.<sup>37</sup>

Most of the British merchants tended to establish their residences along the Victoria road.<sup>38</sup> This road follows a gradual descent from the edge of town, along an elevated ridge about six hundred feet high overlooking the bay, slopes gently around the land's edge, and arrives at the sheltered beach of Porto da Barra. Along its upper reach, most of Bahia's British and other foreign merchants lived in mansions that consistently were described by visitors as being large, elegant, spacious, well-built, and tastefully decorated.<sup>39</sup> Perched along the summit of the ridge, these homes commanded stunning bay views that were repeatedly admired by the authors of travel narratives.

As it happens, the probate inventory of Dr. John Paterson allows for the re-creation of the full interior of one such British home, though from the latter half of the century. The inventory was compiled by the British consul, who seems to

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<sup>34</sup> M. Graham, *Journal*, 134. Maria Graham was the 36 year old wife of a British naval officer, who was assigned to patrol the ports of Brazil during the independence battles of Brazil. She stopped in Bahia in late 1821. She has been described by Gilberto Freyre as one of the most perspicacious of social observers, and was also politically astute and interested in women's issues. Her writings on Latin America and India have been extensively used by Mary Louise Pratt to study the subjective construction of the British empire. Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London and New York: Routledge, 1992).

<sup>35</sup> Pennell to Hamilton, 2 June 1818 PRO FO 63/215; Foreign Office to Pennell, 1 May 1821, PRO FO 63/240.

<sup>36</sup> "The English are all served by slaves, indeed." M. Graham, 148.

<sup>37</sup> Pennell's alarming health report, written by Dr. Dundas, is enclosed in Pennell to Bidwell, 8 March 1828, PRO FO 13/53.

<sup>38</sup> Outside of the main city of Bahia, Graham cites one English merchant resident in Cachoeira (155); government informer Charles Fraser lived near Ilhéus, on his one-man mission of civilizing the Patachó Indians (Charles Fraser to Viscount Castlereagh, 14 April 1812, PRO FO 63/149); and at least two British merchants lived in Valença in the late 1830s, one of whom had with him a wife and four children ("William Sweeney...has a Wife and four Children and has been a Resident in [Bahia] thirteen years and in the Town of Valença the last twelve months engaged in trade..." Edward Porter to Thomas Xavier Garcia d'Almeida, President of Bahia, 12 December 1840. AEB: Seção de Arquivo Colonial e Provincial: 1195, Presidência da Província, Série Governo, Consulado da Inglaterra 1837-1888). There is also evidence that the British owned property on the island of Itaparica. However, these exceptions serve to highlight the main pattern of British settlement, which was to band together in one large enclave next to the main city, and to make efforts to remain fundamentally separate from the surrounding Brazilian society.

<sup>39</sup> William Scully, *Brazil, Its Provinces and Chief Cities, the Manners and Customs of the People, Agricultural, Commercial and Other Statistics Taken by the Latest Official Documents with a Variety of Useful and Entertaining Knowledge, Both for the Merchant and the Emigrant* (London: Murray, 1866), 351; Dundas, 24.

have walked through each room writing down a list of the contents of each. Paterson had a large library, which doubled as a consulting room, on the first floor. Next to it, a drawing-room entrance containing a sofa and large cupboard led into a large drawing-room, furnished with a large table and eleven chairs, two sofas, eight upholstered chairs, and assorted small tables. After this came the sitting room, somewhat smaller, and then a stairway lobby with two cupboards containing fancy glassware. In addition there was a small bedroom and a master bedroom, impressively furnished. Paterson's personal items included a large collection of linen clothing, (23 pairs of trousers, 54 collars, etc.) and a medallion signifying his membership in the Brazilian Order of the Rose. The inventory ends with a "Ground Floor" category covering the dining room and ground floor rooms. Paterson's estate also housed five hens, a duck, three horses, and a cow and a calf; so the rural feeling of a Brazilian country house intermingled with the elegance of this Victorian gentleman's mansion.

