

Collections

This guide can help to inform you about what records are available in the Caird Library and Archive at the National Maritime Museum and how they can be used to support African Caribbean family history research.

The collection relating to the Caribbean is strongest in relation to the 1700s and 1800s. Although the collection contains crew lists from 1915, material relating to the migrations of people from the Caribbean between the 1940s and 1970s is not held at the National Maritime Museum and, instead, can be found at The National Archive. Because of this, the collection held at the Caird Library and Archive may be more useful to researchers who have already traced their family ancestry back to a location in the Caribbean within this time period.

Although maritime records are not usually a starting point for compiling a genealogy, the archive at the National Maritime Museum will enable you to better understand the cultural context of this period, allow you to validate research you may have already carried out and supplement your knowledge.

The formative research for this guide was centred on formerly British colonies in the Caribbean. Although the collection does feature documents relating to formerly Dutch and French colonies in the Caribbean these are limited in number in comparison to formerly British colonies.

This is a working document that may change over time as further research is carried out. We have consulted with researchers and experts from the African Caribbean community in forming this guide. If you wish to suggest an amendment or addition to the guide please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Michael Graham-Stewart Collection

The Michael Graham-Stewart Collection was purchased by the National Maritime Museum in 2002, having been assembled by Graham-Stewart over a period of 14 years. The Collection explores aspects of the West African, transatlantic and Indian Ocean slave trades from the mid-eighteenth to the early-twentieth centuries, and includes material relating to the abolition of slavery. The archive catalogued at the Caird Library and Archive incorporates manuscripts, printed books and pamphlets, maps and photographs.

Many of the documents featured in this guide are from this collection and can be identified by their 'MGS' code.

Newspaper cuttings

Newspaper cuttings offer an insight into the lifestyles of Europeans in the Caribbean. Newspapers would have been printed for European settlers in the Caribbean and reported life in its respective nation in relation to ongoing events in Europe. The import of goods feature heavily in newspapers informing what had come into the country and when they were available for purchase.

Advertisements for the sale of enslaved peoples currently on plantations are also featured in newspaper articles; many advertise a location and a very brief physical description of the peoples or person that the slave owner was attempting to sell. This also usually includes the name of the slave owner as well as their legal representatives present.

Newspaper cuttings also provide an insight into 'runaways'; enslaved peoples who escaped from their plantations. 'Runaway' articles often include a name, and some will also include a surname.

Almost all articles relating to 'runaways' will provide a physical description of the person being sought. Some include a suspected whereabouts for the individual, offering an insight into family life, relationships and support networks enslaved people may have had across and outside of plantations.

Examples in the collection



'The Jamaica Mercury & Kingston Weekly Advertiser' Vol. 1 No. 32, Sat 27 Nov–Sat 4 Dec 1779, with 'Supplement to the Jamaica Mercury'. (MGS/45)

Includes references to slavery and advertisements for 'runaways', many with engraved vignettes.

<u>MGS/45</u>	See description with image above.
<u>MGS/51</u>	<i>Barbados Mercury and Bridge-Town Gazette</i> , 1818. Containing articles for sale; ships arriving and departing; descriptions of runaways; plantations for sale including slaves; services wanted for hire; services offered for hire; no trespassing notice.
<u>MGS/55</u>	<i>The Royal Gazette</i> , Jamaica. Containing articles for sale: 1811 plantations, settlements and lands; descriptions of runaways and absconders; rewards offered; the appointment of a new Lieutenant-governor; workhouses' inmates to be sold by public auction.
<u>MGS/50</u>	<i>Bell's Weekly Messenger</i> , London, No. 911, Sun 12 Sep 1813. Containing an account of the high mortality rates among captive peoples in Charlestown due to poor conditions and treatment; a Lloyd's List of ships affected in the Caribbean following a great hurricane; prices of sugar, coffee, cocoa and ginger and importations of arrowroot and castor oil.
<u>MGS/46</u>	<i>The Cornwall Chronicle and Jamaica General Advertiser</i> , Montego-Bay, Jamaica, Sat 19 and Sat 26 Feb 1785. Contains references to slaves for sale, escaped slaves, etc.

