

The Aerstins

Fact File: Elizabeth Aerstin

Claim Number: 147

Compensation Award: £27 10S 5D

Number of Enslaved in Claim:1

Parish: St. George

Parliamentary Papers: p. 95

The Aerstin family, as recorded in the early 19th-century Slave Registers of Grenada, appears to be part of a small, interconnected group who were involved in the enslavement of people. The family is likely connected through blood relations, with John, Elizabeth, Sarah William and Catherine Aerstin all listed as proprietors in the Slave Registers. Their holdings were relatively modest compared to larger plantations.

John Aerstin emerges as the central figure in the family's history in early-19th-century Grenada. In 1817 he was based in St George that held eighteen enslaved people.

A List of Slaves belonging to or in the lawful Possession of John Aerstin Proprietor

No.	Name	Colour	Country	Supposed Age	Marks
1	Black	Black	African	35 Years	Marks in the face
2	John	do	do	30 do	None
3	Thomas	do	do	50 do	do
4	Black	do	do	45 do	Marks in the face
5	John	do	Carole	30 do	None
6	Black	do	do	18 do	do
7	Bliss	do	do	14 do	do
8	John Louis	do	do	5 do	do
9	George Thomas	Mulatto	Carole	17 do	do
10	Peggy	Black	African	45 do	do
11	Patty	do	Carole	30 do	do
12	Charlotte	do	do	17 do	do
13	Estimie	do	do	30 do	do
14	John	do	African	38 do	Marks in the face
15	John Blair	do	Carole	7 do	None
16	Amelia	do	do	2 do	do
17	Margaret	do	do	5 do	do
18	Lucy	do	do	5 do	do

Eighteen the whole number of Slaves belonging to or in the lawful Possession of John Aerstin

13 of 458
John Aerstin
16 May 1817
John Aerstin

The 1818 register showed a number of changes. John bought 13 year old Grenadian Bella from Robert Hodge. He sold John, Thomas and Dick to James Smith. John Louis, Peggy, Matty, Charlotte, Mary Clare and Amelia were also sold, this time to Richard James Warren.

Annual Return of the African and American of the Slaves belonging to the late Mr. John Austin in the Parish of St. George

By Birth	Names	Age	Colour	Country	Particulars	How Acquired	Notes
	Bella	13	Black	Creole	particulars	Bought of Robert Hodge	" 1
							Total Number 7
By Death	Names	Age	Colour	Country	Particulars	How Acquired	Notes
	John	31	Black	Africa	None	Sold to James Smith	" 1
	Thomas	50	do	do	do	do	" 1
	Dick	46	do	do	Marked with face	do	" 1
	John Louis	6	do	Creole	None	Sold to Richard James Warren	" 1
	Peggy	49	do	Africa	do	do	" 1
	Matty	41	do	Creole	do	do	" 1
	Charlotte	18	do	do	do	do	" 1
	Mary Clare	8	do	do	do	do	" 1
	Amelia	3	do	do	do	do	" 1
					Carried forward		Total 45

Annual Return John Austin Continued

Month	Particulars	Number of Slaves on Return up to the 31 st December 1818	10	9
Dec 31 1818	Number of Slaves on Return up to the 31 st December 1818	10	9	
	Increased during the Year 1818 as above	1		
	Subduct Decrease during the Year 1818 as above	10	4	5
	Total Number of Slaves this Day - 10 Males and 5 females	6	5	
	"So Help Me God" Grenada 6 th Jan'y 1819			
	John Austin			

10230

He ended the year with 11 enslaved people under his control.



In 1819, the Slave Register shows that a child named **May** was also born under his control. Her mother, **Cesarine**, was described as a Black Creole, born in Grenada, while May was listed as a mulatto child, her mixed parentage left unspoken but implicitly revealing the dynamics of power on the plantation.