The area of Victoria was generally said to possess the most pleasant views, the best air quality, and the deepest sense of peace to be found in Bahia. Its British homes possessed extensive grounds, cultivated into gardens whose lush tropical vegetation contributed to an overall atmosphere of freshness, color, and fragrance that delighted those who visited it. Maria Graham expressed great pleasure over a soiree in the garden house or gazebo of Consul Pennell, which "literally overhang[s] the bay...[behind it] flowers and fruits mingle their sweets even down to the water's edge."<sup>40</sup> The British community's longtime doctor, Robert Dundas, declares of the Victoria that "nothing more beautiful than this suburb can well be imagined."<sup>41</sup> Daniel Kidder himself was all but overwhelmed by "the finest gardens that Bahia affords, the most enchanting walks, and the most ample shade...the best houses, the best air, the best water, and the best society."<sup>42</sup> Kidder remarked that whereas in Rio de Janeiro, each section of town had something to commend it, in Bahia the best of everything was united in the Victoria, so it was a natural choice for any foreigner's residence: "He who looks for any one spot that combines more of external beauty...will roam long and widely over the face of the earth."<sup>43</sup> The British homes are further described by Wetherell as being built of stone, with porticoes and large flights of steps, a tiled roof, and exterior walls plastered with stucco, "washed either white or some pale colour, producing, if in the country, a beautiful contrast to the surrounding green foliage."<sup>44</sup>

Among themselves, the community maintained an active social life. This included evening entertainments in the open air, and dances held in open-windowed salons. "Small dancing parties frequently take place," wrote Wetherell, "and when all the windows and doors are open it is really not so warm as an English drawing room."<sup>45</sup> The general atmosphere in the Victoria neighborhood was very pleasant. Dr. Dundas explained that "unlike what occurs in other hot

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<sup>40</sup> M. Graham, *Journal*, 134.

<sup>41</sup> Dundas, *Sketches*, 249.

<sup>42</sup> Kidder, *Sketches*, 63.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>44</sup> Wetherell, *Brazil*, 125.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 82.

regions, the delightful serenity and coolness of tropical moonlight may be enjoyed with perfect impunity, the mind being undisturbed by those visions of fever and malaria which float before the imagination in less favoured climates.”<sup>46</sup> This interaction between impressions -- the imagination, *imaginário*, that the British took with them to Brazil -- and actual physical conditions recurs constantly in the story of British life in Bahia, though this was not always a health-producing interaction. Sometimes their ideas created a collective subjective reality that did not correspond to the actual physical conditions around them, and this could cause severe emotional and physical strain. Dundas believed that the British body could not healthily sustain a residence of more than five to seven years in Bahia, and noted that the problem was especially severe for females.

## **5. British merchants at work**

While most British merchants preferred to live just outside of the main town, their workplaces (“counting-houses”) were generally located on or around Rua da Praia, in the busy lower city. This street ran the length of what was then a very narrow patch of land between the port on the one hand, and a steep hill ascending to the upper city on the other.<sup>47</sup> In addition to commercial buildings, the custom-house (*alfândega*) and enormous warehouses were located there. Kidder’s experience of Praia was that “the buildings are old, although generally of a cheerful exterior...the street is very narrow, uneven, and wretchedly paved.”<sup>48</sup>

Visitors to Bahia almost invariably commented on the crowds, dirt, and noise of Rua da Praia, and contrasted it with the beauty of the city viewed from the sea and the relative calm and pleasantness of the upper town. A British naval officer James Prior, who visited Bahia in 1813, expressed his relief at the moment of moving out of the range of the Praia stench: “Here the chest freely expanded, and we could be said to breathe once more without fear.”<sup>49</sup> Maria Graham wrote this lively description of Rua da Praia in 1821:

It is extremely narrow, yet all the working artificers bring their benches and tools into the street...along the walls are fruit-sellers, venders of sausages, black-puddings, fried fish, oil and sugar cakes, negroes plaiting hats or mats...dogs, pigs, and poultry...and as the gutter runs in the middle of the street, every thing is thrown there from the different stalls, as well as from the windows.<sup>50</sup>

Each day, British merchants commuted on foot from the heights of Victoria to the noise, sights, and smells of Praia and back again. The haven-like quality of their homes, praised by experienced travelers, must have been substantially

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<sup>46</sup> Dundas, *Sketches*, 207-208.

<sup>47</sup> Today the upper and lower cities (*cidade alta* and *cidade baixa*) are connected by a gigantic free-standing elevator, built by British engineers in the 1870s to solve the city’s central topographical problem.

