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ARTICLE

William Munro Tapp: Colonial Investor and Caius College Philanthropist, 1925–1937

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Abstract

William Munro Tapp, the largest post-foundation benefactor to Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge, was a prominent lawyer who directed multiple businesses interested in water utilities, motor car manufacturing, and brewing. That much is acknowledged at Caius today. Yet Tapp was also a director of the sugar refiners Manbré & Garton Limited, and he helped establish a sugar plantation in Kenya. Alongside his involvement in an African estate, he held investments in other plantations and colonial enterprises. He was part of a class of gentlemanly capitalists who participated in imperial expansion and then donated their wealth to British cultural institutions, including colleges and universities. While much public attention has been paid to Cecil Rhodes, this article argues that both Tapp and Rhodes were members of a larger group of men and women who provided their wealth to educational institutions, thereby entrenching the financial legacies of colonialism in universities. By focusing on more minor figures in the British empire, like Tapp, historians can better address the continuities of universities' financial connections to coerced labour and colonialism across time and understand that private connections and affective attachments between individuals and institutions were as significant as governmental policies in directing the spoils of empire.

Born on 6 April 1859, William Munro Tapp enjoyed a life of privilege. He was the son of Arthur March Tapp, a prosperous accountant from Bromley, Kent. Matriculating at Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge, in October 1877, the younger Tapp took a bachelor of arts in 1881, master of laws in 1884, and doctor of laws in 1893. He practised as a prominent solicitor in London from 1884, but was also an amateur archaeologist and geologist, becoming a fellow of the Royal Geographic Society and of the Royal Society of Antiquaries.[1]

[1] 'Tapp, William Munro', in J. L. Dawson, ed., *ACAD: a Cambridge alumni database*, https://venn.lib.cam.ac.uk/cgi-bin/search-2018.pl?sur=tapp&suro=w&fir=william&firo=c&cit=&cito=c&c=all&z=all&tex=&sye=&eye=&col=all&maxcount=50.

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Alongside his legal activities, the middle-aged Tapp was a prosperous businessman, holding directorships in brewing, motor car manufacturing, and water utilities.[2] In 1916, he also benefited from his father's generous will (of which he was an executor), which set aside £15,000 in consolidated stock, railway company stock (including the Great Western Railway and Southern Railway), war stock, and cash.[3] Looking for adventure abroad, Tapp served during the First World War as a St John's ambulance corps driver in Ypres, Belgium, and he visited Korea – a country whose pottery he had a particular predilection for (and forty items of which he bequeathed to the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge).[4]

Upon his death in 1936, Tapp donated approximately £200,000 to Caius College (half of which was to be devoted to the study of the law and half was to be for the general fund) in properties in London, investments, and a box at the Royal Albert Hall, which provides the best seats in the house for musical performances.[5] In its yearly commemoration of benefactors, the college proudly notes that Tapp's bequest was the 'greatest addition to the College's wealth since Dr Caius' foundation'.[6]

On further inspection, there was another side to Tapp's business interests: he was an investor in East African plantations, with extensive interests in Kenya. Tucked away in a neglected folder in the Caius Archive, Tapp's collection of maps, recollections, and correspondence relating to Kenya provides a different side to the London-born lawyer: as part of an entrenched class of colonial capitalists who travelled to Africa to enlarge their fortunes.[7] Tapp was one of the five directors of Manbré & Garton Limited, the largest shareholders of Sukari Limited, of which Tapp was also a director and shareholder.[8]

Based in Hammersmith, London, Manbré was originally registered as a business on 31 March 1897 to acquire the interests of a private company of the same name, founded by Alexander Manbré on 28 January 1874, for the growing, manufacturing, and brewing of sugar, maize, and corn for confectionary.[9] Sukari, which was headquartered in Nairobi, was an important subsidiary, with around 5,242 acres under sugar by 1920 and another 1,000 acres added between 1924 and 1925.[10] Tapp's interest in both companies lasted for much of his later

[2] Christopher Brooke, *A history of Gonville and Caius College* (Woodbridge, 1996; orig. edn 1985), p. 257.

[3] 'Appointment of Messrs. E. P. Weller and A. G. S. Tapp to be trustees in the place of Messrs. H. E. Lawrence and E. Herbert (both deceased), and to act jointly with W. M. Tapp, Esq., 1934', Cambridge, Gonville and Caius College Lower Library (GCC), BUR/TAPP/38/2, Estate of A. M. Tapp.

[4] 'Tapp', in Dawson, ed., *ACAD*.

[5] Copy of the last will and testament of William Munro Tapp, 16 June 1933, GCC, BUR/TAPP/34/1, Estate of W. M. Tapp; Brooke, *History of Gonville and Caius*, p. 257.

[6] Gonville and Caius College, 'Commemoration of benefactors', 9 May 2021, www.cai.cam.ac.uk/sites/default/files/Commemoration%20of%20Benefactors%20May%202021%20final.pdf.

[7] Sarah Dietz, *Entrepreneurship in the age of empire: colonialism, collaboration and exploitation* (London, 2020).

[8] Thomas Skinner, *The Stock Exchange year book* (London, 1915), p. 2012.

[9] Ibid.

[10] *The tea and coffee trade journal: representing the tea, coffee, spice, and fine groceries trade* (London, 1925), p. 860; Articles of association of Manbré Estates Limited, 26 Nov. 1925, London, The National Archives (TNA), BT/31/36939/210113, Manbré Estates Limited, vol. I.

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life, as he expanded Manbré's London operations to include a potentially valuable sugar and coffee plantation in Kenya.

Many of Britain's most exploitative colonial practices took place in East Africa, specifically Kenya. The slave trade was a long-standing institution in that region, with Omani Arabs and the Portuguese trafficking workers for plantations in Oman and Zanzibar. Following Portugal, Germany was the next European power to arrive in 1885, trailed by the Imperial British East Africa Company in 1888. After Germany gave Britain control over its coastal holdings, the British started developing the Uganda Railway, with the First World War breaking up the German possessions and leading to the creation in 1920 of the Colony and Protectorate of Kenya. Before the colony's creation and long afterwards, British East Africa was a repressive regime for African labourers.[11] In 1902, the first Crown Lands Ordinance allowed the colonial authorities to issue European colonists with ninety-nine-year leases on land that had been set aside as crown land.[12] Africans were confined to land reserves and condemned to be an underclass to their white rulers.

Two laws further consolidated white British rule: the Registration of Natives Ordinance in 1915 and the Resident Native Labour Ordinance in 1919. Following the 1919 Ordinance, Kenyan tenants, who had previously been able to negotiate their labour conditions, were not allowed to pay rent in cash and worked as rent labourers who were traced, because the 1915 Ordinance demanded that Africans register at their local administrative office for fingerprinting. Without the right to move and gain new employment elsewhere, Black Kenyans were entrapped into situations of underpayment and abuse, forced to work as 'squatters' on European plantations. Looking to exploit the 'squatters' further, Europeans passed the Resident Native Labourer's Ordinance in 1925, which removed the need for a magistrate to attest a contract, thereby allowing employers to set wages and conditions below normal levels.[13] Ernest Lanning, a Kitale coffee planter who was educated at St Paul's School and had originally travelled to the region with Christian missionaries, did not mince his words; he wrote in July 1932:

> No will admit it but I think they [Black Kenyans] are treated like slaves. They have no say in anything. If we want something done, it has to be done, if the boy likes it or not: if he refuses he gets hit or as some farmers do, whipped with a rhino hide.

This treatment, he mused, was intended 'to help the African native…and to make a fine race of them, etc. all of which is tripe, we use them in the best

[11] Paul Collier and Deepak Lal, *Labour and poverty in Kenya, 1900–1980* (Oxford, 1986), pp. 26–7. See also Bruce Berman and John Lonsdale, *Unhappy valley: conflict in Kenya and Africa. Book one: state and class* (Athens, OH, 1992).

[12] Robert L. Tignor, *Colonial transformation of Kenya: the Kamba, Kikuyu, and Maasai from 1900 to 1939* (Princeton, NJ, 1976), p. 30.

[13] David M. Anderson, 'Master and servant in colonial Kenya', *Journal of African History*, 41 (2000), pp. 459–85, at pp. 464–6.

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way we shall profit from their work'.[14] These labour laws, known collectively as the master-and-servant laws, remained an important element of Kenyan labour legislation until the 1950s.[15]

Lanning and Tapp's chosen industry, the coffee and sugar plantations, which emerged to deal with the surging demand for sweetened beverages, sugar bowls, jams, and biscuits, was particularly rife with abuse in Africa. The plantation system had travelled from the Americas to Africa. Though East Africa is a relatively understudied region in Atlantic-focused histories of sugar and the development of the plantation complex, its sugar contributed greatly to satisfying Britain's sweet tooth. In 1900, Britons consumed 1.5 million tonnes of sugar, or close to 38 kilograms per head of population.[16] To meet this demand, British and European colonists developed vast, mechanized plantations in Africa that rivalled the Caribbean estates of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The Sena Sugar Estates, founded in 1890 by John Peter, stretched across more than 14,000 square miles of Portuguese East Africa, together comprising three sugar plantations, a copra plantation, forestry concessions, a coastal steamer, and a cattle ranch (all with around ten thousand employees). In February 1920, the estates had capital worth £1,500,000, which, while much larger than an average plantation, illustrates the potential size.[17] These plantations were akin to forced labour camps and were ruled as small fiefdoms. One labour contractor was not alone among white Europeans in arguing that African plantation labourers 'were as children' and should be flogged to instil a sense of discipline and hard work.[18]

Tapp's involvement in Kenya provides a window onto two questions of relevance to historians: the ways in which ordinary Britons engaged with and benefited from imperialism; and how specific endowed institutions, including universities, derived their wealth in part from imperial exploitation. Since the Yale University inquiry into the legacies of enslavement in 2004, historians and

[14] Ernest Lanning to his mother and uncle, 22 July 1932, Ernest Lanning collection, Cambridge, Cambridge University Library (CUL), RCMS 362/1/1.

[15] Anderson, 'Master and servant', pp. 464–6.

[16] Ben Fine, Michael Heasman, and Judith Wright, *Consumption in the age of affluence: the world of food* (London, 1996), pp. 94–5.

[17] Bertha Mary Collin, *J. P. Hornung: a family portrait* (London, 1970), p. 134.

