

Acknowledgments

The idea for this book first came to me in the mid-1990s, while I was working on an article on the Jamaican healer Mary Seacole. That burst of post-tenure energy was short-lived, however, since for the last decade and a half the particular turmoil of family life (in this case illness, and then more illness) threatened repeatedly to derail my writing and research altogether. Thankfully, the act of completing this project eventually became a refuge. Here and there I stole thirty minutes in a hospital waiting room to write a paragraph. On good days, that paragraph turned in a page, and despite long gaps of time, that page eventually became a chapter. As I look back now, I'm so very grateful for the help I received from family, friends, and home care staff: their collective contributions enabled me to carve out chunks of time to visit archives in the United States, Canada, and Britain. I especially want to thank my successive research assistants, including David Shih, Emma Garrett, Kyle Grady, Amanda Healey, and Latara MacLamore, for their assistance, in large and small ways, at different stages of my writing and rewriting of chapters.

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