<sup>48</sup> Kidder, 19.

<sup>49</sup> James Prior, *Voyage Along the Eastern Coast of Africa to Mozambique, Johanna and Quiloa to St. Helena, Rio de Janeiro, Bahia, and Pernambuco in Brazil, in the Nisus Frigate* (London: Sir Richard Phillips & Co., 1819), 101.

<sup>50</sup> M. Graham, *Journal*, 133.

enhanced by this sharp daily contrast between home and workplace. At the same time, the necessity of physically experiencing this daily attack on his sensibilities gradually inured the longtime resident to the shock experienced by the new arrival. This is one aspect of the process of psychological change undergone by members of Bahia's British community as they adjusted to their tropical home, and it is of special interest because it so encapsulates the separateness and the connectedness of British residents to the Brazilian reality in which they were immersed.

Even the commute itself represented a mixing of the exotic and the ordinary. Almost every travel narrative gave considerable space to describing the *cadeira*, a sort of palanquin taxi consisting of a chair suspended from a wooden frame and usually carried at a diagonal angle on the shoulders of two barefoot black servants. The hilly topography of Bahia, combined with the disrepair of its streets, rendered wheeled vehicles impractical; exotic or not, the *cadeira* was usually accepted as a matter of course by the British.<sup>51</sup> From their perspective, it added considerably to the local color, as can be seen in this description:

You meet with captains of ships, English and American sailors, fashionable ladies, bishops and fat priests, passengers from emigrant ships, the old and the young, the lame and the blind, all riding about in these cadeiras.<sup>52</sup>

In addition to the visual carnival of color and movement, the widespread use of *cadeiras* created an auditory experience that added to the exoticism. In Wetherell's words:

A person fresh from England, and the bustle and noise of an English town, will be much surprised at the *quiet* of Bahia. The absence of vehicles...the want of horses, the nearly noiseless tread of the unshod black population...give it thus the appearance of a deserted city, as if something had happened to the inhabitants.<sup>53</sup>

It was not only the widespread use, practical advantages, and entertainment value of the *cadeira* that made it part of the daily integration of British merchants and their families into the local society. Status considerations probably played a part in the decision not only to hire *cadeiras*, but even to own one privately, and slaves to carry it. Most of the evidence suggests that the British walked far more often than was socially acceptable, or physically healthy.<sup>54</sup> Nevertheless, they kept private *cadeiras* and slaves to carry them. Dr. Dundas mentions a woman, "Mrs. D., wife of a British merchant, returning home in her cadeira-- a sort of palanquin peculiar to Bahia..."<sup>55</sup> The probate inventory of

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<sup>51</sup> Skill was required to ride in a *cadeira*, as balance was very important: "This mode of conveyance is very luxurious and extremely easy when once the person is accustomed to it, but strangers are very apt to lean to either one side or the other of the chair, and thereby to destroy the balance, and under the momentary apprehension of falling out, make it still worse by endeavouring to put themselves right." Wetherell, 25. "One of our passengers who had got rather hearty, stepped into one of them, and not being able to balance himself properly, tumbled out on the street, to the no small amusement of the slaves who were carrying him and all those passing at the time." Alexander Marjoribanks, *Travels in South and North America* (London: Simpkin, Marshall and Co., 1853), 95.

<sup>52</sup> Marjoribanks, *Travels*, 94.

<sup>53</sup> Wetherell, *Brazil*, 14. Emphasis in original.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 105.

<sup>55</sup> Dundas, *Sketches*, 217.



John Andrews, dated 1862, listed five slaves including “Nei, African, about 40 years of age, *cadeira* carrier.”<sup>56</sup> How might this have been justifiable, in terms of the anti-slavery stance fundamentally required for a proper British identity during the early nineteenth century?