[18] Anderson, 'Master and servant', p. 470. For world sugar production and the persistence of the plantation complex, see also Ulbe Bosma, *The world of sugar: how the sweet stuff transformed our politics, health, and environment over 2,000 years* (Cambridge, MA, 2023); Elizabeth Abbott, *Sugar: a bittersweet history* (New York, NY, 2011); Ulbe Bosma, *The sugar plantation in India and Indonesia: industrial production, 1770–2010* (New York, NY, 2013); April Merleaux, *Sugar and civilization: American empire and the cultural politics of sweetness* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2015); Dunacan L. Du Bois, *Sugar and settlers: a history of the Natal south coast, 1850–1910* (Bloemfontein, 2015); Alan H. Adamson, *Sugar without slaves: the political economy of British Guiana, 1838–1904* (New Haven, CT, 1972); Moon-Ho Jung, *Coolies and cane: race, labor, and sugar in the age of emancipation* (Baltimore, MD, 2006); Carol A. MacLennan, *Sovereign sugar: industry and environment in Hawai'i* (Honolulu, HI, 2014); Peter Corris, *Passage, port and plantation: a history of Solomon Islands labour migration, 1870–1914* (Melbourne, 1973); Edward Wybergh Docker, *The Blackbirders: a brutal story of the Kanaka slave-trade* (London and Sydney, 1981; orig. edn 1970); and Gerald Horne, *The white Pacific: U.S. imperialism and black slavery in the South Seas after the Civil War* (Honolulu, HI, 2007).

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activists alike have turned the public's attention toward the financial, material, and ideological involvement of university students, alumni, and professors in propagating European colonization and slavery in the Americas, Asia, and Africa. Scholars have written with great insight on how these historical injustices should be resolved in the present, with a renewed emphasis on retrospective justice allowing college communities to discuss apology, reparations, and memorialization.[19]

Despite this necessary work, more attention is needed on these colonial financial legacies after the end of slavery in the Americas. To be sure, Cecil Rhodes, the infamous diamond magnate and benefactor of the Rhodes Scholarship at the University of Oxford, has received a great deal of focus – in part because of the efforts of the 'Rhodes Must Fall movement', which has targeted institutions – including Oriel College, Oxford, and the University of Cape Town – that celebrated him.[20] However, the involvement of more minor figures in the invasion, colonization, and partition of Africa in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and their attempts to reap prodigious profits from such enterprises have gone largely unmentioned in the literature on colonialism, reparations, and the modern university. This is an important aspect of a broader historiographical debate on the 'cost–benefit analysis of empire', the contribution of external, exploited wealth to the British industrial revolution and the Great Divergence, and the question of who was driving – and gaining from – imperial expansion. Almost forty years ago, the historians Lance E. Davis and Robert A. Huttenback asked which categories of Britons had received imperial profits.[21]

[19] For slavery at British and American universities, see, for example, Craig Steven Wilder, *Ebony and ivy: race, slavery, and the troubled history of America's universities*, (New York, NY, 2013); Leslie M. Harris, James T. Campbell, and Alfred L. Brophy, eds., *Slavery and the university: histories and legacies* (Athens, GA, 2019); Lindsey K. Walters, 'Slavery and the American university: discourses of retrospective justice at Harvard and Brown', *Slavery & Abolition*, 38 (2017), pp. 719–44; Alfred L. Brophy, 'The university and the slaves: apology and its meaning', in Mark Gibney, Rhoda E. Howard-Hassmann, Jean-Marc Coicaud, and Niklaus Steiner, eds., *The age of apology: facing up to the past* (Philadelphia, PA, 2009); Stephen Mullen and Simon Newman, *Slavery, abolition and the University of Glasgow: report and recommendations of University of Glasgow History of Slavery Steering Committee* (Glasgow, 2018); and Catherine Hall, Nicholas Draper, and Keith McClelland, eds., *Legacies of British slave-ownership: colonial slavery and the formation of Victorian Britain* (Cambridge, 2016; orig. edn 2014).

[20] For Rhodes, see William Beinart, 'Appendix A: historical appendix to the report of the Oriel commission on the Rhodes statue and diversity within the College', in Oriel College, *Report of a commission of inquiry established by Oriel College, Oxford into issues associated with memorials to Cecil Rhodes* (Oxford, 2021). On the modern legacies of colonialism for universities, see Jacob T. Levy and Iris Marion Young, eds., *Colonialism and its legacies* (Lanham, MD, 2011); Richard Symonds, *Oxford and empire: the last lost cause?* (Oxford, 1992); Tamson Pietsch, 'Between the local and the universal: academic worlds and the long history of the university', in Meng-Hsuan Chou, Isaac Kamola, and Tamson Pietsch, eds., *The transnational politics of higher education: contesting the global/transforming the local* (Abingdon, 2016), pp. 21–42; Tamson Pietsch, *Empire of scholars: universities, networks and the British academic world, 1850–1939* (Manchester, 2015).

[21] The costs and benefits of empire are explored in, among others, Lance E. Davis and Robert A. Huttenback, *Mammon and the pursuit of empire: the political economy of British imperialism, 1860–1912* (Cambridge, 2009; orig. edn 1988); P. L. Cottrell, *British overseas investment in the nineteenth*

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This article makes three contributions to the cost–benefit debate. First, in examining Tapp, it shows that one answer to this question, for academics, might lie before our eyes: British universities, schools, and colleges. If British educational institutions were implicated in the Atlantic slave economy of the preceding centuries, then the same was true of modern colonialism. Second, Tapp's experiences help us understand that private connections and affective attachments between individuals and institutions were as significant as governmental policies in directing the spoils of empire. These feelings of closeness and affection, generated both through Tapp's education at Caius and through his enduring relationship to the college and its fellowship, helped to direct the flow of his finances to a prominent educational institution. It was thanks to the generosity of gentlemanly capitalists like Tapp that colleges received money from men and women committed to imperial expansion, helping to launder their profits from colonial exploitation. Lastly, Tapp's story shows the need for a history of failure when considering African imperial expansion. In studying successful enterprises and entrepreneurs, historians miss how the diverse portfolios of colonial investors provided them with a buffer to survive economic shocks, and the persistence of white colonists when struggling to make the empire work for them. From this perspective, African investments were less a rational game of costs and benefits and more a gamble, with a high chance of disaster but the small possibility of incredible gains if successful.

Building upon the interconnected histories of the sugar and coffee industries, Kenyan colonization and forced labour, twentieth-century investing, and the growth and development of the modern research university in the United Kingdom, this article follows Tapp's investments in Kenya to push for a history of modern colonialism that considers the distribution of those profits to European universities and other educational bodies. While Rhodes has 'stolen the show', the discussion here stresses the importance of lesser-known figures in African colonization – the 'foot soldiers' of colonialism – in creating the networks of gentlemanly capitalists who had enduring emotional ties to colleges and universities and strove to provide them with their wealth. To make that claim, the first two sections examine Manbré's origins and its expansion to Kenya, focusing on Tapp's activities in the Protectorate. The final two sections detail Tapp's other investments in extractive industries, and the role of these operations in his bequest to Caius.

century (London, 1975); P. J. Cain and A. G. Hopkins, *British imperialism, 1688–2015* (New York, NY, 2016; orig. edn 1993); A. R. Hall, *The export of capital from Britain, 1870–1914* (London, 1968); Patrick K. O'Brien, 'The costs and benefits of British imperialism, 1846–1914', *Past & Present*, 125 (1988), pp. 163–200; Avner Offer, 'The British empire, 1870–1914: a waste of money?', *Economic History Review*, 66 (1993), pp. 215–38; A. N. Porter, 'The balance sheet of empire', *Historical Journal*, 31 (1988), pp. 685–99; Leigh A. Gardner, *Taxing colonial Africa: the political economy of British imperialism* (Oxford, 2012); Nicholas J. White, *The trouble with tin: governments and business in decolonizing Malaya* (London, 2014); and Klas Rönnbäck and Oskar Broberg, *Capital and colonialism: the return on British investments in Africa, 1869–1969* (London, 2019).

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I

Tapp took his job as a company director seriously and showed great interest in Manbré's operations. After all, he was – in economic status and ideological interest – a member of the propertied British middle classes and the web of fraternal associations called 'club-land'.[22] His political leanings can best be described as anti-labour and were an important indicator of how he saw himself and his relationship to workers, in both England and Kenya. Over the course of nine days, from midnight on 26–7 September to 5 October 1919, the Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen and the National Union of Railwaymen launched a strike to maintain the rates of pay that they had enjoyed during the First World War. The strike was a success, ensuring the standardization of pay across the industry and a maximum eight-hour working day.[23] Tapp, it appears, worked with the Middle Classes Union to oppose the strike.[24]

This union – founded in February 1919 to safeguard private property after the Reform Act of 1918 had expanded working-class suffrage, thereby spurring fears of 'revolution' and 'extreme Labour demands' – was an antisemitic and anti-immigrant organization of 11,000 members.[25] During the strike, Tapp was 'approached' and filled out a 'very elaborate form' to drive a lorry. As he recalled to a friend, 'I was hanging about more or less a week in Hyde Park at times being sent on various trips to the country; handling milk cans even when empty I found was a very tiring job.'[26] He did not complain to his brother, Arthur, writing that he had been 'called up to drive a motor', but commuters felt 'little effect' from the railway strike because 'everyone on the road who could gave them a lift'.[27]

Unfortunately, Manbré's workers, whose employer had been struggling at that time, felt his ire too. Tapp revelled in having 'closed' the company factory, and

> sacked the men (such a delightful experience this latter!) and were on the verge of treating our shareholders to a most liberal division of cash when a Stratford firm came along [and] offered us most liberal terms for our factory and business; this was accepted and the purchasers are in full swing; they have got over the short hours by working night and day all the week round and are doing extremely well.

That purchase, as we shall see, led to Tapp's involvement in Kenya and the establishment of Manbré Estates.[28]

[22] William Munro Tapp to B. Hodgson-Smith, 15 Oct. 1919, GCC, GC/BUR/TAPP/75, William Munro Tapp private correspondence, 1919–20.

[23] Philip Bagwell, *The railwaymen: the history of the National Union of Railwaymen* (London, 1963), pp. 384–95.

[24] The Middle Classes Union interim report, Nov. 1919, GCC, GC/BUR/TAPP/75, Tapp correspondence, 1919–20.

[25] Maurice Cowling, *The impact of Labour, 1920–1924* (Cambridge, 1971), p. 65.

[26] Tapp to Professor William Ridgeway, 16 Oct. 1919, GCC, BUR/TAPP/75, Tapp correspondence, 1919–20.

[27] Tapp to Arthur Tapp, 12 Dec. 1919, GCC, BUR/TAPP/75, Tapp correspondence, 1919–20.

[28] Tapp to Ridgeway, 16 Oct. 1919, GCC, BUR/TAPP/75, Tapp correspondence, 1919–20.