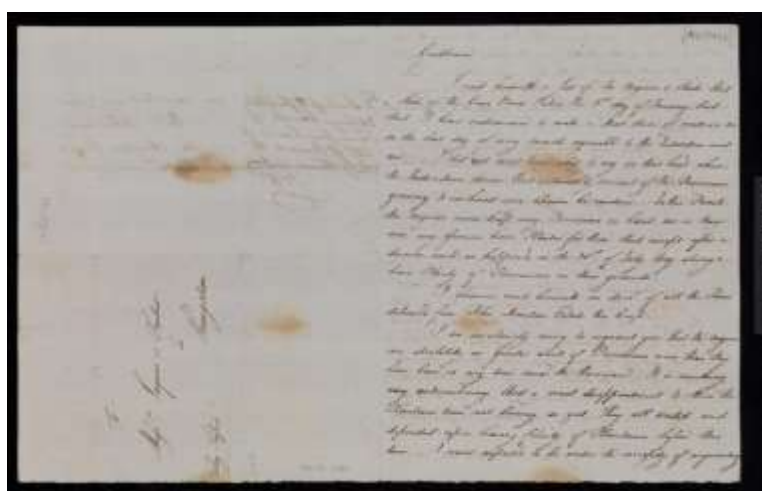
Correspondences

Written by Europeans in relation to events, business and general affairs on plantations, correspondences can be used to place plantations in the wider context of the wider economy of enslaved labour.

As letters were often written to owners and stakeholders that did not live in the Caribbean, we are able to read a summary of a plantation's financial situation, its upcoming ventures and any business concerns.

These types of correspondences very rarely name or identify any particular individuals beyond those in leadership positions on plantations. We do not often have entire conversation chains so researchers may not be able to track the response, or what preceded the correspondence.

Examples in the collection



Slave-carried letter (with two original enclosures), Kingston, Jamaica, 30 Jun 1785 (MGS/19)

<u>MGS/19</u>	See description with image above.
<u>MGS/20</u>	Letter to William Atkinson of Sheffield, addressed from Augusta, Georgia, 23 Mar 1821.

Inventories

As slave owners considered enslaved people to be property, we are able to find information about people included in inventory reports.

Plantation inventory records provide an insight into the business of plantations, their production and crops, as well as the communities of enslaved and free people within them.

They can be useful in verifying knowledge or building a stronger contextual narrative of the wider community and the plantation during research.

The format of these reports range across plantations, but the information in the reports may touch on the following:

- Name (first)
- Gender
- Role/job
- Location on plantation

Examples in the collection

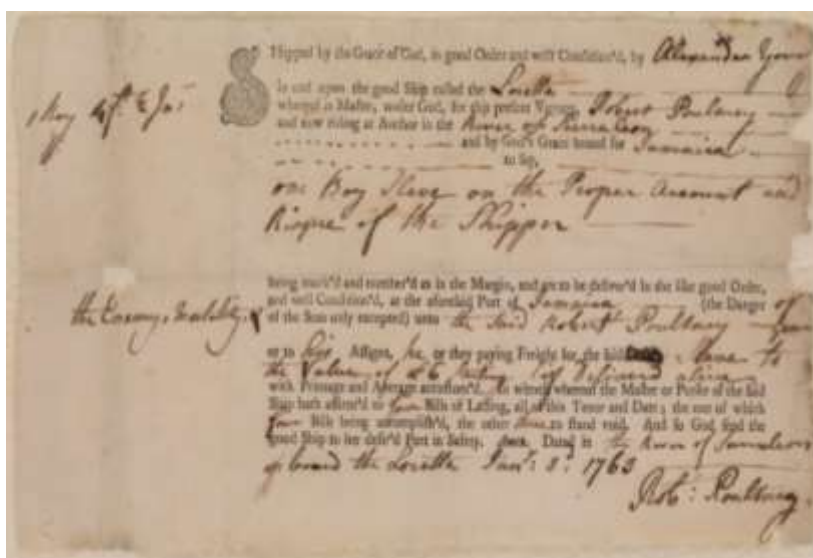
Plantation slave inventory of the Waterhouse & Tunbridge Plantation, British West Indies, entitled 'A list of slaves on Waterhouse & Tunbridge', taken on 1 January 1797. Inventory including 62 men, 65 women, 10 boys, 8 girls, 6 male invalids, 9 female invalids, 13 male children, 25 female children, and increase/decrease in slave numbers for 1796. The plantation was in St Andrew, Jamaica. (MGS/23)

<u>MGS/23</u>	See description with image above.
<u>MGS/24</u>	Inventory of Plantation Mon Repos, the property of Joseph Hamer Esquire, deceased, situated on the East Coast of Demerary, taken the 1st July 1816. Lists of plantation acreage and buildings, followed by a list of the names (under 'Negroes') of 85 men, 70 women, 43 male children and 46 female children slaves, total of 244 individuals.