Daniel Kidder unwittingly revealed the analogy which probably served to rationalize slave ownership in the status-conscious minds of British merchants: “To keep a *cadeira* or two, and negroes to bear them, is as necessary for a family in Bahia, as the keeping of carriages and horses elsewhere.”<sup>57</sup> Kidder observed, without the slightest irony, that the livery of the carriers and the expense of the curtains and ornaments of the *cadeira* served to denote the rank and style maintained by the family. Kidder, an American Protestant minister who elsewhere in his book praised efforts to end slavery in Brazil, was able here to draw a direct analogy between a black man and a horse, not only as a source of labor power, but principally as a material possession conferring status upon its owner.<sup>58</sup> True, Kidder was unlike the average British merchant in that he had long personal experience of slaves and slavery in the southern United States. But under the circumstances, the rationalization did seem to offer a fairly straightforward way for an otherwise liberal-minded British businessman to make the conceptual shift necessary to become a slave-owner in Bahia. The question of slave ownership, then, is a theme pertaining to the material circumstances as well as the psychological adaptation of the British merchant community in Bahia.

## **6. Habits and appearance**

When re-imagining the daily activities of the British merchant community, it soon becomes necessary to have an image of how they looked. The main aspect of personal appearance usually is the wearer’s apparel. How did they dress? How did they look against the background of early nineteenth-century Bahia? What impression did this make on outside observers? Because of its social and economic connotations, it may be read as a text or code, telling the story of the wearer’s social role in the context of a physical and social environment with all its historical specificities.

Clothing is an obvious vehicle for expressing group affiliation and/or identity in general, thus serving the function of immediately including or excluding others from the group. Partly for that reason, details of dress are often carefully recorded in historical sources. Also, clothes affect the wearer’s health, as the body is freed or constrained in systematic, gender-specific ways over long

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<sup>56</sup> “1:000\$000, Nei, Africano, com 40 annos mais ou menos, carregador de Cadeira. ”AEB: Seção Judiciária: Inventário 06-2566-3066-05.

<sup>57</sup> Daniel P. Kidder and James C. Fletcher, *Brazil and the Brazilians Portrayed in Historical and Descriptive Sketches* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1868), 477.

<sup>58</sup> Even the anti-slavery Quaker John Candler was pleased with the novelty. “No one need suppose that [the use of *cadeiras*] was an oppression to the slaves: on the contrary, it was to them a coveted employment...a kind look, and a very small gratuity added to the fare, always made us welcome.” John Candler and Wilson Burgess, *Narrative of a Recent Visit to Brazil; to present an address on the slave-trade and slavery, issued by the Religious Society of Friends* (London: Edward Marsh, Friends’ Book and Tract Depository, 1853), 48.

periods of time. In the particular situation of the British community of Bahia, the need to signal identity apparently outweighed the need for physical comfort by far. Thus, it provides another way to examine the situation of the isolated British expatriates. Trying to live in a physical-social environment very different from their own, and where their very difference was a key factor keeping them together, these individuals were preserving their ability to cope as a group while preventing each individual from adapting too closely to Bahia.

John Luccock, the cloth merchant from Leeds who worked in Rio de Janeiro during the 1810s, made a point of comparing British and Brazilian clothing styles. He pointed out that his Brazilian buyers did not favor the dark, drab colors favored by British men of their class. Luccock's note was intended as a market recommendation. He rejected several bales of fabric sent by his supplier, for being

...too gloomy for people who laugh at themselves. Let us have no drabs -- we have no Quakers here. We want no dismal colours suitable for an English November...We live in a lively climate, and with people who love to laugh.<sup>59</sup>

Obviously, in the saturated markets of Bahia and Rio de Janeiro during the 1810s, merchants' concerns had to be on the side of understanding Brazilian tastes so that they could be catered to. Luccock's tone even suggests that he was not unsympathetic to the Brazilian predilection for liveliness in dress and demeanor. But the issue of cultural tastes for clothing may gradually have taken on a more important function for the British community -- that of establishing their own superior status vis-à-vis Brazilians of their own class and above

Traces of this may be found in various contemporary narratives. Wetherell, far from appreciating the liveliness represented by the bright colors worn by Brazilian men, described them in a deprecatory way:

The Brazilians, the men, when they appear in public, are very showy in their dress, quite French in their fashions, and as far as possible removed from the quiet of an English taste.<sup>60</sup>

But Wetherell also thought that Brazilian men ought not to wear dark clothes either:

A full suit of black is the proper dress for ceremonious visiting, &c.,-- an absurd custom in a tropical climate, and a relic of Portuguese barbarism.<sup>61</sup>

The first criticism appeared to blame cultural differences, but the second suggested that no correct solution was possible. Brazilians' departure from the "quiet" British taste was a mark of inferiority, but neither ought they to follow it too closely, either, since dark clothing was obviously ridiculous in a hot climate, regardless of the "quietness" of the formal social circumstances.