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The strike illuminates Tapp's close connections to Cambridge, particularly Caius College, too. Having earned three degrees from Cambridge, he was a well-connected figure in the college's wood-panelled meeting rooms, and apparently well-liked, especially given that his anti-union opinions were shared there. Sir William Ridgeway, the Disney Professor of Archaeology and an alumnus of both Peterhouse and Caius (and a fellow of the latter), congratulated Tapp on 8 October that his and other Britons' efforts to facilitate anti-strike actions had 'taken aback' the striking workers and convinced the 'public' not to be 'so nervous for the future in [the] face of threatened strikes, and this will be a great asset in fighting them'. The fellow Caians shared news about Cambridge as well. 'Cambridge is simply bursting with undergraduates', Ridgeway complained, and that had led to substantial difficulties for students in finding 'rooms for them, and also secure a supply of coal'. He protested that the strikes had crippled Cambridge's economy and had threatened to bring the venerable university to a 'stand still'.[29]

Nevertheless, Tapp's connections went further than a simple ideological affinity between him and elite Cambridge professors. He was a member of the Oxford and Cambridge Club and the New University Club, which catered to 'Oxbridge' alumni.[30] These memberships placed him at the centre of a powerful network that had connections to government and business, and he profited from these contacts. The future director of Manbré, Albert Eustace Berry, sent his son, Derbe Carlton Berry, to Caius; and Manbré's production facilities and warehouses were situated on the Thames in Hammersmith with spectacular views of the Oxford–Cambridge boat race. Tapp advised prospective parents on whether their sons should attend Caius too. In October 1919, he wrote that 'the Honor [sic] Degree in Law at Cambridge is a very high standard and I do not quite know why your son should not take this up, especially if he succeeds in getting an adequate scholarship'. He continued: 'Is your son musical? If so, possibly at Caius he might get a Choral Scholarship in addition to any Law Scholarship going there.'[31] As a sign of his emotional attachment to his alma mater – emotive ties that would pay dividends for Caius upon the lawyer's death – Tapp paid £250 to commission Arthur Hacker to produce a portrait of Ernest Stewart Roberts, who was the master of Caius from February 1903 until his death in June 1912.[32]

Amid his college activities, it appears that Tapp's directorship of Manbré started less than a decade prior to the founding of Manbré Estates. In 1919, he had £1,000 in preferred shares in the company and received £62 10s. in directors' fees for the fourth quarter of that year – one of many capital sums that he and other directors devised to hide from the government 'should the Labour Party carry out some of their complicated projects'.[33] The directors

[29] Ridgeway to Tapp, 8 Oct. 1919, GCC, BUR/TAPP/75, Tapp correspondence, 1919–20.

[30] Tapp to E. R. Still, 11 Nov. 1919, GCC, BUR/TAPP/75, Tapp correspondence, 1919–20.

[31] Tapp to A. Turner, 15 Oct. 1919, GCC, BUR/TAPP/75, Tapp correspondence, 1919–20.

[32] Tapp to F. Spenlove, 15 Jan. 1920, GCC, BUR/TAPP/75, Tapp correspondence, 1919–20.

[33] H. P. Tongue to Tapp, 1 Jan. 1920; Tapp to Barclays Bank, 23 Jan. 1920; Arthur Eustace Berry to Tapp, 17 Nov. 1919; all in GCC, BUR/TAPP/75, Tapp correspondence, 1919–20.

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had much to hide, given that business had improved following Albert Eustace Berry's rapid ascent to the company's leadership. From a head chemist, Berry became a manager at the Stratford firm A. Boake, and in 1906 he acquired the Johnson Saccharine Company and formed Sugar & Malt Products Ltd. Berry, an exceptionally intelligent and hard-working manager, recognized that significant profits could be made from brewing sugars, as popular tastes were starting to shift in Britain from malted beers to lighter alcoholic beverages. Berry's Sugar & Malt Products was a success and, following a loan of £350,000 from Barclays Bank, he purchased Manbré 'lock, stock, and barrel'. In this new organization, named Manbré Sugar & Malt Ltd., A. Boake was the chairman and Berry was the managing director. Berry's business empire soon expanded, with the purchase of Brewers Sugar Company of Greenock, the Liverpool Saccharine Company, and the Liverpool Malt Company, to name a few.[34]

With Manbré's business in Britain secure, Berry and the other company directors, including Tapp, were attracted to Kenya's cheap land, abundant labour, and large profits. Tapp was part of the influx of investors, businesspeople, planters, missionaries, and anti-imperialists who made up Kenya's colonial society.[35] These men worked hard and played hard, finding the time to enjoy squash and golf, or dine with friends and hold 'eating contest[s]'.[36] Tapp's interests were more cerebral, and in Kenya he visited that 'brilliant scholar [and archaeologist] L. S. B. Leakey and his small band of Cambridge Students'.[37] It bears mentioning that East Africa's white society included colonists who denounced Britain's labour regime. Missionaries actively opposed the labour ordinances, with Frank Weston, the Anglican archbishop of Zanzibar, drafting a memorandum against these measures and publicizing its contents for signatories in England. He wrote in his 1920 work, *The serfs of Great Britain*, 'We regard forced labour as in itself immoral; and we hold that forcing Africans to work in the interests of European civilization is a betrayal of the weaker to the financial interests of the stronger race.'[38] The memorandum, however, came with qualifications and caveats: it accepted coerced labour for 'public utility' and acknowledged that Black idleness remained a concern. Tapp showed little evidence of even such limited criticisms of white imperialism.[39]

[34] John L. Garbutt, *Manbré and Garton Limited, 1855–1955: a hundred years of progress* (London, 1955), pp. 19–26, quotation at p. 22.

[35] Dane Kennedy, *Islands of white: settler society and culture in Kenya and Southern Rhodesia, 1890–1939* (Durham, NC, 1987), pp. 56–7. The views and experiences of white Kenyan colonists are discussed in Brett Shadle, *The souls of white folk: white settlers in Kenya, 1900s–1920s* (Manchester, 2017); Will Jackson, *Madness and marginality: the lives of Kenya's white insane* (Manchester, 2013); and John Lonsdale, 'Kenya: home county and African frontier', in Robert Bickers, ed., *Settlers and expatriates: Britons over the seas* (Oxford, 2010), pp. 74–111.

[36] Ernest Lanning to his mother and uncle, 10 Aug. 1832, Lanning collection, CUL, RCMS 362/1/1.

[37] William Munro Tapp, diary entries, n.d., GCC, BUR/TAPP/28/2, correspondence of Tapp during a visit to East Africa.

[38] Ross W. McGregor, *Kenya from within: a short political history* (London, 1968), p. 107.

[39] 'Missionary memorandum to secretary of state', *East African Standard*, 15 Feb. 1921. The tensions between the Colonial Office, local government, and the colonists are illuminated in Anthony Clayton and Donald C. Savage, *Government and labour in Kenya, 1895–1963* (London, 1974).

In fact, Tapp appears to have had high hopes about the Protectorate and its prospects for profiteering. In a newspaper clipping contained in his papers at Caius, he was mentioned as 'the Vice Chairman of Manbré Sugar and Malt, Ltd., an important and flourishing British company', who had travelled from Mombasa to Nairobi as there was 'a possibility of his company going in for sugar and manioc production north of the Zambesi, and if the decision is made in that direction, it will involve a very large expenditure for machinery and plant'.[40] Africa was certainly a risk, yet well worth the initial outlay of capital for future profits.

Tapp saved another newspaper article, from the *Financial Times* in October 1925, which again showed his interest in Kenyan business. The reporter, George A. Tyson, declared:

> Readers of *The Financial Times* may be interested to have a few first-hand particulars regarding the investment prospects offered by Kenya Colony, which during the last two or three years has made great progress. The large extensions to the harbour works at Mombasa, now well forward, and the big programme of railway construction now in hand or in prospect are opening up the Highlands at a rapid rate.[41]

From a paper describing itself as the 'Honest Financier', such advice regarding the material benefits of East African colonization was welcome. Alongside these industrial improvements, the report pointed to the low costs of production and the high profits that one could make in starting a company in Kenya. In mentioning a £75 profit on a ton of coffee, Tyson noted that, with

> a capital investment of £20,000, which might appeal to many private investors, giving what is an excellent return – namely, 19 per cent per annum – even taking the figures on a very conservative basis, added to which there is the prospect of considerable capital appreciation over the next few years in view of the large programme of railway development which is under consideration.[42]

These rates of return on investment compared favourably to other parts of the empire, such as in the Malayan rubber plantations, which hovered between 10 and 15 per cent in the same period.[43] There, the businessmen who operated the tin mines and rubber estates were not a unified lobby and – as Manbré's tensions with Danish investors attest – were instead fragmented into highly competitive groups that each tried to gain support from government officials. In their efforts to maintain their financial and commercial interests, these men

[40] Newspaper clipping, GCC, BUR/TAPP/28/2, Tapp East Africa correspondence.

[41] Newspaper clipping, *Financial Times*, 26 Oct. 1925, GCC, BUR/TAPP/28/2, Tapp East Africa correspondence.

[42] Ibid.

[43] Klas Rönnbäck, Oskar Broberg, and Stefania Galli, 'A colonial cash cow: the return on investments in British Malaya, 1889–1969', *Cliometrica*, 16 (2021), pp. 149–73 at p. 160.

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inaugurated a 'new imperialism'.[44] Spurred by low costs and comparatively high rates of return, colonial businessmen like Tapp had similar hopes in East Africa.

II

Manbré's incorporation papers, housed at The National Archives in Kew, London, illuminate Tapp's involvement in the formation of its Kenyan operations. According to the company prospectus, 'Manbré Estates [was formed] to acquire and develop an estate known as the Kamiti Ranch, Kahama, Nairobi, in the Crown Colony of Kenya on the East Coast of Africa.' The prospectus outlined in detail how this expansion was brought about, with Berry, alongside William Henry Abbey (a Sussex landowner and brewer) and Tapp, named as directors of the estate. During the summer of 1924, Berry and Tapp, respectively the chairman and vice-chairman of Manbré Sugar & Malt Limited, decided to spread the company's operations beyond its traditional involvement in the processing of sugar to growing the crop and becoming more involved in coffee planting. According to the prospectus, they sought to investigate 'the character of certain raw cane sugars which were being grown in Kenya' and the fact that 'in certain districts of that Colony substantial yields of sugar cane were being secured, in some cases as much as 50 to 60 tons per acre and containing a high sugar content'. The region appeared ripe for profit and exploitation.[45]

Intrigued by these more productive strains of sugar cane, Tapp visited Kenya, Mozambique, and Portuguese East Africa, financed with the help of Barclays Bank Limited and funds from Abbey, Berry, and himself. His extensive collection of maps (now in the Caius archives) of Kenya (particularly its railway system and the Yatta Plateau), and the colonies of Mozambique and the Sudan, indicates his interest in the region. Excited by these new opportunities and with the help of funds that the initial investors pooled in the 'Kenyan Sugar Syndicate', Tapp 'proceeded to East Africa, and, assisted by a gentleman who had some experience of sugar growing in Natal, inspected properties' in all three colonies.[46] As the duties were lower on Kenyan sugar and the produce from that region more likely to succeed, the syndicate chose that colony to conduct business.[47]

Situated on the Kenyan Highlands – known as the White Highlands for the vast number of colonists who monopolized land in the highly productive region – the Kamiti Ranch appeared destined for success.[48] It certainly inspired

[44] Nicholas White, 'Gentlemanly capitalism and empire in the twentieth century: the forgotten case of Malaya, 1914–1965', in Raymond E. Dumett, ed., *Gentlemanly capitalism and British imperialism: the new debate on empire* (London, 1999), pp. 175–96 at p. 181.