Annual Return of the Increase and Decrease of the Slaves belonging to or in the lawful Possession of John Austin of the Town Saint George

Increase							Total Increase	Total Decrease	
By Birth	Names	age	colour	country	conspicuous marks	How Acquired			
	Mary	3 months	Black	Creole				1	
By Purchase	Charlotte	19	Black	Creole	None	Bought of Matilda B. Warren		1	
otherwise	Thomas	19	do	do	do	Bought of David McEwen		1	
							Total Increase	2	
Decrease							Total Increase	Total Decrease	
By Death	Names	age	colour	country	conspicuous marks	Manner of Death			
			None						
By Sale or otherwise			None				How Disposed of		
Number of Slaves per Return, up to the 31 st December 1818.							6	5	
Increase during the year 1819 as above							1	2	
Deduct Decrease during the year 1819 as above							1	4	
Total Number of Slaves this Day - Seven Males & Seven Females							7	7	
To Help Me God John Austin, Grenada January 5 th 1820									

Dec 31st 1819
Registration

John enslaved two more people that year; **Charlotte** from Matilda B. Warren (perhaps the same Charlotte that was sold the year before) and **Thomas** from **David McEwen**. They were both 19 years old.

- Note: David McEwen, was His Majesty's Receiver for "**Confiscated Properties**" so the purchase of an enslaved from him would have been from one of the confiscated plantations.
- The phrase "**confiscated plantations**" refers to when the British Crown seized dozens of plantations from French Catholic landowners in the 1760-80s and resold them to British planters.



- *These confiscations were a deliberate policy to punish French planters viewed as disloyal after Britain captured Grenada during the Seven Years' War (1762–63), to reward British elites, and to consolidate Britain's control.*

In the 1820 Slave Register, John had 14 enslaved people under his control (6 male, 8 female). He made the following changes. He sold **Jack** (22) to **William Pitt** and manumitted **Charlotte** (20). He bought **Angel** (21) who gave birth to a daughter **Francoise**.

Annual Return of the Increase and Decrease of the Slaves belonging to in the lawful Possession of John Kersten in the Town of St George

Increase							males	females
	Names	age	Mother's Name	colour				
By Birth	francois	months	Angel	Black				1
	Names	age	colour	country	conspicuous marks	How Acquired		
By Purchase or otherwise	Angel	2 yrs	Black	Senegal	none	Bought of Julius Lussan		1
						Total Increase		2
Decrease								
	Names	age	colour	country	conspicuous marks	Manner of Death		
By Death			None					
						How Disposed of		
By sale or otherwise	Jack	22 yrs	Black	Senegal	none	Sold to Wm Pitt	1	
	Charlotte	28 yrs	ditto	ditto	none	Manumitted		1
						Total		
Number of Slaves Per Return, up to the 31 st December 1819							4	7
Increase during the Year 1820, as above							1	2
Deduct Decrease during the Year 1820, as above							1	1
Total Number of Slaves this 1 st of January 1821							4	8

Do Help me get my data January 22nd 1821
John Kersten

Dec 31. 1820
Recapitulation

434 of 856



The 1821 Slave Register shows that he had placed his interests under the possession of Catherine Aldridge.

Annual Return of the Increase and Decrease of Slaves belonging to John Austin Proprietor, in possession of Catherine Aldridge as Agent of the said John Austin of the Town of St George for the year 1821.

INCREASE								
Names	Age	Colour	Country	How acquired	Any previous master	Notes: Name & Remarks	Males	Females
Camus	9 months	Mixed	Isle of France	By Birth	None	None	1	1
						Increase by Birth	1	
						Decrease otherwise		
						Total Increase	1	
DECREASE								
Names	Age	Colour	Country	Manner of death or How disposed	Any previous master	Remarks	Males	Females
Peter	18 years	Black	Isle of France	Shut three hours	None		1	
Cesarine	34	do	Isle of France	Sent to Trinidad	None			1
May	2	Mixed	Isle of France	for sale	None			1
Margaret	10	Black	Isle of France	given over to Sarah Austin	None	These two slaves was given over to Sarah Austin and Elizabeth Austin, having been purchased by them by the late Sarah Aldridge		1
Lucy	9	do	Isle of France	given over to Elizabeth Austin	None	See: Verminously enclosed by the deceased's Executor John Austin in his letter		
Six Males & four females St. Thomas 1821								
C. Aldridge, Agent of John Austin								
8th April 1822								
							Decrease by death	1
							Decrease by sale or otherwise	1
							Total Decrease	2
							Increase	1
							Actual Decrease	1
							No of Slaves in Station	8
								14

Peter, Cesarine, and May were shipped to Trinidad for sale, while Margaret and Lucy were transferred to Sarah and Elizabeth Aerstin respectively under a contractual arrangement tied to the late Sarah



Fletcher, John was the executor of her will. It is likely that he was closely related to Sarah and Elizabeth in some way.