According to Wetherell, the fashion sense of elite Brazilian men veered from the offensive to the absurd. He saw their styles in terms of extremes: too brightly decorated, too dark and oppressive, too overdone in public, and too slovenly in private.

Upon returning to his house, a Brazilian will remove everything but his shirt and drawers...putting on a dressing-gown, and thrusting his bare feet into tamancas

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<sup>59</sup> Heaton, 'A merchant adventurer', 13, citing Luccock.

<sup>60</sup> Wetherell, Brazil, 119.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

(wooden shoes) he will remain in this undress.<sup>62</sup>

Wetherell found this custom of private undress bordering on the contemptible, particularly as it contrasted so sharply with what to him was an excess of self-decoration in public. His remarks were meant for an audience of elite British readers, who would know that a respectable person would behave differently even in the privacy of his own home.

On this point, Maria Graham provided corresponding evidence for women, though she visited Bahia twenty years before Wetherell. Acutely aware of the function of fashion as social insignia, she noticed and recorded details of women's clothing very carefully during her visits. She also interpreted her observations in revealing ways. On a Friday morning in October of 1821, the daughter of British consul William Pennell took her on a round of morning visits at the houses of her Brazilian acquaintances. Graham was appalled by what they saw:

When they appeared, I could scarcely believe that one half were gentlewomen. As they wear neither stay nor bodice, the figure becomes almost indecently slovenly, after very early youth; and this is the more disgusting, as they are very thinly clad, wear no neck-handkerchiefs, and scarcely any sleeves.<sup>63</sup>

Her subsequent discovery that these same Brazilian gentlewomen were perfectly capable of presenting themselves in full European formal style did faze Graham somewhat, but not for long. At a ball given by the British consul three days after her round of visits, she admitted having

...great difficulty in recognising the slatterns of the other morning. The senhoras were all dressed after the French fashion: corset, fichu, garniture, all was proper, and even elegant, and there was a great display of jewels.<sup>64</sup>

But, alas, the Brazilians lacked *grace*. Since they did not *habitually* wear the corset and other restrictive garments, they could not move naturally in them. Therefore,

Our English ladies, though quite of the second rate of even colonial gentility...bore away the prize of beauty and grace; for after all, the clothes, however elegant, that are not worn habitually, can only embarrass and cramp the native movements...'she who would act a gentlewoman in public, must be one in private life.'<sup>65</sup>

Unlike Wetherell, she does not criticize the French showiness of Brazilian women's formal dress, but that is probably because British women also followed French styles and did not mind being showy. Bright clothing was all right for women, but only as long as it was displayed with the proper deportment; and here it was that Brazilian women failed to make the grade, as far as Graham was concerned.

As it happens, Wetherell noted the very same flaw in Brazilian men:

When thus 'got up,' they have a stiff and awkward appearance, easily to be accounted for; they are quite unaccustomed to the finery -- 'ease before

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<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> M. Graham, *Journal*, 135.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., 142.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid. Emphasis in original.

elegance.<sup>66</sup>

These remarks suggest a British attitude toward Brazilians that had to do with much more than superficial appearance. After all, clothes are just merchandise, and can be bought for money as any merchant knows. The real superiority of the British taste lay in the meta-garment, the *habit*, of wearing restrictive and over-layered clothes in every circumstance. In a way, both Wetherell and Graham believed that the true British attitude was to be demonstrated by this very refusal to accommodate the foreignness of the surrounding climate. To change one's clothing styles for something more suitable to the circumstances would amount to giving up the real essence of a British appearance: elegance and grace. These were seen to flow exclusively from the daily habit of wearing the clothes that one would be wearing if one were in Britain, which is in a sense to say that Britain is where one properly ought to be, and where one will certainly return as soon as possible.