[45] Prospectus, 3 Dec. 1925, TNA, BT/31/36939/210113, Manbré Estates Limited, vol. I.

[46] Ibid.

[47] Maps of the East Africa Protectorate, Mozambique, and the Sudan, GCC, BUR/TAPP/28/2, Tapp East Africa correspondence.

[48] Colin Leys, *Underdevelopment in Kenya: the political economy of neo-colonialism* (London, 1975), p. 29. Between 1915 and 1953, the number of white colonists in the Highlands increased from

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Theodore Roosevelt, the former president of the United States of America, who visited the estate in 1910, a year into a safari in East and Central Africa, when it was owned by Hugh H. Heatley, a Cheshire-born farmer who later noted having 'sold the ranch to a syndicate and returned to England'.[49] 'It is white man's country', Roosevelt opined, 'a country which should be filled with white settlers; and no place could be more attractive for visitors'. Kenya was so congenial to his health that it seemed to be like an 'ordinary trip' to the French Riviera or Italy.[50] The 24,760-acre estate, which lay 13 miles from Nairobi, had a supply of timber and, as the Manbré Estate prospectus noted, 'an excellent homestead with all necessary farm buildings – a coffee factory with water power, a mill with similar power, Managers and two guest houses and certain machinery and plant'. Tapp was informed, too, about the significant amount of labour in the region, with one manager arguing that the 'available labour supply for the estate has been satisfactory and the standard of health on the estate is good'.[51] This sentence was indicative of the perverse contrast, which will be discussed later, between the housing and treatment of white managers and Black Kenyans, the latter of whom were described as a mere 'supply' of workers for the estate and judged for their health (thereby indicating how much labour they could put into harvesting the sugar and coffee crops).

The plantation's prospects met Tapp's expectations. According to a vendor reporting to the syndicate, approximately 8,000 acres of land could be placed under sugar cane and another 1,000 acres was valuable swamp land that, when drained, promised significant yields. Holding the usual ninety-nine-year lease on their land, the estate had a homestead farm of 1,037 acres on freehold, and livestock valued at £1,169. In total, the land was valued at over £100,000 but Manbré purchased it for £51,000, with an additional £6,000 provided to the Sugar Syndicate for Tapp's inspection of the property and the relevant costs of hiring lawyers in Nairobi to seal the purchase. These costs were negligible compared to the high profits that could be gained from Kamiti. The vendor noted that the gross income of the ranch was £12,000 and estimated that the net profits from such a large estate would be around £8,000 per annum as the raw sugar would be sent back to England to be processed at Manbré's refining facilities in east London. These profits and the high rates of return on investment spurred Tapp to invest.[52]

After purchasing Kamiti, Tapp continued to be a hands-on operator at the estate when he visited from England. Arriving again in Kenya in October 1928, he sent a letter to Berry, noting that he was not 'in Africa on pleasure bent, but on business which to a certain extent interests the Shareholders of Manbré & Garton and should in years to come prove a source of some

1,000 to 4,000, and the amount of land that they occupied increased from 4.5 million acres to 7.3 million acres (ibid.).

[49] 'Hugh Henry Heatley', *Europeans in East Africa*, www.europeansineastafrica.co.uk/_site/custom/database/?a=viewIndividual&pid=2&person=1024.

[50] Theodore Roosevelt, *African game trails: an account of the African wanderings of an American hunter-naturalist* (New York, NY, 2011; orig. edn), p. 148.

[51] Prospectus, 3 Dec. 1925, TNA, BT/31/36939/210113, Manbré Estates Limited, vol. I.

[52] Ibid.

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additional income to that Company'.[53] Not a man to tell tall tales, Tapp was involved in all aspects of plantation life: he helped to drain swamps and organized a joint swamp programme to open up land for cultivation; he helped to build canals; he mortgaged trucks, locomotives, sidings, and other much needed equipment; he negotiated deeds and titles for land and facilities on the Ruiru river for sugar cultivation and irrigation; he remunerated employees and maintained good relations with managers and overseers; he built bund walls to retain rainfall; and he showed clients around the estate.[54] He even sent a letter to a local white colonist, claiming that they had parked a car on Manbré land. No colonial sojourner, Tapp was a diligent director who applied his knowledge of geology, finance, and the law to improve the position of the company in Kenya.[55]

Tapp had a direct role in the planting too. The plantation allowed him to implement his geological expertise, and he corresponded widely on soil fertility, irrigation schemes, and farming methods. Writing to Captain Williams, who helped to run Sukari's sugar plantations, Tapp revealed himself to be a fastidious micromanager. In a December 1928 letter, he noted that 'much valuable time is lost during the rainy season in moving our Cane which is used for planting, as it is well[-]nigh impossible to use our tractors owing to the state of the ground and road tracks', advising that the estate construct a 'system of light rails'. Once the rains had 'ceased', he was more forceful in his advice than before. He argued that the 'prospects of fresh cane planted' were high and that planning had to begin, or the 'growth' would be 'retarded'. On the coffee harvest, he advised Williams to employ a tractor 'to draw your coffee' and move the crop downhill, and directed that oxen be used 'to draw the coffee to the Factory'.[56]

While he took an active interest in the business, Tapp also controlled the purse strings and ensured that there were no cost overruns on the plantation. In organizing the Kamiti estate's operations, he took a conservative approach to labour rights. On 26 December, he again wrote to Williams, arguing that Manbré's employees must 'contribute themselves' to the 'extra expense' of housing their wives and children on the estate.[57] Claiming that expenses should not exceed £1,000, Tapp declared that the 'strictest economy is to be exercised' on the plantation and that 'any attempt to rush the work and to have an unwieldy gang of men would be suicidal' to the security of the whole enterprise.[58] His involvement shows someone committed and involved in Manbré's operations – a business directly benefiting from underpaid and

[53] Tapp to Albert Eustace Berry, 23 Oct. 1928, GCC, BUR/TAPP/28/2, Tapp East Africa correspondence.

[54] Ibid.; Tapp to Charles Harrison, 14 Nov. 1928; Tapp to Captain Williams, 23 Dec. 1928; Tapp to Berry, 30 Nov. 1928; Tapp to Berry, 15 Dec. 1928; Tapp to Mr Aronson, 24 Dec. 1928; Tapp to Captain Abbey, 27 Dec. 1928; all in GCC, BUR/TAPP/28/2, Tapp East Africa correspondence.

[55] Tapp to Mrs Heatley, 19 Nov. 1928, GCC, BUR/TAPP/28/2, Tapp East Africa correspondence.

[56] Tapp to Captain Williams, 26 Dec. 1928, GCC, BUR/TAPP/28/2, Tapp East Africa correspondence.

[57] Ibid.

[58] Tapp to Harrison, 27 Dec. 1928, GCC, BUR/TAPP/28/2, Tapp East Africa correspondence.

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coerced labour. The estate's workers found little protection in the International Labour Organization (ILO) conventions because, as the historians Sacha Hepburn and April Jackson have shown, Britain succeeded in carving exceptions to ILO regulations for Kenyan labourers, creating a 'two-tier system of international labour law which rendered colonial children [and adults] less protected' than Europeans.[59]

In time, Tapp's extensive involvement in both Sukari's and Manbré's operations forced him to admit a conflict of interest. In November 1928, he wished his statement to be recorded on the company minutes that he 'was in Kenya at the urgent request of the directors of Manbré Estates Lim. who were paying his expenses and in which Company he was interested and the primary object of his visit was to investigate and report generally on their interests out here'. Furthermore, he declared that despite his 'conflicting interests he felt that with mutual goodwill nothing but good should result from his visit; in any discussions that took place no doubt the directors of Sukari would bear in mind his exact position'.[60] That same year, he resigned from his directorship of Sukari Limited 'at the urgent request of the Board of Manbré Estates Lim. and any attempt to serve two masters, with perhaps conflicting interests, has forced me to take the above decision'.[61]

Aside from Sukari and Manbré, Tapp's interests extended to another plantation business in Africa: Incomati Estates Limited.[62] He owned 500 shares in that enterprise, which was established in 1911 along Kenya's Incomati river.[63] Incomati, with the backing of Barclays Bank and the National Bank of South Africa, sold over 215,000 shares to British investors in 1920. The share proposal noted that production was 'exceptionally favourable' owing to 'cheap working conditions', and profits were estimated at £174,500. The press reports concerning Incomati, however, were damning, highlighting the low nutritional quality of the labourers' food (the corn flour was equated to 'bricks'), the absence of such food on the estates (workers received only one meal a day), poor medical care ('sick black[s]' were often left to die because doctors were rarely called, and those who died were discarded due to cemeteries being 'whites only'), draconian punishments (the local police killed a man who stole cane), and long working hours (with workers being paid through tasks and forced to work the land from dawn to dusk).[64] The extreme labour conditions imposed at plantations like Incomati led to high rates of starvation, poverty, and mortality.[65]

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[59] Sacha Hepburn and April Jackson, 'Colonial exceptions: the International Labour Organization and child labour in British Africa, c.1919–40', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 57 (2022), pp. 218–41, at p. 218.

[60] Suggested minutes to be recorded at meeting of directors of Sukari Limited: to be held at Nairobi, Nov. 1898, GCC, BUR/TAPP/28/2, Tapp East Africa correspondence.

[61] Tapp to Harrison, 21 Nov. 1898, GCC, BUR/TAPP/28/2, Tapp East Africa correspondence.

[62] See 'Memorandum and articles of association of Incomati Company, Limited', 4 Feb. 1914, TNA, BT 31/37506/133811, Incomati Estates Limited vol. I.

[63] 'Dr W. M. Tapp, deceased', GCC, BUR/TAPP/68/1, Trust Estate, Tapp Trust ledgers, 1936–84.

[64] *O Brado Africano*, 7 Feb. 1925.

[65] Alicia H. Lazzarini, 'Gendered labour, migratory labour: reforming sugar regimes in Xinavane, Mozambique', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 43 (2017), pp. 605–23, at pp. 607–8.

