

# The West Indies, 1835

## Map of the British Islands in the West Indies, 1835

This detailed map shows the different islands which made up the British colonies in the Caribbean.

**Alexander Stewart** of South Woodford owned plantations in the western Jamaican parishes of Clarendon, Manchester, St. Elizabeth and St. Mary. These names clearly show the British power over the island. For example, Manchester was named after the Duke of Manchester who governed Jamaica between 1808 – 1811.

The map, published by the *Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge*, provides fascinating detail. Under each island is a statement of how each came to be under the control of Britain. Some were simply 'settled', which means they were invaded and claimed by Britain over the rights of the native Caribb Indians. Others were ceded (given) by France to Britain after its defeat of France during the Napoleonic wars of 1791 – 1815.

This map gives a clue to the cultural complexities of the Caribbean which also has Spanish, Portuguese and of course West African influences.

Map - [www.prestwidge.com/river/jamaicanparishes.html](http://www.prestwidge.com/river/jamaicanparishes.html)

# Woodford, 1835

## Map of Woodford, 1835

This wonderfully detailed and beautifully drawn map shows the Parish of Woodford.

If you look closely, you can see at the bottom of the map, the estate of Grove Hall where Alexander Stewart is listed as living.

At the top of the map, you can see the large estate of Harts House where William Mellish lived.

The Map is normally on display in Redbridge Local Studies & Archives, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor.

Redbridge Local Studies & Archives

# How do we know?

## How did Redbridge Museum find out about Alexander Stewart?

A local historian, Georgina Green had been in contact with a relation of Alexander Stewart in 1999. There was a family story that Stewart had plantations, received compensation when slavery was abolished and that he never visited Jamaica again. But there was no proof...

So, Redbridge Museum:

- Contacted the Jamaica Archives who had two documents about plantations that Alexander Stewart sold in the 1850s. These difficult documents were transcribed by Pat Heron, Redbridge Local Studies.
- Visited the London Metropolitan Archives to look at street directories to find out where and when Stewart had offices in the City of London from the 1820s until his death in 1857.
- Looked at slave-owners compensation records in the British National Archives, which listed Stewart in 1835-6.
- Found his will at the National Archives.
- Looked at baptismal record, maps and images in Redbridge Local Studies

# Alexander Stewart

## **Grove Hall, South Woodford, 1901**

Alexander Stewart moved into this house in the 1820s, which had been built in about 1720.

As a wealthy local man he was asked to be an Overseer of the Poor responsible for the payment of poor relief and as a Churchwarden.

But in the Parish Vestry records he is listed as being fined for non-attendance in 1825 and 1828, suggesting he did not take his duties very seriously.

Photograph: Redbridge Local Studies & Archives

# Alexander Stewart

**The Register of Compensation Paid to Slave Owners** (1835-1842) is held by the National Archives in Kew.

Redbridge Museum looked at the five register books for Jamaica and found:

*Manchester parish, Jamaica*

**Alexander Stewart** and Isaac Westmoreland were paid **£672/3 shillings/ 7pence** in compensation for the loss of slaves

*Signed by them 18 January 1836*

There are 32 register books in all. Each book relates to a Caribbean island and each features information on the parishes in that island. Each page lists the claimant, a signature of the claimant and the amount of the claim. Imagining

In each book there are around 1000 individual claimants which indicates the large number of people owning slaves. The claims range from £19 up to several thousand pounds. Many have Scottish names and there are lots of individual women listed.

Although there are many claimants, Alexander Stewart signed on behalf of other claimants. In his job as a merchant, he may have been employed by Jamaican slave owners to visit the National Debt Office in London to sign the claim register.

# Alexander Stewart

**The Records of Claims to the Slave Compensation Commission** (1835 – 1846) are held by the National Archives in Kew.

Redbridge Museum looked at 2 boxes for the year 1835 and 4 boxes for claims made in 1836. Each box has around 100 individual claim forms, showing the large number of slave owners. Each of the claim forms are for one island or one parish in the larger islands such as Jamaica.

Two claims for Alexander Stewart and Isaac Westmoreland, his business partner were found:

*St. Mary's parish, Jamaica*

**£1626, 5 shillings, 7pence**

*Signed by them 9 October 1835*

*St. Elizabeth's parish, Jamaica*

**£462, 19 shillings**

*Signed by them 7 December 1835*

# Alexander Stewart

**Conveyance [sale] of land called St Jago, in the Parish of Clarendon by Alexander Stewart to James Henry Mitchell, 1854 and of the Morland plantation also to James Henry Mitchell.**

Redbridge Museum contacted the Jamaica Archives to find out if they had any information about Alexander Stewart. The Archives had a record related to a sale of Alexander Stewart's plantation in 1854.

In this, Stewart and his business partner, Isaac Westmoreland sold 2 plantations in Jamaica. St. Jago in the parish of Clarendon was 3000 acres and sold for £7000 (up to several £million today). The other plantation was 3 – 4000 acres in the parish of Morland.

The St. Jago plantation had '*boiling houses*' for sugar and '*still houses*' for distilling sugar to make rum. At 3000 acres, this was a very large plantation.