In the service of this idealized non-surrender of their bodies, British men wore layered clothing and walked everywhere in the sun. Dundas pointed out the dangers of the excessive perspiration that resulted from such habits, but the merchants apparently would not listen.<sup>67</sup> Meanwhile, each day, British women had remain at home while wearing layered dresses over tight corsets, in the absence of any other social pressure to do so.<sup>68</sup> Clearly, the physical discomfort endured by British men and women every day, and their free hand in criticizing the customs of Brazilian elites, were just two sides of the same coin. It was one more artificial barrier between the community and its environment. It was, in fact, a way in which they simultaneously affirmed and denied the obvious -- that traditional British habits constituted inappropriate behavior in the Brazilian (or at least the Bahian) context.

According to Dundas, British women became physically ill in Bahia at a higher rate than British men. He found this noticeable enough to treat it a separate section of his book, which he entitled "European Females in Tropical Climates:"

This unexpected result must, I apprehend, be accounted for by the more indolent habits and mode of life of the former, favoured, if not altogether induced, by the languour inseparable from high temperature, sanctioned by the prevailing customs in most tropical climates, where household occupations are not attended to as in Europe, where fashion or custom precludes the enjoyment of active exercise abroad, and where even mental exertion is to some extent laborious...<sup>69</sup>

Dundas appears to be making a reference to slavery, as well as to British women's habits of daily living:

Notwithstanding... the more regular and temperate habits of the female, and her

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<sup>66</sup> Wetherell, Brazil, 119.

<sup>67</sup> Dundas, Sketches, 51.

<sup>68</sup> This did not happen only in Latin America. Callaway studies how the British of the Victorian period made use of clothing rituals in the African colonies to emphasize their separateness and superiority to those whom they ruled. Helen Callaway, "Dressing for Dinner in the Bush: Rituals of Self-Definition and British Imperial Authority." In *Dress and Gender: Making and Meaning*, edited by Ruth Barnes and Joanne B. Eicher (Oxford, UK: Berg Publishers, 1992).

<sup>69</sup> Dundas, Sketches, 99-100.

exemption from many of the ordinary sources of tropical disease, as exposure to the sun, atmospheric vicissitudes, over-fatigue, &c., yet are these advantages more than counterbalanced by the inactivity and indolence almost necessarily connected with her position.<sup>70</sup>

Thus Dundas implies that private lifestyle choices were the real culprit behind the illnesses that were so commonly suffered by Europeans in Bahia. Since most of those Europeans happened to be British, it seems likely that those choices had a lot to do with maintaining the psychological protection of their clearly marked-off identities, even at the cost of the physical safety of their bodies. The men needn't have exposed themselves to sun or over-fatigue; they could have used a *cadeira*, and adopted the local custom of taking a lunchtime nap. The women did not have a choice. Dundas admits that they had to remain at home, indolent and inactive, in order to express their proper role as respectable high-status wives *in both cultural languages*. It is likely that the local elites could tolerate the spectacle of British men walking around in the sun more easily than that of a British woman living an active life outside of the confines of their houses, let alone of the enclave itself.

Elite Brazilian women were required to stay at home almost all of the time, but they were able to wear light, loose clothing; this the British women could not do; Maria Graham's comments on the indecency of Brazilian women's house clothes makes this clear. Wearing tight clothes all day long, kept "almost necessarily" at home, and unable to pursue the physical, mental and social activities which presumably would have kept them at least as healthy as the men, it is no wonder that the British women got sick. In essence, they were paying in their bodies the price of keeping up the behavioral demands of both British and Brazilian society. A cultural discourse interrelating nationality, class, hygiene, climate, and health thus operated to keep the British self-consciously separate from Bahia, its environment and its people. The implications of these physical and social circumstances for the emotional health of the community will be explored in a forthcoming book.

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<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