Receipts/Bill of Sales/Auction Records

Bills of sales provide an insight into the price that was paid for enslaved or captive peoples. Bills of sales range in format. They often show transactions of groups of people being sold at once and feature no descriptions of the people in question. Very few contain the names of the enslaved or captive people being sold; this will most often be the case if only one person is being sold as part of the sale. From the pricing and format of the receipt researchers can attempt to ascertain the importance of the individual being sold. Very rarely will it say what the individual is being sold for as this will largely be the decision of the slave-owner.

Examples in the collection



Shipping bill certifying the loading of 'one slave boy', valued at £6 sterling, shipped by Alexander Young on the ship LORETTA (Robert Poultsney, Master), on the River Sierra Leone, bound for Jamaica, dated 3 Jan 1763. (MGS/14)

MGS/2	Slave registration certificate, Slave Registry Office, Cape Town, Cape of Good Hope, 15 Aug 1826, detailing the registration of a male infant, named Japi, born on 4 Aug 1826, whose mother was named Theresia, housemaid, property of Mr Daniel Krynauw Senior.
MGS/8	Receipt dated 9 May 1804 for 26 'new Negroe men' from the ship ANN from Cape Mount, Kingston, Jamaica, bought by HM Government from George Kinghorn as recruits for HM's Second West India Regiment at Fort Augusta for £2,340 (at £90 per head).
MGS/9	Receipt for the purchase of a slave by Miss Maria Potinger from John Hinde & Co. in Kingston, Jamaica, 30 May 1807, with tax blind stamp, for one new Negro woman, from the BEDFORD, Capt Newman, for £110.
MGS/14	Shipping bill certifying the loading of 'one slave boy', valued at £6 sterling, shipped by Alexander Young on the ship LORETTA (Robert Poultsney, Master), on the River Sierra Leone, bound for Jamaica, dated 3 Jan 1763.

Lloyd's List

Between 1500–1800, over 35,000 slave voyages carried millions Africans to the Americas (including North America, the Caribbean, and Brazil). From 1734 to the present day, the Lloyd's List has provided regular updates about shipping news.

The Lloyd's List provided a reliable and concise source of information for the merchants' agents and insurance underwriters to negotiate insurance coverage for trading vessels. From a research perspective the list provides us with insight into the movement of a particular vessel, where it was coming from and going to.

The database has been largely digitised for this purpose on [the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database](#) but the paper records can be ordered and accessed at the National Maritime Museum.

We recommend consulting the Lloyd's List research guide before ordering any of the records:

A brief history and introduction to the Lloyd's List:

<https://www.rmg.co.uk/discover/researchers/research-guides/research-guide-h1-lloyds-lloyds-list-brief-history>

Index List:

<https://www.rmg.co.uk/discover/researchers/research-guides/research-guide-h4-lloyds-lloyds-list-indexes>

Crew lists

The 1915 British Merchant Navy crew lists (RSS/CL/1915/) are a valuable resource for family historians searching for people who may have served on board a British merchant navy vessel during this period. References to Caribbean locations are largely in relation to the birthplace of the crew member. Researchers can search through these lists to search for surnames or place of birth. Please be aware of potential spelling errors or variations in the surname.

Please see below for links to the following locations mentioned in the crew lists:

[Anguilla \(Anguila\)](#)

[Antigua](#)

[Aruba](#)

[Bahamas](#)

[Barbados](#)

[Barbuda](#)

[Virgin Islands \(British\) \(Tortola\)](#)

[Cayman Islands](#)

[Cuba](#)

[Dominica](#)

[Grenada](#)

[Haiti](#)

[Jamaica](#)

[Martinique](#)

[Montserrat](#)

[St Lucia](#)

[St Martin \(Saint Martin\)](#)

[St Kitts and Nevis](#)

[St Vincent and the Grenadines](#)

[Trinidad and Tobago](#)

Please note that this is a digital document and is constantly growing with research. If there is a location that is not listed here it can be searched via the 'birth place' search bar. If you would like to add a location to the guide, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Further research and reading lists:

Staying Power: The History of Black People in Britain – Peter Fryer

A Tree Without Roots: The Guide to Tracing British, African, and Asian Caribbean Ancestry – Paul Crooks
The Family Tree Toolkit: A Comprehensive Guide to Uncovering Your Ancestry and Researching Genealogy – Kenyatta D. Berry
Tracing your Caribbean Ancestors: A National Archives Guide – Guy Grannum
How Europe Underdeveloped Africa – Walter Rodney
Black and British: A Forgotten History – David Olusoga

Useful links:

[National Archives – Family History](#)

[Researching African-Caribbean Family History - BBC](#)

[UCL Legacies of British Slave Ownership](#)

[The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database](#)

[Former British Colonial Dependencies, Slave Registers, 1813-1834](#)

We would like to thank our core group of contributors and researchers:

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