There is a record of **John AERSTIN** selling an enslaved worker under execution in the Marshall's office on 18 Feb 1822.

362 PAPERS AND RETURNS *relating to the* SLAVE POPULATION

6.
GRENADA.
Enclosure, N° 8.

Enclosure, N° 8.

STATEMENT of SLAVES sold under Execution in the Marshal's Office,

Date of Levy.	Date of Sale.	OWNERS' NAMES.	MALES.	Age.
1822: January 29	Feb. 18	John Aerstin - - -	- - - - -	- -

The Slave Register of this year, again under the possession of Catherine Aldridge showed 6 males and 4 females under his control. James was 9 months old.



A List of Slaves Belonging to John Aerstin for printer in possession of Catherine Aldridge as agent of the late John Aerstin of the Town of St George

1831b	Names	Age	Colour	Country	Conspicuous Marks	Remarks
94	John	24 years	Black	African	his country mark on the face	
95	John	24 "	"	Isle of St Martin	None	
96	Nelson	24 "	"	Isle of Grenada	None	
97	Thomas	21 "	"	"	None	
98	George	21 "	Mulatto	"	None	
99	James	21 months	"	"	None	
Females						
100	Sally	24 years	Black	African	her country mark on the face	
101	Willis	16 "	"	Isle of Grenada	None	
102	Angel	22 "	"	"	None	
103	Frances	18 "	"	"	None	

8 April 1822
Sig. Master of the Females St. George 1822
C. Aldridge agent for John Aerstin

He likely died before emancipation, which would explain why no compensation claim exists under his name. There is also a [record of a John Aerstin](#) who died in Grenada in 1831, aged 29.

John may have had children with a woman recorded variously as Elizabeth Bagenhall, Backenhall, or Ballingale. The records of [Samuel](#) (1808) [Ann](#) (1807), [Jane](#) (1810), and [Charles Aerstin](#) (1814) suggest that a parallel domestic life existed alongside his role as plantation owner. There is also a record for the birth of [Thomas Aerstin](#) with Louisa Harris in 1820, [Elizabeth Helen Aerstin](#) with Catherine Pire in 1829.



Elizabeth Aerstin

Elizabeth comes into focus through the 1821 Slave Register, when she appears as the owner of Lucy, who had been bequeathed to her by the late Sarah Fletcher. The record reads “*This Slave bequeathed to me Sarah Aerstin by the late Sarah Fletcher deceased & commonly included by the deceased’s Executor John Aerstin in his return*”

Annual Return of the Increase and Decrease of Slaves belonging to Elizabeth Aerstin proprietor in the Parish of Saint George for the year 1821

<i>INCREASE</i>								
<i>Names</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Colour</i>	<i>Country</i>	<i>How acquired</i>	<i>Conspicuous marks</i>	<i>Mother's Name</i>	<i>Remarks</i>	<i>Probable</i>
<i>Lucy</i>	<i>4 years</i>	<i>Black</i>	<i>Isle of Senegal</i>	<i>from Mrs. Aerstin as be- to Sarah Fletcher deceased. Included in the bequest to me</i>	<i>None</i>	<i>This slave bequeathed to me Elizabeth Aerstin by the late Sarah Fletcher deceased. and is commonly included by the deceased's Executor John Aerstin in his return</i>		<i>1</i>
						<i>Increased by Birth</i>		<i>0</i>
						<i>Increased otherwise</i>		<i>1</i>
						<i>Total Increase</i>		<i>1</i>

This transfer was formalised through the executor, John Aerstin. For more than a decade, Elizabeth’s register entries show no change: she owned only Lucy, and her holdings neither grew nor diversified. Elizabeth’s life appears modest compared with John’s. She had enslaved one person and did not engage in buying or selling others. Lucy appeared in the registers of 1824, 1825, 1829, 1833 and 1834.