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As for Tapp, he gave little indication of his scientific views on race, but his comments echoed the paternalistic planter vision: that colonial industry transformed otherwise idle Black Kenyan 'boys' into industrious labourers. He often distinguished between the estate's 'staff' – the white men and their families, who had defined schemes for their remuneration and had homes and the privilege of using motor vehicles on the plantation – and 'natives', who did much of the hard labour on the coffee and sugar plantations. In an undated letter, he recounts how he would get up on the plantation soon after 6 a.m. and that 'the drums roll out about that time summoning our cheery natives to parade for work'.[66] The reference to 'cheery natives' and a 'parade' was consistent with the militarization and regulation of work on these estates. According to one labour contractor, he had the right of 'treating his labour in the way that an officer treated his soldiers'.[67] Given that the white colonists wanted to impose military discipline in Kenya, it should be no surprise that multiple figures at the Manbré Estate, including its manager, were former army captains. In another letter, Tapp wrote with some awe of 'our 750 acres of coffee plantations and the miles and miles of sugar ditto; the former dotted with natives who are busy getting in the coffee berries, cherries they are called and which the fruit much resembles'.[68] If he mentioned Black Kenyans, it was generally to insult them, deriding the many servants who were forced to work for little pay serving, feeding, and assisting their white rulers.[69] In one diary entry, Tapp notes the 'queer stories of Kenya's native servants' and how the 'food up to a certain point, looks rather unreliable when a dinner party, with its attendant many dishes, requires attention' – mocking how Black Kenyans would, according to him, top a fruit salad with a boiled egg.[70]

Though Tapp did not espouse scientific racism in his writings, William Ridgeway, one of his correspondents, certainly did. In the Kenyan colonial service, eugenicists were split between those favouring environmental factors for racial inferiority and officials who argued that African development was hampered by heredity.[71] Ridgeway, who was in the former camp, had argued that it was essential for colonial officials to learn 'ethnology and primitive religion', an issue that he believed had 'bearing on the interests of our national trade in its competition with that of foreign countries'.[72] Indeed, he claimed that 'the effects of the environment' changed 'racial types', with one example being the 'change in the type of the American of New England from that of his English ancestor and his approximation to the hatchet face and thin

[66] Tapp to Berry, n.d., GCC, BUR/TAPP/28/2, Tapp East Africa correspondence.

[67] Anderson, 'Master and servant', p. 470.

[68] Tapp to Berry, n.d., GCC, BUR/TAPP/28/2, Tapp East Africa correspondence.

[69] Kennedy, *Islands of white*, p. 155.

[70] Tapp, diary entry, n.d., GCC, BUR/TAPP/28/2, Tapp East Africa correspondence ('unreliable').

[71] Chloe Campbell, *Race and empire: eugenics in colonial Kenya* (Manchester, 2012), p. 14.

[72] 'A memorandum from the Royal Anthropological Institute on the teaching of anthropology to colonial officials', Cambridge, Churchill College Archives Centre, GBR/0014/CHAR 11/5, Board of Trade papers, 1906–11.

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scraggy beard of the Red Indian'.[73] A. C. Haddon, who helped to establish Cambridge's School of Anthropology, was more qualified in his argument that environment and climate shaped racial characteristics, but his *The races of man and their distribution*, published in 1909, utilized a classification system to determine race. On facial features, he wrote that 'A flat and retreating forehead is also a "low" feature, but a somewhat bulbous forehead such as is characteristic of Negroes does not necessarily imply high intellectual ability.'[74] The preponderance of such views in Cambridge, and Tapp's personal interest in natural history and friendship with Ridgeway, mean that they may have provided a possible insight into his worldview.

Notwithstanding the derogatory comments aimed at the company's 'servants', Manbré was complicit in British efforts to expropriate African land. By 1930, six years before Tapp's death, 3 million acres of land had been provided to 2,000 colonists, but another 3 million were afforded to 1.7 million Black Kenyans.[75] These acquisition programmes, along with direct taxes, restricted the ability of Black Kenyans to improve their lot and created a labour surplus – a reserve army of labour – that constantly put a downward pressure on wages in the Protectorate. In effect (and in part by design), expropriation drove exploitation – creating a vicious cycle of poverty that harmed economic development in Kenya.[76]

The Kenyan Land Commission of 1930, instituted to investigate African land claims and the bundle of grievances that arose because of the inequalities in land ownership, mentioned Manbré. The land in question in the Thika area belonged to the Anjiru and Ambui clans, who had occupied territory, now alienated for European settlement, stretching from the Chania river to the Ruiru. The commission reported that the land claimed was 'about 12 miles long and 2½ miles wide, and comprises the whole or part of the estates known as Kibazi, Kiora, Dunmottar, Gulmac, Kiu River Farm, Kahawa, Kamiti Downs, Liara, Mayfield, and part of Manbré, also Kahawa Station and the estate of Mr. J. W. Lennon'.[77] This process of land alienation, in which Manbré Estates, Sukari, and Tapp were involved, sowed the seeds of poverty and ensured that Black Kenyan producers became squatters on white land, forced to

[73] William Ridgeway, 'The application of zoological laws to man', *Popular Science Monthly*, Dec. 1908, pp. 500–22, at p. 502.

[74] Alfred Cort Haddon, *The races of man and their distribution* (Cambridge, 2012; orig. edn 1909), p. 4.

[75] Patricia J. Deacon and Michael B. K. Darkoh, 'The policies and practices behind the degradation of Kenya's land resources – a preliminary review', *Journal of Eastern African Research & Development*, 17 (1987), pp. 34–52, at p. 43.

[76] See Leys, *Underdevelopment in Kenya*; Richard D. Wolff, *The economics of colonialism: Britain and Kenya, 1870–1930* (New Haven, CT, 1974); Mwangi Wa-Githumo, *Land and nationalism: the impact of land expropriation and land grievances upon the rise and development of nationalist movements in Kenya, 1885–1939* (Washington, DC, 1981); and M. P. K. Sorrenson, *Land reform in the Kikuyu country* (Nairobi, 1967). For direct taxation and the creation of colonial inequality in a comparable British colony, see Laura K. Channing, 'Taxing chiefs: the design and introduction of direct taxation in the Sierra Leone Protectorate, 1896–1914', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 48 (2020), pp. 395–424.

[77] Kenyan Land Commission, *Kenya Land Commission evidence* (111 vols., London, 1932–4), I, p. 330.

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work under the colony's coercive master-and-servant regulations.[78] Tapp may have resigned his position as director due to ill health in March 1930, but the legacy of his decisions continued to reverberate in the Protectorate.

III

Despite Tapp's efforts, Manbré Group historians have dismissed the Kenyan operation as a failure, 'owing to drought and to the attentions of plagues of locusts, attracted like any sensible creature to something sweet, but a confounded nuisance'.[79] Yet investors saw Kenya's plantations as a place to reap financial windfalls. The initial offering of £100,000 in ordinary stock on 21 December 1925 was completely subscribed at £1 each, providing these investors a vote at the company's shareholder meetings and the estate with capital to begin operations.[80] The directors owned a significant number of these shares: Henry Abbey held £9,800 of stock, Berry £11,001, and Tapp £10,000. Manbré Estates benefited, too, from the investment of several British brewers, such as Abbey – thereby highlighting the liquor industry's role in African colonization. Hoping to take a slice of the profits from trading in sweeter forms of liquor, Captain John R. Abbey (£2,000), a manager of Kempt Town Brewery along with his brother, A. Russell Smith of Griffin Brewery (£82,348), and James H. Stephens, the chairman of Menx's Brewery, all invested in Manbré Estates.[81] If we expand our definition of white Kenyan colonists, then it is necessary to reinterpret who could be a colonial investor, whether colleges or brewers.

Closer to Tapp's friends in Cambridge, King's College had £450 stock in Manbré Estates's parent company from June 1924 until October 1926, while the firm was moving into Kenya. At the time, John Maynard Keynes was the first bursar at King's, transforming its portfolio from long-term fixed-income assets into equities, many of them in colonial enterprises, ranging from Malaya to the Sudan. By June 1925, King's had £4,050 collectively held in five Malayan rubber plantations: United Sua Betong estates (£500), Sunger Buaya Rubber in Sumatra (£150), Selaba Rubber Estates (£400), Central Sumatra Rubber Company (£2,000), and Telogoredjo United Plantations Limited (£1,000). The college also held investments in Africa, including Sudan bonds (£33,500), shares in Tanganyika Concessions Limited (£1,000), a mining and railway company established to extract minerals from Rhodesia and the Congo Free State, and the Sudan Plantations Syndicate (£941), an organization founded to expand cotton growing and irrigation with the assistance of Sir Frederick Eckstein, a South African gold miner. Plantation and colonial investments therefore remained a significant part of college balance sheets.[82]

[78] Maria Fibaek and Erik Green, 'Labour control and the establishment of profitable settler agriculture in colonial Kenya, c. 1920–45', *Economic History of Developing Regions*, 34 (2019), pp. 72–110.

[79] Antony Hugill, *Sugar and all that: a history of Tate & Lyle* (London, 1978), p. 305.

[80] Report of the directors, 1925, TNA, BT/31/36939/210113, Manbré Estates Limited, vol. I.

[81] Names, addresses, and descriptions of allottees, 21 Dec. 1925, TNA, BT/31/36939/210113, Manbré Estates Limited, vol. I.

[82] Investment register, 1922–7, Cambridge, King's College Archive Centre (KCAC), GBR/0272/KCA/920, pp. 71 (total Malayan investment), 102 and 122 (United Sua Betong, Sunger Buaya

Aside from brewers, financiers, and college fellows, men and women from multiple backgrounds and social classes invested in Manbré Estates, from both Britain and Kenya. In 1925, 1931, and 1937 – the three years when most investors provided money to the company – the largest proportion of the 455 unique investors in Manbré were so-called 'gentlemen': men who lived off the wealth of their fixed capital (often landed estates), members of the professional class (particularly solicitors, financiers, and accountants), and mercantile men who traded and bartered on the stock market. But other individuals were involved, from coffee and sugar planters to advertising contractors, to directors of companies, to ministers in the Church of England, to retired members of the armed forces. The Rt Hon. Thomas Henry Noel-Hill; Baron Berwick of Attingham Park; Lawrence Dundas, 2nd marquess of Zetland and earl of Ronaldshay and later the secretary of state for India; and George Osborne, 10th duke of Leeds all contributed funds to the enterprise, thereby cementing the aristocracy's interest in the Kenyan Protectorate.[83]

Furthermore, a significant number of women – forty-three when the first round of shares was offered in 1925, eight in 1931, and sixty-five in 1937 – bought stock in Manbré Estates. These women, some of whom were personally related or married to the directors, were listed in the records as 'unmarried', 'married', or 'widowed'. One, Mary Greenwood from Todmorden, Lancashire, a 'housekeeper', had £80 in stock. Their investments crossed lines of class and profession: Adelaide Boddam-Whetham, an archer at the 1908 Olympic Games, had £100 in ordinary shares; Dr Adeline Mary Roberts, an Irish surgeon and feminist activist, held the same amount of stock.[84] As the historians Josephine Maltby and Janette Rutterford argue, women's investing has attracted 'very little attention' from scholars, thereby meaning that the power of 'gentlewomanly capitalism' in driving imperial expansion has been underestimated.[85] Given the wide range of investors, both men and women, Manbré's operations were considered a viable prospect and should not be so easily dismissed.

