

Market Marronage: Fugitive Women and the Internal Marketing System in Jamaica, 1781–1834
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This article theorizes what it meant for some women to run away *to* the market. Historians of slavery have studied marronage—or “running away”—as one of the most common forms of enslaved resistance to slavery. Women who escaped bondage to work in the internal marketing economy showcase the economic and gendered dimensions of this Atlantic-world phenomenon. In Jamaica, the abolition of the slave trade in 1807 placed new demands on black women’s reproductive capacities as colonial elites sought to “encourage” the “natural” increase of enslaved laborers in light of the prohibition on new legal imports of enslaved Africans. Simultaneously, amid growing rumors of impending freedom, enslaved women continued to flee slavery and often sought refuge and sustenance in public marketplaces. Enslaved women’s decisions to run away and trade were shaped not only by their experiences of slavery but also by a desire for greater physical mobility and economic autonomy and the possibility of reconstituting family. Runaways undermined planter authority and plantation stability even as the markets to which they ran stabilized colonial slavery on a larger scale. Marketplaces facilitated community formation and self-preservation while helping women to escape the all-too-intrusive gaze of their masters and the law.