

The Claggett & Pratt risk books, 1823 – 1824. Purchased for the Lloyd's Collection by Lloyd's in August 1932.

The risk books and their links to historic enslavement

The Claggett & Pratt risk books detail the risks of the firm over two years, 1823 and 1824.

As business documents, the risk books are administrative record-keeping. However, they evidence the practices of marine insurers and their links to the transatlantic slave economy, in this instance through the commodities being insured and transported from America.

In the period covered by the risk books, Claggett & Pratt were underwriting risks globally, much of which related to goods produced on plantations reliant on enslaved labour. The risk books show they were insuring shipments of cotton and tobacco.

The risk books include shipments from American ports including Baltimore, Carolina, Charleston, Darien [Connecticut], George Town [Washington], New Orleans, New York, Philadelphia, Savannah and Virginia [including Alexandria]. The goods were shipped to Liverpool, London and other ports in Europe.

The Claggetts and the Pratts

Horatio Claggett (c.1756-1815) was born in Rock Creek, USA and became the European partner of Claggett & Company, run by his elder brother Thomas Claggett (1741-1792). He moved to London shortly after the American Revolutionary War, around 1783. Thomas had served as an outfitter for the American revolutionary forces and after the war Thomas and Horatio Claggett counted among their clientele the first President of the United States, George Washington.

Horatio Claggett was a Lloyd's underwriter and had a tobacco brokerage business called Claggett & Pratt at America Square in the City of London. Horatio Claggett partnered with William Pratt (1754-1830). Horatio brought his son into the business, [Thomas William Claggett](#) (d. 1860) and William brought in his nephew, [William Pratt, Junior](#) (d.1843).

Horatio Claggett was active in the Lloyd's market from around 1794 and would go on to serve on the Committee of Lloyd's from 1811-1815.

The Lloyd's Collection also holds Horatio Claggett's 1807 risk book, covering the last year of the British slave trade, in which he took lines in over 60 slaving voyages. On his death, Horatio Claggett left £180,000 to his son, who carried on the running of Claggett and Pratt. Thomas William Claggett was a subscriber to Lloyd's from 1814-1836 and was declared bankrupt, with his partner William Sidney Warwick of Billiter Square, in 1837.

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 John' 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