The estate's balance sheets from 1925 until 1938, around the time of Tapp's death, show significant growth, despite the difficulties in the global sugar and coffee markets (see Figure 1).[86] The enormous expansion of sugar production

Rubber, Selaba Rubber, Central Sumatra Rubber), 109 (Telogoredjo United Plantations), 73 (Sudan bonds), and 85 (Tanganyika Concessions); Cambridge, KCAC, Chest investments, college ledger for the first bursar, 1933–40, p. 33 (Sudan Plantations); David Chambers, Elroy Dimson, and Justin Foo, 'Keynes, King's and endowment asset management', *National Bureau of Economic Research Working Paper*, no. 20421, www.nber.org/system/files/working_papers/w20421/w20421.pdf.

83 Names, addresses, and descriptions of allottees, 21 Dec. 1925, TNA, BT/31/36939/210113, Manbré Estates Limited, vol. I.

84 Names, addresses, and descriptions of allottees, 21 Dec. 1925, 30 Apr. 1931, and 6 Aug. 1937, TNA, BT/31/36939/210113, Manbré Estates Limited, vol. I.

85 Josephine Maltby and Janette Rutterford, '"She possessed her own fortune": women investors from the late nineteenth century to the early twentieth century', *Business History*, 48 (2006), pp. 220–53, at p. 221; David Green and Alastair Owens, 'Gentlewomanly capitalism: widows and wealth-holding in England and Wales, c. 1800–1960', *Economic History Review*, 56 (2003), pp. 510–36.

86 Brian H. Pollitt, 'The Cuban sugar economy in the Great Depression', *Bulletin of Latin American Research*, 3 (1984), pp. 3–28, at p. 3.

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by one-third between 1920 and 1925 – the 'crisis of overproduction' – because of significant price increases after 1923 then resulted in a price collapse for more than a decade, with only some respite in 1926–7. Compounding this issue, sugar-producing colonies increased production, with Indonesia expanding from 1.5 million tonnes in 1920 to 3 million tonnes in 1929.[87] In parliament in 1930, one member highlighted the fact that the 'depression in [sugar] prices and the underselling to which our British Colonial producers are exposed is far greater than practically any other industry that I have been able to investigate'.[88] Environmental factors are therefore too readily used by Manbré Company historians to dismiss the Kenyan operations, which both Tapp and Berry believed to be a vital part of the company's present and future success.

It appears that neither the global economy nor the environment precipitated Manbré Estates' demise. In 1927, the sales of produce declined because, as Manbré admitted, 'the Estate suffered from drought, and in consequence the Coffee crop has been restricted, and the profits will probably not justify the payment of a dividend'.[89] Despite these issues (and belying the failure narrative popular within Manbré), the estate made a net profit of £6,202 18s., paid a dividend of 4 per cent to its investors, finished work on irrigating the sugar cane, and erected a factory to produce coffee. As Figure 1 shows, the value of the company's assets increased until Tapp's death in 1936. During this time, the estate managed to improve sales of produce from £13,093 3s. 8d. in 1926 to a peak of £38,249 10s. 1d. in 1932. Tapp and his fellow investors had made a viable investment in Manbré; the problem was that they had made their move into Kamiti at the wrong time. In fact, the company was not wound up by liquidators – a voluntary liquidation – until 2 April 1952, with the assets for the estate (after deductions to secured creditors) totalling £359,508.[90] The last annual general meeting was on 14 June 1956.[91]

Manbré had larger concerns than locusts, with the company having to contend with a complex arrangement of international and imperial sugar agreements. Kenyan sugar producers were anxious at the time about the world sugar market. These concerns were to be addressed at the World Sugar Conference of 1937, which imposed export and production quotas based largely on imperial preferences in Europe.[92] Nevertheless, Berry wondered whether double standards were at work. In an April 1936 letter to Sir Sidney Caine, the secretary to the West India and UK Sugar Industry commissions, he wrote that in Uganda there had been 'big efforts' to 'increase the production in Central Africa, and from all information to hand I feel that the attitude is in direct conflict with the one that will be adopted at the Sugar Conference'. He

[87] Dietmar Rothermund, *The global impact of the Great Depression, 1929–1939* (London, 1996), pp. 43–4.

[88] Debate on 26 Nov. 1930 concerning the British sugar industry, *Hansard, 1803–2005*, https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/lords/1930/nov/26/british-sugar-industry.

[89] Prospectus, 1927, TNA, BT/31/36939/210113, Manbré Estates Limited, vol. I.

[90] Analysis of balance, 2 Apr. 1952, TNA, BT/31/36939/210113, Manbré Estates Limited, vol. I.

[91] Return of final winding-up meeting, 14 June 1956, TNA, BT/31/36939/210113, Manbré Estates Limited, vol. I.

[92] Alan S. Milward, *The European rescue of the nation-state* (London, 2000; orig. edn), p. 273.

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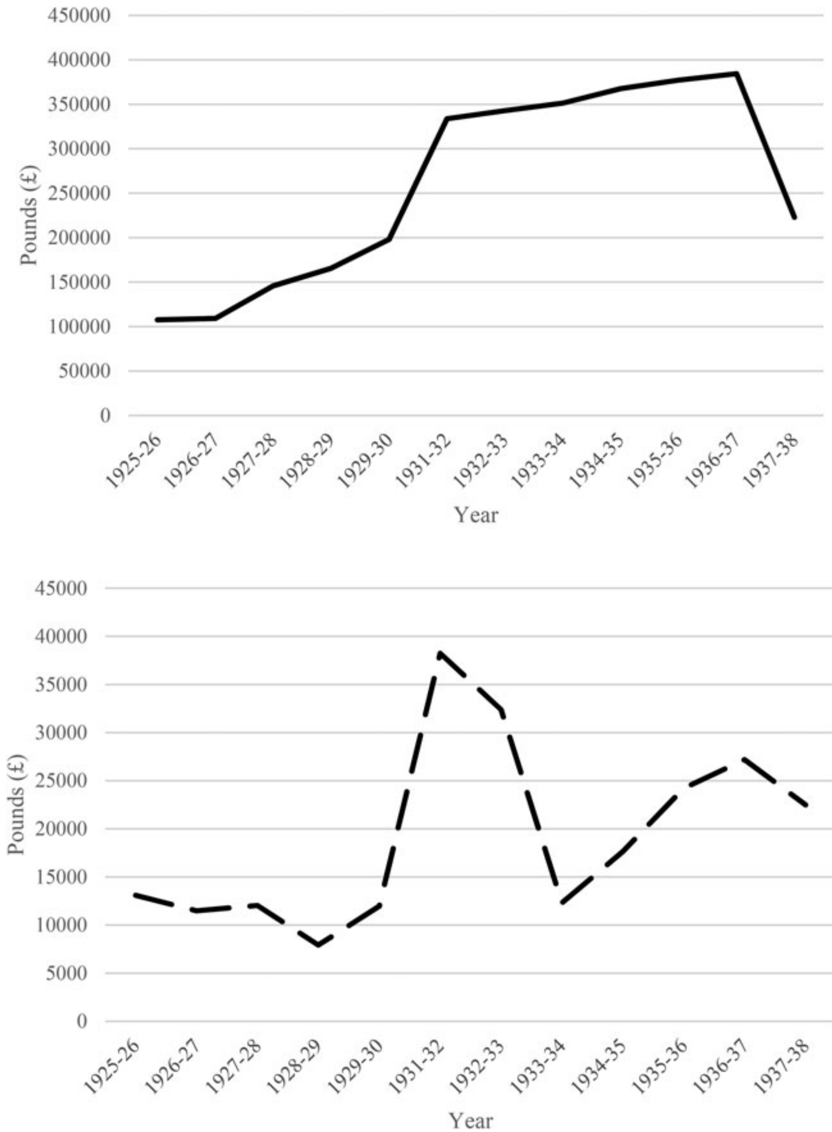

Figure 1. Company assets (top) and sales of produce (bottom). The data for the fiscal year 1930–1 are not extant. *Source:* London, The National Archives, BT/31/36939/210113, Manbré Estates Limited vol. I.

further protested that, although 'the Governor placed a prohibition upon the importation of machinery for milling with the object of restricting the production of sugar', he had 'been advised that Uganda has withdrawn that restriction and allowed machinery to be imported for increased production: there is further talk now of new mills being built, which I submit is entirely contrary to

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the attitude I think the British Government will take in the forthcoming Conference'. These entreaties fell on deaf ears, but Berry was able to access the upper echelons of colonial authority.[93]

Finding evidence to support his claims of overproduction, Berry sent another letter to Caine two days later concerning Danish estates in Tanganyika to the south-west, which Britain held as a League of Nations mandate until the end of the Second World War.[94] He was referring to the Tanganyika Planting Company, a Danish enterprise that had operated in East Africa for six years.[95] The Manbré director complained that they had established a sugar factory in Arusha. To add insult to injury, Berry had 'been approached to help in the development of that factory with the object of increasing its capacity to 15,000 tons of sugar cane per annum: the local consumption of sugar in Tanganyika is about 3,500 tons – probably it does not exceed 4,000 tons per annum'. He believed that, with the assistance of Danish finance capital, foreign investors were unduly benefiting from British preference arrangements in exporting sugar to Britain. The Danes had 'brought machinery from Java and erected it in Tanganyika to enjoy the British preference, and I understand that this attitude is going to be increased'.[96] The flight to British preference arrangements from Java made sense for the Danish company, given that the Dutch colony had no established home market for sugar, and the region had fallen 'victim to growing protectionism' and imperial preferences in the Indian subcontinent, Japan, and China.[97] Java had suffered under the transnational influence of what the historian Roger Knight calls 'exogenous colonialism'.[98]

Searching for higher profits, Berry claimed that the government had provided support to the Danish sugar producers. In essence, the letters exposed an enduring tension between a supposed 'free market' for sugar, as debated and proposed at the Sugar Conference in 1937, and the importance of protectionism to Kenyan producers seeking shelter from foreign competition. 'My Company and our British interests', he continued in his communication of 18 April,

> are likely to suffer in consequence of the support that I understand is being given to this Tanganyika enterprise: some time ago, when a Conference initiated by the Governors of the three territories studied the whole sugar position, you may remember that consideration was given to quotas for the respective territories.

[93] Berry to Sidney Caine, 16 Apr. 1936, TNA, CO 852/83/5, Uganda, Kenya, and Tanganyika territory papers.

[94] Susan G. Pederson, *The guardians: the league of nations and the crisis of empire* (New York, NY, 2015), p. 225.

[95] Henning Morgan, *Danish sugar in East Africa: the Tanganyika Planting Company* (London, 2016).

[96] Berry to Caine, 18 Apr. 1936, TNA, CO 852/83/5, Uganda, Kenya, and Tanganyika territory papers.

[97] Fritz Georg Von Graevenitz, 'Exogenous transnationalism: Java and "Europe" in an organised world sugar market (1927–37)', *Contemporary European History*, 20 (2011), pp. 257–80, at p. 263.