When emancipation came in 1834, her enslaved worker, Lucy, by then 22½ years old, was legally freed. Elizabeth later received compensation in October 1835, amounting to £27 10s 5d, for the loss of Lucy’s labour.



A List of Slaves, belonging to Elizabeth Aerstin in the Town of Saint George on the 31st July 1834

<i>N^o 178</i>	<i>Names</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Colour</i>	<i>Country</i>	<i>Conspicuous Marks</i>	<i>Remarks</i>
<i>Males</i>						
	<i>None</i>					
<i>Females</i>						
	<i>Lucy</i>	<i>22 1/2 years</i>	<i>Black</i>	<i>Grenada</i>	<i>None</i>	<i>N. P.</i>
	<i>No Increase or Decrease since last Return to 31st Dec^r 1833</i>					
	<i>One Female Slave 31st July 1834</i>					
	<i>Elizabeth Aerstin</i>					
	<i>17th Aug^r 1834</i>					

Sarah AERSTIN was also included in the 1821 register. She is listed as the owner of Margaret, a ten-year-old bequeathed to her by the late Sarah Fletcher under the same executor, John Aerstin, like Elizabeth. Sarah's small-scale ownership resembles Elizabeth's.

Annual Return of the Increase and Decrease of Slaves belonging to Sarah Aerstin Proprietor in the Town of Saint George for the year 1821

<i>Increase</i>									
<i>Names</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Colour</i>	<i>Country</i>	<i>How acquired</i>	<i>Conspicuous marks</i>	<i>Mother's Name</i>	<i>Remarks</i>	<i>Males</i>	<i>Females</i>
<i>Margaret</i>	<i>10 years</i>	<i>Black</i>	<i>Isle of France</i>	<i>From John Aerstin a late Sarah Fletcher deceased, by whom she was bequeathed to me.</i>	<i>None</i>	<i>This slave bequeathed to me by the late Sarah Fletcher deceased & was accordingly included by the deceased Executor John Aerstin in his return</i>	<i>Increase by Birth</i>		<i>1</i>
						<i>Increase by Purchase</i>		<i>1</i>	
						<i>That Increase</i>		<i>1</i>	



By 1824 she had sold Margaret, then aged thirteen, to Samuel Weatherhead. She held one other female enslaved person at that time, though no further details are recorded. After 1824, Sarah disappears from the registers entirely. Whether she died, migrated, married under a different surname, or simply ceased to own enslaved people remains unknown.

Annual Return of the Increase and Decrease of Slaves belonging to Sarah Gordon in the town of St George for the year 1834

W. H. J.

Names	Age	Color	Country	How acquired	Conspicuous marks	Whether name known	male	Female
							Increased by birth	0
							Increased otherwise	0
							Total Increased	0

Decrease

Names	Age	Color	Country	Where acquired	Conspicuous marks	Remarks	male	Female
Margaret	23 years	Black	Caribbean	Not known	None			1

Weatherhead

William AERSTIN

William Aerstin appears briefly but significantly. On 7 April 1821 he exported three enslaved people; two females and one male, from Grenada to Trinidad. These individuals may have been the same Peter, Cesarine, and her daughter May who had been enslaved by John Aerstin and were removed around the same period. His actions suggest that William participated directly in the inter-Caribbean slave trade.



IN THE WEST INDIES,

343

Enclosure, N° 1.

Grenada.

6.
GRENADA.

Enclosure, N° 1.

RETURN of SLAVES EXPORTED, from 1st January 1821 to 31st December 1824.

Dates.	N° of Male Slaves.	N° of Female Slaves.	To where Exported.	NAMES OF EXPORTERS.
--------	-----------------------	-------------------------	--------------------	---------------------

There is a record of a William and Rose Aerstin having a son, Edmund, born on 9 November 1823 in St George.

Catherine Aerstin

Catherine enters the historical record in 1817 as the enslaver of a woman named Francoise in St George. Her involvement appears minimal, and it is unclear how she connects to John or the others. She may have been a relative, wife, or widow, or simply part of a wider Aerstin network in the parish.

A List of Slaves belonging to or in the lawful Possession of Catherine Aerstin in the town of St George's Parish.