The document states that the new owner of the Morland plantation, William Tenby would receive any sums that '*... might be charged on or become due owing and payable from...**any slaves formerly upon or belonging to the said plantation***'.

This seems to indicate that Alexander Stewart, by selling the plantation, could not receive any more compensation for the loss of slaves from that plantation in future.

Records courtesy of the Jamaica Archives and Dalea Bean (photographs)

# Woodford and Slavery

**Alexander Stewart of South Woodford owned sugar plantations in Jamaica. He owned slaves and acted on behalf of those who owned slaves when slavery was abolished in 1834.**

Alexander Stewart lived in a grand house called Grove Hall, South Woodford. He was a merchant with offices in Old Broad Street, in the City of London. Unfortunately, Redbridge Museum has no images of him.

Stewart owned plantations in Jamaica and like all slave owners, he received compensation for his loss of 'property' (enslaved Africans) when slavery was abolished in 1834. However, he continued to own plantations there and sold them off in 1854, shortly before his death.

He also appears to have acted on behalf of other slave owners living in Jamaica who claimed compensation. He died in 1857 a wealthy man due to his life as a merchant although its not known what he traded in. It is also impossible to state how much of that wealth came from the products of slave labour.

Born in Edinburgh, Alexander Stewart initially lived in Finsbury Square, near Moorgate. He married in 1818 and moved to Grove Hall, South Woodford shortly after. It is not known what goods he traded in or who his clients were but a large house in South Woodford suggests a wealthy man.

In his Will of 1857, Stewart leaves his wife, son and two daughters with large sums of money. His plantation in Jamaica is mentioned, and he even leaves money for his clerk and his children's nurse. He was buried in the Caledonian Church in Holloway, north London.

| Name                 | Date of Issue | Claimant             | Date of Treasury Warrant |
|----------------------|---------------|----------------------|--------------------------|
| Alexander Stewart    | 18/1/36       | Alexander Stewart    | 11 January 1836          |
| Isaac Westmoreland   | 18/1/36       | Isaac Westmoreland   | 11 January 1836          |
| Mary Williams        | 19/1/36       | Mary Williams        | 11 January 1836          |
| Ann Williams         | 19/1/36       | Ann Williams         | 11 January 1836          |
| Elizabeth James      | 19/1/36       | Elizabeth James      | 11 January 1836          |
| The Rev. James Orono | 19/1/36       | The Rev. James Orono | 11 January 1836          |
| Elizabeth his wife   | 19/1/36       | Elizabeth his wife   | 11 January 1836          |

**Left** – the payment made to Alexander Stewart and his business partner Isaac Westmoreland on 18 January 1836 for compensation for the loss of the enslaved Africans they owned in Jamaica. Their signatures are on the far left.

Image: The National Archives

**Redbridge and slavery**



# JAMAICA.

## PAYMENTS on account of West India

Claimant.

Signature.

Date of Issue.

|                    |              |  |
|--------------------|--------------|--|
| <i>[Signature]</i> | <i>18/36</i> | Alexander Stewart<br>and<br>Isaac Westmoreland |
| <i>[Signature]</i> | <i>18/36</i> | Mary Williams                                  |
| <i>[Signature]</i> | <i>18/36</i> | Ann Williams                                   |
| <i>[Signature]</i> | <i>18/36</i> | <i>[Signature]</i> Mitchell                    |
| <i>[Signature]</i> | <i>19/36</i> | Elizabeth James<br>Mitchell                    |
| <i>[Signature]</i> | <i>19/36</i> | The Rev. James John Rowe                       |
| <i>[Signature]</i> | <i>Do</i>    | Elizabeth his wife                             |

## Compensation,

Date of Treasury Warrant

*Pro. for  
Justice N<sup>o</sup> 23  
11<sup>th</sup> January*

4

LIST to which the foregoing Certificate refers.

Jamaica St. Elizabeth

| Number of Claim | Name  | Designation   | Sum      | Number of Claim. |
|-----------------|---|---------------|----------|------------------|
| 298             | Alexander Stewart<br>(and)<br>Isaac Westmorland | St. Elizabeth | 462 19 3 |                  |
| 299             | Robert Muschett                                 | do            | 31 5 11  |                  |
| 300             | Rosanna Davy                                    | do            | 57 18 2  |                  |
| £               |   |               | 552 3 4  |                  |

d. W. D. Diamond.

Jamaica. St. Mary.

| Number of Claim. | Name.   | Designation. | Sum.  |    |   |
|------------------|---|--------------|-------|----|---|
| 5                | John Christie   | Saint Mary   | 59    | 8  | 7 |
| 11               | The Right Hon <sup>ble</sup><br>Sir Edward Hyde<br>East Baronet | do.          | 2,443 | 19 | 2 |
| 13               | Alexander Barclay and<br>Jasper Hall Livingston                 | do.          | 2,261 | 0  | 2 |
| 19               | Alex <sup>r</sup> . Stewart and<br>Isaac Westmoreland           | do.          | 1,626 | 5  | 7 |