[98] G. Roger Knight, 'Exogenous colonialism: Java sugar between Nippon and Taikoo before and during the interwar Depression, c. 1920–1940', *Modern Asian Studies*, 44 (2010), pp. 477–515.

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Arguing that Manbré had been disadvantaged by locusts and drought, forcing the cane fields to be replanted, Berry wrote that these issues had resulted in a 'small quota, although we have the finest and most up-to-date mill in any of the territories'. The quota for Kenya and Uganda stood at 30,000 tons and the Tanganyika Planting Company would be allotted 6,451 tons – well beyond the total agreed by the East African governors.[99]

If Berry was looking for swift action against the 'new project in Tanganyika entirely controlled by Danish capital', he would have been disappointed.[100] British officials were dismissive of his arguments against competition. One official, waiting until 5 May to respond, noted that 'no special assistance has been given to this Tanganyika factory'. The Danish enterprise had been 'allowed to develop land for sugar, the Government not having thought fit to prevent such development in the absence of any agreement for the regulation of sugar production either internationally or in East Africa'. Referring to Tanganyika's status as a mandated territory, the official noted that 'therefore, the Government cannot discriminate in any way between British and foreign enterprise'.[101] Even as sugar dropped to a low of 10 cents per pound, Caine wrote in marginalia on the official documents: 'If the Danes can make sugar pay why can't Mr Berry? No one is going to stop him!'[102] Berry was a victim of diplomatic tension between territorial governments. From 1924, white colonists and businessmen in East Africa had pushed for a union between Kenya, Uganda, and Tanganyika – a project that fell apart because Donald Cameron, Tanganyika's governor, maintained that the mandate's status made such a project impossible.[103]

British officials saw no reason to afford either Manbré or Sukari Limited preferential treatment. More than a year later, in May 1937, another observer mocked Sukari's operations. On the question of relaxing the export quota, he observed that Kenya would get into 'local difficulties because of the peculiar position of Sukari Limited, who have a very expensive mill in the wrong place, around which there is simply not enough cane land to feed it'. Sympathizing with investors, like Tapp, the official saw 'little chance of getting it [their money] back, but it is naturally asking too much of the people who have got mills in the right place surrounded by unlimited acres of cane land to agree that they should make sacrifices on behalf of the Sukari

[99] Berry to Caine, 18 Apr. 1936, TNA, CO 852/83/5, Uganda, Kenya, and Tanganyika territory papers.

[100] Ibid.

[101] Caine to Berry, 5 May 1936, TNA, CO 852/83/5, Uganda, Kenya, and Tanganyika territory papers.

[102] Sidney Caine, note on 25 Apr. 1936, TNA, CO 852/83/5, Uganda, Kenya, and Tanganyika territory papers.

[103] For the possibility of union in British East Africa, see Michael D. Callahan, 'The failure of "closer union" in British East Africa, 1929–31', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 25 (1997), pp. 267–93; Michael D. Callahan, *Mandates and empires: the League of Nations and Africa, 1914–1931* (Brighton, 1999); and Nicholas J. Westcott, 'Closer union and the future of East Africa, 1939–1948: a case study in the "official mind" of imperialism', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 10 (1981), pp. 67–88.

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people'.[104] Manbré and Sukari were caught between poor decisions, local environmental factors, fluctuating global sugar prices, and complicated regional administrative frameworks concerning the mandate and preference system. Though Manbré failed to turn a profit, the *Tanganyika Territory Gazette* noted in September that 'the Tanganyika Planting Company may export from their mill at Arusha 1,612 tons of sugar between the above-mentioned dates'.[105]

Belying the decline and fall narrative, Manbré's African adventure did not end in failure. Reinforcing the Kamiti Ranch's value, the company chose to continue business on the continent three years before the estate's closure. In effect, Berry and the other directors expanded their business in Africa rather than renounce their failure in Kenya. In 1935, Manbré became affiliated with the African Products Manufacturing Co. Ltd (APMC) in South Africa. Built on a 14-acre estate near the Transvaal maize triangle – a rich agricultural region stretching across Transvaal, the former eastern Orange Free State, and colonial Basutoland – the APMC holding provided starch, glucose, cornflour, and maize for cornflour and laundry starch brands such as 'African Maid' and 'Maizeko', which became household names in the region.[106] Tapp did not live to enjoy this success, but Manbré had finally gained a financial foothold in Africa.

Tapp's bequest was extensive and included other stock and property investments besides Manbré, including in Africa. His papers document a natalite syndicate in Kenya, of which he owned a one-third share, along with his business partners Arthur Berry and E. J. Boake.[107] Given coverage at the British Empire Exhibition in 1924, natalite was a compound made from molasses which could act as a substitute for petroleum; it was therefore a valuable product for the plantations to export at a time of high fuel prices.[108] Joining other joint-stock firms, such as the British East Africa Natalite Company and Natalite Motor Spirit Company in South Africa, Tapp, Berry, and Boake made a move on the agricultural fuel market, where the price for petroleum was of 'vital concern', given that the colony, as one politician put it, depended 'entirely on the products of the soil'.[109] This syndicate was a substantial enterprise, with each member contributing £1,400, to create an initial capital of £4,200.[110] The syndicate hoped to obtain a 5-acre parcel of land in the district of Kiambu, near Sukari Limited's sugar factory and land belonging to Manbré Estates.[111]

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[104] Letter to G. L. M. Clauson, 27 May 1937, TNA, CO 852/83/5, Kenya papers.

[105] *Tanganyika Territory Gazette*, supplement, 1 Sept. 1937, TNA, CO 852/83/5, Kenya papers.

[106] 'African Products Manufacturing Co. Ltd', Manbré & Garton Group Limited prospectus, 1935, London, Hammersmith and Fulham Library, H 664 MAN/J82/547.

[107] Deed for the Natalite Syndicate, 13 June 1928, GCC, BUR/TAPP/28/1, Natalite Syndicate.

[108] H. Massac Buist, 'Motor cars at the British Empire Exhibition', *British Medical Journal*, 3 May 1924, pp. 796–7, at p. 796.

[109] *Official report of debates in Legislative Council* (91 vols., Nairobi, 1925–63), II, p. 549, 3 Nov. 1927.

[110] Deed for the Natalite Syndicate, 13 June 1928, GCC, BUR/TAPP/28/1, Natalite Syndicate.

[111] Secretary of Manbré Estates to the Natalite Syndicate, 28 Apr. 1931, GCC, BUR/TAPP/28/1, Natalite Syndicate.

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Alongside his interests in East Africa, Tapp's holdings included 330 shares in the Central Provinces Manganese Ore Mining Company, which was a British-owned company established in 1896.[112] Manganese was a necessary component in arms production, and India was one of its greatest producers, particularly in Madhya Pradesh.[113] Yet this industry also depended on land expropriation, driving more than 10 million 'Adivasis' – a collective term for the tribes indigenous to the Indian subcontinent – away from their traditional lands to make room for mining, dam operations, and road-building.[114] Forced to work for limited pay and at the mercy of labour contractors and money lenders, the Adivasis in India shared a similar fate to the Black Kenyans on the Manbré, Sukari, and Incomati sugar and coffee plantations who laboured for the European colonists.

On 23 January 1936, Tapp died at his home in Queen Anne's Mansions, London. His will and codicil, which were proved more than three months later, on 7 May, left the college the 'largest bequest' that they had ever received.[115] To make Caius's rights to Tapp's estate clearer, John Forbes Cameron, the master, and Ernest Powell Weller, the bursar, were appointed as the executors and the college as trustees. Having established an income for his wife, Kate Garrett Tapp, and provided items from his estate to his sister, Catherine Alway, and various stipends to other friends, Tapp gave Caius 'all my real and leasehold estate whatsoever and wheresoever of or to which I shall at my decease be seised [sic] possessed or entitled or over which I may have a general power of appointment or disposition by Will'. He further directed that half of his trust should fund the 'encouragement of the study or teaching of law and jurisprudence', providing up to £80 per candidate for a period of seven years, and the other half should be provided to the college general fund for Caius's use.[116] In time, Tapp's funds may have provided a boon for the college's finances as it completed Harvey Court (designed by Sir Leslie Martin and Colin St John Wilson) in 1960–2.[117] Given the significant expansion in student numbers after the Second World War due to returning servicemen, Caius could not provide undergraduates with two years' accommodation in college. Projects such as Harvey Court may have benefited from Tapp's injection of funds, thereby securing Caius for the future, and establishing the benefactor in their esteem.

Tapp's shareholdings in Sukari, Manbré, Incomati, and the Manganese Ore Mining Company were substantial and formed part of the trust he established following his death. Still, the efforts he made over several years and numerous visits to attain riches from the Sukari and Manbré estates amounted to little

[112] 'Dr W. M. Tapp, deceased', GCC, BUR/TAPP/68/1, Trust Estate, Tapp Trust ledgers, 1936–84.

[113] Kaushik Roy, *The army in British India: from colonial warfare to total war, 1857–1947* (London, 2013), p. 121.

[114] Pranjali Bandhu and T. G. Jacob, *Encountering the Adivasi question: south Indian narratives* (New Delhi, 2019), p. 19.

[115] *Once a Caian*, no. 3 (Cambridge, 2006), p. 9.

[116] Copy of will of W. M. Tapp, 16 June 1933, and codicil, 23 Sept. 1935, GCC, BUR/TAPP/34, Estate of William Munro Tapp.

[117] Brooke, *History of Gonville and Caius*, pp. 275–6.

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relative to the significant capital that he had vested in railway, breweries, and water company stock.[118] In Kenya, Tapp played the colonial lottery and lost – but his failure was not for want of trying. Price Waterhouse valued his estate, and the auditors mentioned his involvement in Manbré. In considering whether estate duty was owed from these assets, they wrote: 'Your Solicitors have communicated with Manbré Estates Ltd.' and found that there was an arrangement among the partners to not pay rent when the company was unprofitable but that this rent charge would 'remain a debt due to the Company'. After his death, Tapp's estate had to resolve the failures of Manbré in Africa, including its rents. The Natalite Syndicate turned out to be one of Tapp's least successful ventures and it was wound up soon afterwards. The stocks he owned that related to East Africa at his death included the aforementioned 500 shares in Incomati Estates (with a book value of £500 and a market value of £87 10d.), 10,200 shares in Manbré Estates (with a book value of £10,200 and a market value of £127 10d.), and 1,000 shares in Sukari Limited (ordinary shares with 'nil' sale value). These shares featured in subsequent editions of the Tapp Trust ledger books, and the Sukari stock remained on these ledgers until 1958.[119]

As a direct result of Tapp's will, both the college bursar, Ernest P. Weller, and the master and former vice-chancellor of the University of Cambridge, John F. Cameron, became shareholders in Manbré Estates in 1937, owning around £600 worth of preferred stock on behalf of the college.[120] Weller's letter books contain extensive correspondence relating to the Manbré and Sukari investments, but there was no discussion of the ethics of these colonial activities – an archival silence that was not particularly surprising given that Caius, for one, had taken benefactions from individuals who had investments in British imperial enterprises from the eighteenth century onwards.[121] On 19 November 1937, Weller informed Sukari of Tapp's death and that 'in due course his residuary estate will be vested in this College as trustees. [Forthcoming] communications, therefore, should be addressed to me.'[122] The bursar continued to be abreast of developments into the new year. In December 1938, he contacted Tapp's widow to let her know that he would not be attending Sukari's Annual General Meeting in Nairobi on account of it being 'too late to get there in time for the meeting even if I intended to

[118] Price Waterhouse statement of account of assets, 23 Jan. 1937, GCC, BUR/TAPP/39, W. M. Tapp and executors' transactions.