N°	Name	Colour	Country	Age	Marks
1	Francoise	Black	Creole	24 Years	None

Thus the whole number of Slaves belonging to or in the lawful Possession of Catherine Aerstin is Repreented.

18409 *Attestd James Hynds* *A True Return 10th Aug 1847 Catherine L. Aerstin mark*



Summary

Collectively, the Aerstins formed a small but active slave-owning family in St George, participating in the transfer, management, and sale of enslaved people between at least 1817 and 1834. Their activities spanned ownership (John), small-scale inheritance and custodianship (Elizabeth and Sarah), and intercolonial exporting (William).

The Aerstin family's slaveholding activities were relatively small in scale but typical of the era, involving the inheritance and sale of enslaved people within family structures. The connection between John, Elizabeth, and Sarah suggests a tight-knit family unit. The lack of further records for Sarah and the relatively limited number of enslaved people held by Elizabeth contrasts with the slightly larger operations overseen by John before his death. The family appears to have profited from the British system of compensation after abolition, which rewarded slaveholders for the loss of "property" when enslaved individuals were freed.



The Enslaved

Name	Sex	Where born	Colour	Date of Birth	Parish	Owner	1817	1818	1819	1820	1821	1822	1824	1825	1829	1833	1834
Dick	M	Africa	Black	1792	St George	John Aerstin	P										
John	M	Africa	Black	1787	St George	John Aerstin	P	S									
Thomas	M	Africa	Black	1767	St George	John Aerstin	P	S									
Dick	M	Africa	Black	1772	St George	John Aerstin	P	S									
John	M	Grenada	Black	1787	St George	John Aerstin	P										
Jack	M	Grenada	Black	1799	St George	John Aerstin	P				S						
Dick	M	Africa	Black	1792	St George	John Aerstin	P					P					
John	M	Africa	Black	1787	St George	John Aerstin	P	S									
Thomas	M	Africa	Black	1767	St George	John Aerstin	P	S									
Dick	M	Africa	Black	1772	St George	John Aerstin	P	S									
John	M	Grenada	Black	1787	St George	John Aerstin	P										
Jack	M	Grenada	Black	1799	St George	John Aerstin	P			S							
Peter	M	Grenada	Black	1803	St George	John Aerstin	P				S						
John Louie	M	Grenada	Black	1812	St George	John Aerstin	P	S									
George	M	Grenada	Mulatto	1800	St George	John Aerstin	P					P					
Peggy	F	Africa	Black	1769	St George	John Aerstin	P	S									
Matty	F	Grenada	Black	1797	St George	John Aerstin	P	S									
Charlotte	F	Grenada	Black	1800	St George	John Aerstin	P	S	A	M							
Cesarine	F	Grenada	Black	1797	St George	John Aerstin	P		P		S						
Sally	F	Africa	Black	1779	St George	John Aerstin	P					P					
Mary Clare	F	Grenada	Black	1810	St George	John Aerstin	P	S									
Amelliah	F	Grenada	Black	1815	St George	John Aerstin	P	S									
Margaret	F	Grenada	Black	1811	St George	John Aerstin / Sarah Aerstin	P				S/P		S				
Lucy	F	Grenada	Black	1812	St George	John / Elizabeth Aerstin	P				S/P		P	P	P	P	P
Bella	F	Grenada	Black	1805	St George	John Aerstin		A				P					
Francoise	F	Grenada	Black	1820	St George	John Aerstin				B		P					
Angel	F	Grenada	Black	1799	St George	John Aerstin				A		P					
May / Mary	F	Grenada	Mulatto	1819	St George	John Aerstin			B		S						
Thomas	M	Grenada	Black	1800	St George	John Aerstin			A								
Margaret	F	Grenada	Black	1811	St George	Sarah Aerstin					S						
James	M	Grenada	Mulatto	1821	St George	John Aerstin						B					
Francoise	F	Grenada	Black	1793	St George	Catherine Aerstin											
John	M	Martinique	Black	1788	St George	John Aerstin						P					
Nelson	M	Grenada	Black	1798	St George	John Aerstin						P					
Thomas	M	Grenada	Black	1801	St George	John Aerstin						P					

The people enslaved by the Aerstins reflect the human stories behind the numbers, registers, and transactions. They include children, mothers, young adults purchased for labour, and individuals forcibly exported across the Caribbean.

