

Papers relating to John Blagrove junior, 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 GM/443/

background history

John Blagrove (1753-1824) was bequeathed Orange Valley and Unity estates, Jamaica, by his grandfather, John Blagrove senior. Blagrove senior had intended his other Jamaican estates, Pembroke, Magotty and Cardiff Hall, to be inherited by his son Thomas. However, Thomas died (at the age of 21) before his will had been awarded probate and all the estates passed, in about 1756, to John Blagrove junior, who as a minor was placed under the guardianship of Colin Currie. Thomas Blagrove's widow (John's mother) Elizabeth later remarried and was known subsequently as Elizabeth Witter.

Cardiff Hall, Unity and Magotty appear to have been sugar estates, but Pembroke and Orange Valley may also have been involved in stock rearing and crop production. John spent his childhood and early adulthood in England and was educated at Eton and Oxford. In 1777, after a 'Grand Tour' of the continent, John married Anne Shakespear. During this time the Jamaican estates were presumably managed on Blagrove's behalf, possibly by Colin Currie.

Shortly after their marriage, John and Anne Blagrove left England to enable John to manage his Jamaican estates himself from his residence at Cardiff Hall. They appear to have stayed in Jamaica for the next 25 years or more (apart from a two-year period of residence in England between 1780 and 1782). They had four sons (none of whom outlived their father), John William, Henry, Charles and Peter, and four daughters, Eliza, Charlotte, Isabella and Anne.

In 1805, John Blagrove bought and rebuilt Ankerwycke House, Wraysbury, Buckinghamshire, and left Jamaica to settle there. A few years later, he bought Great Abshott House in Titchfield, Hampshire, but maintained his residence at Wraysbury as lord of the manor. In the Jamaica Almanac of 1818 he is listed as absentee landlord of Orange Valley, Unity, Pembroke, Magotty, Cardiff Hall and Belle Air estates. Blagrove died in 1824 and his wife Anne died ten years later.

related publication

- J Shakespear, *John Shakespear of Shadwell and his descendants, 1619-1931* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Northumberland Press, 1931), pp. 82-96

our archive holdings

- will of John Blagrove senior 1755
- estate accounts, Jamaica, West Indies 1756-75.

archives held elsewhere

- [University of Bristol Library](#): Copy articles of agreement re plantations and estates late of John Blagrove 1838; copy indenture, Robert Hawthorn and William George Shedden to trustees and executors of the will of John Blagrove 1838 (Ref: DM 1353/3).
- [National Library of Jamaica](#): Petition of John Blagrove and Peter Campbell 1812
- [Jamaica Archives](#): Blagrove family records, largely re property n.d. (Ref: Private 4/67).