

Policy and Bill of Lading for goods produced by enslaved people from Jamaica to London, 1782-1783. Purchased for Lloyd's Collection before August 1956

The Policy and Bill of Lading

This insurance policy was purchased for the Lloyd's Collection, with the bill of lading, before August 1956. No further provenance details are known.

As business documents, the policy and the bill of lading appear as unassuming pieces of administrative ephemera. However, they evidence the trade systems of the transatlantic slave economy, in this instance through commodities being insured and transported from Jamaica to Britain that were produced by an enslaved workforce. These documents represent examples of the bi-lateral trading voyages between Britain and the Caribbean.

The insurance policy records that the goods were exported from Jamaica to London c. January 1783 and the bill of lading is written in July 1782. The ship is referred to as 'Saint Anns' in the policy and 'Saint Ann' in the bill of lading but as they share the same master of the ship, **James Hunter**, with the same destination, at around the same date. It is likely that they are either from the same shipment or refer to the same ship on different voyages. The policy also states the ship must form part of a convoy.

The organisation of convoys were undertaken by the British Navy for the protection of the merchant ships while on passage. For Lloyd's, the convoy system was an important mitigation of risk in transatlantic trade. It formed the basis of their quotations of differential premium rates, which were considerably higher if a vessel did not sail with a convoy or parted company during the voyage.

The Policy

The policy is dated on the reverse as 1782. The broker is **Samuel Betton** and **John Sims** is the only underwriter to take a line for £100 on 3 January 1783, which is taken as the date of the policy, for insuring sugar and rum.

The policy rate reduces from 20 guineas (equivalent to 420 shillings) to four pounds (equivalent to 80 shillings) if the ship sails on or after 12 January and Lloyd's List on 25 February 1783 lists 'St Ann, Hunter' in a section entitled 'For London'.

On 2 July 1783 a total loss is recorded and John Sims promises to pay one month after this date. John Sims was a Subscriber to Lloyd's prior to 1782.¹

The policy is 'printed according to the Form revised and confirmed at New Lloyd's' which standardised marine policy wording in 1779. This format did not change significantly until the later 20th century, although three forms were used up to around 1795, all bearing an abbreviation using single letters at the top of the margin: 'SG' for Ship and Goods, 'S' for Ship only and 'G' - as in this policy - for Goods only.² The survival of any 'G' policies is very rare and this is the only example of such a policy in Lloyd's Collection.

The insurance policy is for the account of **Mr Samuel Betton**. UCL's Legacies of British Slavery database, which records slave owner compensation claims from the 1830s, lists a [Samuel Betton](#) who was born in St Ann, Jamaica in 1786. His father, also Samuel Betton, is recorded as being married in Shropshire in 1785 and could be the Betton referred to in the insurance policy.

Samuel Betton Junior purchased the Windsor plantation in 1817 and the Winefield estate in 1815. Betton junior [made a successful claim on the Windsor and Winefield plantations for £4251 17s 6d for 195 enslaved people.](#)

Bill of Lading

The Bill of Lading was issued to the master of the ship James Hunter, to acknowledge the receipt of cargo for shipment. The Bill of Lading is dated 29 July 1782 and was for 4028 pieces, containing 30 tons of Fustick, a dyewood used for yellow dye, likely to have been produced by enslaved people. The margin of the document states each piece was branded with IW.

¹ The Roll of Lloyd's, compiled by Warren Dawson, the Honorary Librarian of Lloyd's, published in 1931

² In 1795 an Act amended laws on stamp duty, marine insurance and the forms of policy, see C Wright & C E Fayle, A History of Lloyd's, 1928, 132-235

The agent is given as **Isaac Lascelles Winn or Wynn** and it was to be shipped to Birkbeck Blakes & Co. in London.

[Isaac Lascelles Winn/Wynn](#) was the owner of the sugar plantation called Adelphi (formerly known as Stretch and Sell) in St James, Jamaica. Winn was from an elite family with interests in North America, England, and the Caribbean. His relations, Edward and Henry Lascelles, held seats in parliament and were some of the biggest plantation owners in the Caribbean, principally in Barbados, and by '1787 the

family held more than 27,000 acres in Barbados, Jamaica, Grenada and Tobago.³

Winn had at least three children with a 'free quadroon'⁴ woman called Grace Davis and other records show he had a daughter, residing in England, called Emily Providentia Winn. In 1788 Winn hired the African American Baptist convert, Moses Baker, to undertake a Christian mission amongst the enslaved in western Jamaica. Several sources depict him as a 'pioneer of missionary work in Jamaica'.⁵

Lloyd's Collection

We have been exploring our archive to better understand our historical links to the transatlantic slave trade through a research collaboration with Black Beyond Data, from Johns Hopkins University, and independently funded by the Mellon Foundation.

The research will be published in November 2023 along with our plan of action to create a more inclusive and equitable future for Black and ethnically diverse individuals in our market and communities.

Harmful content

You may encounter harmful content and language especially as we contextualise items in Lloyd's Collection which records enslaved people experiencing trauma and harm. We believe it is important to bring to the foreground the absent and hidden histories of enslavement. If you have any feedback or comments about the issues raised please email archives@lloyds.com

³ <https://www.york.ac.uk/projects/harewoodslavery/about.html> [accessed 13/02/2023]

⁴ 'Quadroon' was used as a term to classify race and means a person was one quarter African and three-quarters European ancestry. Grace David was not enslaved but 'free'.

⁵ <https://bibletruthpublishers.com/pioneers-of-missionary-work-in-jamaica/faithful-words-for-old-and-young-volume-21/la152329> and Helen McKee (2018) From violence to alliance: Maroons and white settlers in Jamaica, 1739–1795, *Slavery & Abolition*, 39:1, 41.