John, Thomas and Dick

Born in Africa, John, Thomas and Dick had all crossed the Atlantic in chains and survived the horrors of the Middle Passage. All carried with them memories of another continent, a childhood spent beneath a different sun, before being forced into a world that stripped them of their name and history. All three were bound by a shared experience of loss and endurance.

In 1817, their names appeared together in the records of the **John Aerstin** their lives catalogued as property. Then, in 1818, their fates intertwined yet again as they were sold together to **James Smith**. The sale meant the wrenching separation from what little community they had



built, but it also meant that, at least for now, they would not face the unknown alone.

You can imagine, on the journey to their new destination, they would reminisce of the stories from their homeland, whispering fragments of songs and traditions that had survived the years. Thomas, despite his fifty years remained a figure of quiet strength, his endurance a silent testament to resistance. John, the youngest at 30, drew strength from their presence, learning that survival was not just about the body, but about memory and companionship.

They faced an uncertain future. Yet, by holding onto each other, they carried with them the spirit of endurance and the hope that, no matter how the world sought to break them, their lives and their memories of Africa would persist.

But their reprieve was brief. **James Smith**, into whose hands they had been delivered, did not intend to keep them for long. Almost immediately, he arranged their sale to **George Cruikshank**, another figure in the tangled web of Caribbean slavery. For John, Dick, and Thomas, it was another abrupt transition, their fates dictated by the shifting interests of men whose lives were built on the trafficking of others.

Annual Return of the Increase and Decrease of the Slaves belonging to or in the lawful Possession of George Cruikshank, Proprietor in the Town of St. George

1798

	Name	age	Whether Slave	Colour	Country	Conjunctive Mark	How Acquired
By Birth				none			
By Purchase	John	32	black	African	none		Purchase
	Dick	47	White	White	marks in the face		
	Thomas	52	White	White	none		James Smith
otherwise	Luke	26	White	White	none	purchased of Louisa Hartman	
							Total Increase 4

This was the last we saw of Thomas.

James Smith appears from the record to be more of a middleman than a long-term owner. His rapid transfer of the men suggests he was a trader, one who moved enslaved people as commodities, seeking profit in every



transaction rather than seeking to cultivate or manage estates. For John, Dick, and Thomas, this meant their lives were measured in values and exchanges rather than roots or relationships, and each new sale threatened further separation and uncertainty. Still, moving as a group, they clung to the fragments of familiarity and memory that could not be sold, even as the world around them changed with every transaction.

Dick was sold again on 1825 to **James McBurnie**. The record now whos him to have country marks most likely on his face. This transaction marked yet another upheaval in Dick's life, as he was forced to leave behind any sense of stability he might have begun to rebuild. Each sale chipped away at the fragile connections to people and place, but Dick's repeated presence in the records is a testament to his endurance. Despite the unrelenting cycle of displacement and uncertainty, he continued to survive his story a silent chronicle of resilience amid continual upheaval.

Annual Return of the Increase and decrease of Slaves belonging to George Prichard and his heirs under the possession of John Pymant his attorney, the term of 1825