**Appendix: Real property transactions by British subjects, 1810 - 1850**<sup>71</sup>

Year	Type of Transaction	Description of Property	Owner	Transferred (sold, rented, or mortgaged) to:
1810	Lease for hire ( <i>arrendamento</i> ) <sup>72</sup>	Land and houses in Brotas	M <sup>a</sup> F <sup>a</sup> [Maria Francisca] da Conceição Aragão	Frederico [Frederick] <b>Lindeman</b>
1810	Lease for hire	Large house in Nazaré	Manuel Jose Vilela de Carvalho	Jorge [George] <b>Sealy &amp; Co.</b>
1815	Lease for hire	Houses in Nazaré	Manoel José Vilela de Carvalho	Ricardo [Richard] <b>Latham</b>
1816	Sale	House in Itapagipe	Caetano José Gomes de Sta. Rita	George <b>Sealy</b>
1820	Lease for hire	House in Cidade Baixa [downtown]	Ponciana Isabel de Freitas	<b>Harrison Latham &amp; Co.</b>
1820	Sale	House in Giquitaia	<b>Moir &amp; Co.</b>	João Miguel Dias de Faria
1824	Sale	Lot in Victoria	M <sup>a</sup> [Maria] da Boa Hora and others	Carlos [Charles] <b>Russell</b>
1824	Sale	Lot and ruined house in Victoria	Carlos [Charles] <b>Russell</b>	João [John] <b>Yonds</b>
1826	Sale	House on road from Victoria to Porto da Barra	Joaquina Candida de Souza	Guilherme [William] <b>Pennell</b>
1827	Mortgage	House	Guilherme [William] <b>Pennell</b>	<b>Sealy</b>
1829	Mortgage	Lot in Porto da Barra	Guilherme [William] <b>Pennell</b>	João Batista Fetal

<sup>71</sup> Source: Arquivo do Estado da Bahia, modern index-card listing of real estate record book entries, 1800-1860. The original records were not available for direct consultation.

<sup>72</sup> This term describes a rental in which the property will be used for profit. Payment is in the form of a set portion of profits arising from the property.

1830	Sale	Lot in Victoria	Vicente Luís Gonçalves Ferreira	William A. <b>Candler</b>
1831	Sale	Lot in Victoria	José Francisco Lopes	Guilherme [William] <b>Candler</b>
1833	Lease for hire	Lot in Barra	Convent of São Bento	João Henrique <b>Lambert</b>
1834	Mortgage	House in Barra valued at 4:000\$000	Manoel Gonçalves de Oliveira Vasconcelos	Frederico [Frederick] <b>Robilliard</b>
1834	Mortgage	Lot in Barra valued at 2:000\$000	João Felipe [John Philip] Henning	João Henrique [John Henry] <b>Lambert</b>
1834	Lease for hire	Lot in Barra (6 <i>braças</i> )	Monastery of Graça	Roberto [Robert] <b>Paterson</b>
1834	Rental	House in Algibes	Joaquim José da Fonseca	Heyworth <b>Crabtree</b>
1837	Mortgage	House in Nazaré	Henrique [Henry] Samuel <b>Marback</b>	José Antonio Ferreira
Not given (probably 1836)	Sale	House on Rua São José [downtown]	Tomasia de Souza Paraiso	João Jardiner [John <b>Gardiner</b> ]
1837	Sale	Lot and house on Victoria Road	Narciza <b>Yonds</b>	Joaquim Inácio da Costa
Not given (probably 1836 - 1839)	Sale	House in Canela	Pedro Cerqueira Lima and wife	Roberto [Robert] <b>Paterson</b>
Not given (probably 1839)	Sale	House in Canela	Roberto [Robert] <b>Paterson</b> Senior	Irontide <b>Napier &amp; Co.</b>
1840	Sale	Land in Cachoeira	Felipe Adolfo Plessing	Henrique [Henry] <b>Behrens</b>
1840	Mortgage	Casa - São Francisco de Paula	Antônio Cosme Bahiano	<b>DalGLISH MacNab &amp; Co.</b>
1840	Sale	Ranch ( <i>fazenda</i> ) in Juazeiro	Jonatas <b>Abott</b> and others	João Duarte Bruno Camargo
1846	Sale	House on Rua da Faísca [downtown]	José Jesuino Alves da Silva	Tomaz Melo [possibly Thomas <b>Mellor</b> ]

1847	Sale	Lot in Preguiça [downtown]	José Caetano da Costa	David <b>Lindgren</b>
1848 <sup>73</sup>	Sale	40\$000 - Lot and ruined house in Rio Vermelho	Jozé Ferreira Guimarães and wife	Thomaz [Thomas] <b>Mellor</b>

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<sup>73</sup> From the Arquivo Municipal da Cidade de Salvador, *Escrituras de Compra e Venda de Escravos 1834-1854*, Volume 74.2.