

Papers of James Lowther, 1st Earl of Lonsdale, West Indian plantation owner

This document describes a collection of records held by NatWest Group Archives, including details of their background; publications (if any) relating to them; summary of the contents of the collection; and information (where known) about related records held in other archives.

collection reference CH/1/

background history

James Lowther (1736-1802) was the son of Robert Lowther of Maulds Meaburn, Westmoreland, who had been governor of Barbados and owned a slave labour plantation there through his first wife, Joane Lowther. James Lowther succeeded to the baronetcy and inherited the large Lowther estates in Westmoreland and the plantation in Christ Church, Barbados, West Indies, in 1751. He acquired further estates in Whitehaven in 1755 and Marske in 1756. He served as Member of Parliament for Cumberland and Westmoreland from 1757 and took a seat in the House of Lords when created Earl of Lonsdale in 1784.

Management of the financial affairs and daily life of his West Indian plantation was, by 1769, delegated to William Senhouse (1741-1800), attorney to James Lowther in Barbados and Surveyor-General for Barbados and surrounding islands from 1770 until 1787. Senhouse kept Lowther informed about local Barbados and political news and plantation affairs, including the buying and selling of enslaved people, by regular and frequent correspondence.

James Lowther died at Lowther Hall, Westmoreland, in 1802.

Lowther was a customer of Child & Co. It was among this bank's archives that these papers were found, although the exact nature and extent of Child & Co's connection to the dealings they represent is not clear as the bank is never mentioned in this collection.

our archive holdings

Access to these records is by permission of the Lonsdale Estate only.

- Lowther family papers and accounts 1703-69
- title deeds for land and enslaved people, Barbados plantation 1690-1762
- will of Joane Lowther 1704
- deed re appointment of estate managers, Barbados plantation 1707
- enabling act re sale of land and enslaved people, Christ Church, Barbados 1717-18
- correspondence and certified accounts re Barbados plantations 1769-1800 (these records contain large amounts of information about the enslaved people living and working on the estate)
- plantation map, Christ Church, Barbados 1791

archives held elsewhere

- [Carlisle Archive Centre](#): Correspondence with William Senhouse concerning his appointment as Surveyor-General of Customs for Barbados and the Leeward Isles 1650-1802 (Ref: DLons L12/1); recollections and other notes of William Senhouse 1750-94 (Ref: DSen vol.1/13).
- [Weston Library, Oxford](#): Diary of William Senhouse, copied and completed by Sir HF Senhouse 1750-1800 (Ref: MSF.W.Ind.r.5, 6).