[119] Tapp Trust ledger book, 1945–62, GCC, BUR/TAPP/68/02, Tapp Trust accounts. The tenancy agreement for renting the factory from Manbré is detailed in Secretary of Manbré Estates to the Natalite Syndicate, 28 Apr. 1931, GCC, BUR/TAPP/28/1, Natalite Syndicate.

[120] Names, addresses, and descriptions of the allottees, 6 Aug. 1937, TNA, BT/31/36939/210113, Manbré Estates Limited, vol. I.

[121] Nicolas Bell-Romero, 'The legacies of enslavement and coerced labour at Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge', www.cai.cam.ac.uk/sites/default/files/The%20Legacies%20of%20Enslavement%20and%20Coerced%20Labour%20at%20Gonville%20and%20Caius%20Report%20July%202022.pdf.

[122] Ernest P. Weller to the secretaries of Sukari Limited, 19 Nov. 1937, GCC, BUR/C/02/093, Gonville and Caius College bursar letter books.

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go'. He concluded: 'The accounts are not very encouraging.'[123] In time, the bursar intended to use the Tapp investments and other incomes to purchase 'low nominal yield' stocks, particularly Consols (essentially redeemable government bonds), to support the legal scholarship programme and general fund into the future.[124]

Stocks, shares, and bonds constituted the largest part of the Tapp bequest, which was valued at £96,581 13s. 9d., including his African securities. Tapp's estate papers show that he had a laundry list of investments that were not related to African colonization and profiteering.[125] One might conclude, therefore, that Tapp's African investments were insignificant. But Tapp, like many colonial capitalists, was a smart investor, diversifying his portfolio to include land, stocks, and bonds. Holding his capital in the Kenyan venture would have been reckless and, given the fate of Manbré Estates, a sure road to financial ruin. He also earned significant funds from Manbré directors' fees, which perhaps helped to finance his other investments. Like Caius College and most Britons following a stable and profitable investment strategy, Tapp held bonds in domestic and international railway companies, particularly the London Passenger Transport Board, the Midi Railway Company, and the Northern Railway of France. He held interests in breweries and distilleries, such as Bullard & Sons in Norfolk, Bushell, Watkins & Smith in Kent, and Hodgson's Kingston Brewery in Kingston-on-Thames. From seaside resorts to water companies to coal enterprises, Tapp was a sophisticated agent in the London stock exchange. Furthermore, alongside his stockholdings, he held war loans from the First World War, and conversion loans, which provided the Treasury with funds to purchase mature securities.[126]

Aside from railway stocks, bonds, and the Kenyan investments, Tapp's bequest was significant in personal property. The college still possesses an inventory of the effects that were left to Caius. Tapp was generous, providing rugs, mahogany chairs, a sang de boeuf ceramic vase, a Louis XV clock, a wardrobe, Korean vases (some of which went to the Fitzwilliam Museum and are still on display), lamps, decanters, curtains, and a doctor of laws academic gown. His silver collection – including two whalebone ladles, Birmingham kettles, and silver watches – went to the master's lodge. (The one item from Kenya was a mounted monkey skin.)[127] His book collection, housed in the college library, illuminates his interests in ornithology, architecture, poetry, furniture, pottery, genealogy, and Charles Dickens. The value of these items, drawn from Tapp's two homes, Abbey House and Queen Anne's Mansions, amounted to

[123] Weller to Kate Garrett Tapp, 19 Dec. 1938, GCC, BUR/C/02/101, Gonville and Caius College bursar letter books.

[124] Weller to Arthur Gerard Rhodes Sentance Tapp, 24 Jan. 1939, GCC, BUR/C/02/101, Gonville and Caius College bursar letter books.

[125] Price Waterhouse statement of account of assets, 23 Jan. 1937, GCC, BUR/TAPP/39, W. M. Tapp and executors' transactions.

[126] 'Investments of the deceased in stocks, shares, and bonds', 23 Jan. 1937, GCC, BUR/TAPP/39, W. M. Tapp and executors' transactions.

[127] 'Inventory of effects of W. M. Tapp, annotated by Mrs. A. L. Tapp', Jan. 1936, GCC, BUR/TAPP/54/2, Disposal of effects of W. M. Tapp.

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£434 11s. Tapp bequeathed physical property, too, in Tottenham Court, Westcliff-on-Sea, Twickenham, Chelsea, Hampstead, Sutton, and Suffolk, valued at £27,215 in freehold properties and £47,700 in leasehold estates.[128] His properties may not have benefited from his Kenyan activities, but his colonial investments demonstrate how such speculations – though beset with failure – were a regular and important part of the investment strategies pursued by middling Britons, as well as the institutions that they endowed.

Caius did not shy away from similar plantation operations. Though not publicized widely in the college's official records, the Cadbury family donated £700 in January 1937 to 'pay the cost of substituting Colley Weston slates for blue slates on the roofs on the south-west side of Tree Court and the east side of the Master's garden'.[129] Coincidentally, Laurence J. Cadbury and Cadbury Brothers were investors in Manbré.[130] That had not been their first colonial venture: in 1908, the activities of Cadbury Brothers Ltd in the Portuguese colony of São Tomé and Príncipe came to light after the English chocolatier sued the *Standard News* for libel. The newspaper had claimed that the company had knowingly used slave-produced cocoa. Cadbury's won the case and thereby maintained their popular reputation for abolitionism, earned by the Quaker family during the nineteenth century, but Henry Nevinson and other journalists exposed how companies in Africa, including the famed chocolatier, had abandoned principles for profit.[131] The donation hints at the kind of reputational whitewashing that institutions such as Caius played for benefactors. These institutions sat at the heart of an imperial economic system that brought together old and new elites who governed the empire in their interest and returned the favour through donations that enabled the cycle to continue. While the direct monetary benefits and incentives to pursue imperial expansion can seem obscure, piecing together the system as a network of favours helps to show how elites, even men as minor as Tapp, could turn empire to their benefit and have a profound effect on institutions such as the University of Cambridge.

IV

Given the discrepancy between the efforts that Tapp expended on these enterprises versus the amount he accrued from his time and investment, how does one evaluate the linkages between the Tapp trust and the legacies of colonialism? The simple fact is that the trust itself gained little from his involvement in Kenya – the Natalite Syndicate, the crown jewel of the lawyer's investment

[128] 'Freehold and leasehold properties in hand at 23 January 1936 and at 23 January 1937, showing rents, less income tax', GCC, BUR/TAPP/39, W. M. Tapp and executors' transactions.

[129] GCC, GOV/03/01/21, Resolutions of the meetings of the College Council, 22 Jan. 1937.

[130] Names, addresses, and descriptions of allottees, 21 Dec. 1925 and 6 Aug. 1937, TNA, BT/31/36939/210113, Manbré Estates Limited, vol. I.

[131] The Cadbury case is well documented in Kevin Grant, *A civilized savagery: Britain and the new slaveries in Africa, 1884–1926* (New York, NY, 2005); Lowell J. Satre, *Chocolate on trial: slavery, politics, and the ethics of business* (Athens, OH, 2005); and Catherine Higgs, *Chocolate islands: cocoa, slavery, and colonial Africa* (Athens, OH, 2012).

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in East Africa, turned out to be a failure. The issue here is with Tapp himself and his involvement in Sukari's and Manbré's enterprises in Kenya. He was no interloper in these operations: the documents held at the Caius and National archives – perhaps a small fraction of the correspondence he shared regarding his activities in East Africa – reveal someone who was deeply committed to the plantation enterprise in that region, a business deeply enmeshed in systems of land exploitation and expropriation – a colonial world that a comparable coffee planter condemned as 'slavery'. Caius and the Tapp Trust did not significantly benefit from these operations, but the small sums that Tapp accrued from his efforts on behalf of Sukari and Manbré Estates were not from want of trying to achieve success in Kenya, and the directors' fees he earned from those operations provide an unquantifiable connection (given the lack of available source material) to colonialism.

If hard-headed cost–benefit calculations helped to direct the flows of profits from colonialism, then it was also true that deep emotional ties to institutions – the sort that Tapp had to Caius and its fellowship, particularly Professor Ridgeway – channelled benefactions to prominent institutions. The college, in turn, showed its gratitude. On 19 February 1926, the council minutes recorded 'the grateful appreciation of the College of Dr Tapp's…generous intentions towards the College as communicated by him to the Bursar'. A year later, he donated a silver dove to the boat club (where he had rowed in the third boat).[132] Such bequests, whether scholarships or silver trinkets, were a particular boon for schools, colleges, and universities which nurtured emotional bonds with alumni through old student networks and clubs. Still, aside from the education sector, there is scope to consider whether funds from individuals involved in nineteenth- and twentieth-century colonial enterprises went to charities, municipal areas, clubs, societies, or businesses as a result of these attachments. A renewed emphasis on the personal dimensions of investments requires further research in institutional archival collections, and for such bodies to consider their connections to both enslavement and modern colonialism in Africa and Asia.

Rhodes looms large over the links between colonization and the modern university, but Tapp's papers prove that these connections run deeper and involve unknown, yet locally significant, figures in the history of African colonization and its legacies. Like many colonists and British politicians, Tapp believed in the significant potential for wealth and profit in Kenya, particularly the Highlands. Though he did not see himself as colonial businessman, he was certainly one of their number, and his interest in and involvement in East Africa needs mentioning when discussing the most important benefactor in Caius College's history, and when examining the nature of the benefits that universities accrued from African colonization. Not every colonial venture was a success for its investors. Yet these failures still make up an important part of the exploitation, land appropriation, and trauma of imperial rule for the many Kenyans who lived and worked on these estates. Tapp's story is a

[132] GCC, GOV/03/01/19, 19 Feb. 1926, Master/Registrary Gesta, 1923–9, 19 Feb. 1926 and 10 June 1927; *Cambridge Review: A Journal of University Life and Thought*, 11 Feb. 1880.

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reminder to both scholars and the global university community that Rhodes may be the important tip of an iceberg of imperial networks, colonial investment, and exploitation that helped make British universities great.

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