1825

Names	Age	Colour	Country	How acquired	Conspicuous marks	Marked	Number	Gender
Procreate								
John	Young	Black	Guinea	By Birth	none	Scars	1	Male
						Scars by birth	1	Male
						Scars by birth	1	Male
						Total increase	1	
Decrease								
Dick	3 years	Black	African	By purchase	Scars	Scars	1	Male
						Scars by birth	1	Male
						Scars by birth	1	Male
						Total decrease	1	
Procreate								
Thomas	Young	Black	Guinea	By Birth	none	Scars	1	Male
Decrease								
						Scars by birth	1	Male
						Scars by birth	1	Male
						Total decrease	1	
Procreate								
John	Young	Black	Guinea	By Birth	none	Scars	1	Male
Decrease								
						Scars by birth	1	Male
						Scars by birth	1	Male
						Total decrease	1	
Procreate								
John	Young	Black	Guinea	By Birth	none	Scars	1	Male
Decrease								
						Scars by birth	1	Male
						Scars by birth	1	Male
						Total decrease	1	
Procreate								
John	Young	Black	Guinea	By Birth	none	Scars	1	Male
Decrease								
						Scars by birth	1	Male
						Scars by birth	1	Male
						Total decrease	1	
Procreate								
John	Young	Black	Guinea	By Birth	none	Scars	1	Male
Decrease								
						Scars by birth	1	Male
						Scars by birth	1	Male
						Total decrease	1	
Procreate								
John	Young	Black	Guinea	By Birth	none	Scars	1	Male
Decrease								
						Scars by birth	1	Male
						Scars by birth	1	Male
						Total decrease	1	
Procreate								
John	Young	Black	Guinea	By Birth	none	Scars	1	Male
Decrease								
						Scars by birth	1	Male
						Scars by birth	1	Male
						Total decrease	1	
Procreate								
John	Young	Black	Guinea	By Birth	none	Scars	1	Male
Decrease								
						Scars by birth	1	Male
						Scars by birth	1	Male
						Total decrease	1	
Procreate								
John	Young	Black	Guinea	By Birth	none	Scars	1	Male
Decrease								
						Scars by birth	1	Male
						Scars by birth	1	Male
						Total decrease	1	
Procreate								
John	Young	Black	Guinea	By Birth	none	Scars	1	Male
Decrease								
						Scars by birth	1	Male
						Scars by birth	1	Male
						Total decrease	1	
Procreate								
John	Young	Black	Guinea	By Birth	none	Scars	1	Male
Decrease								
						Scars by birth	1	Male
						Scars by birth	1	Male
						Total decrease	1	
Procreate								
John	Young	Black	Guinea	By Birth	none	Scars	1	Male
Decrease								
						Scars by birth	1	Male
						Scars by birth	1	Male
						Total decrease	1	
Procreate								
John	Young	Black	Guinea	By Birth	none	Scars	1	Male
Decrease								
						Scars by birth	1	Male
						Scars by birth	1	Male
						Total decrease	1	
Procreate								
John	Young	Black	Guinea	By Birth	none	Scars	1	Male
Decrease								
						Scars by birth	1	Male
						Scars by birth	1	Male
						Total decrease	1	
Procreate								
John	Young	Black	Guinea	By Birth	none	Scars	1	Male
Decrease								
						Scars by birth	1	Male
						Scars by birth	1	Male
						Total decrease	1	
Procreate								
John	Young	Black	Guinea	By Birth	none	Scars	1	Male
Decrease								
						Scars by birth	1	Male
						Scars by birth	1	Male
						Total decrease	1	
Procreate								
John	Young	Black	Guinea	By Birth	none	Scars	1	Male
Decrease								
						Scars by birth	1	Male
						Scars by birth	1	Male
						Total decrease	1	
Procreate								
John	Young	Black	Guinea	By Birth	none	Scars	1	Male
Decrease								
						Scars by birth	1	Male
						Scars by birth	1	Male
						Total decrease	1	
Procreate								
John	Young	Black	Guinea	By Birth	none	Scars	1	Male
Decrease								
						Scars by birth	1	Male
						Scars by birth	1	Male
						Total decrease	1	
Procreate								
John	Young	Black	Guinea	By Birth	none	Scars	1	Male
Decrease								
						Scars by birth	1	Male
						Scars by birth	1	Male
						Total decrease	1	
Procreate								
John	Young	Black	Guinea	By Birth	none	Scars	1	Male
Decrease								
						Scars by birth	1	Male
						Scars by birth	1	Male
						Total decrease	1	
Procreate								
John	Young	Black	Guinea	By Birth	none	Scars	1	Male
Decrease								
						Scars by birth	1	Male
						Scars by birth	1	Male
						Total decrease	1	
Procreate								
John	Young	Black	Guinea	By Birth	none	Scars	1	Male
Decrease								
						Scars by birth	1	Male
						Scars by birth	1	Male
						Total decrease	1	
Procreate								
John	Young	Black	Guinea	By Birth	none	Scars	1	Male
Decrease								
						Scars by birth	1	Male
						Scars by birth	1	Male
						Total decrease	1	
Procreate								
John	Young	Black	Guinea	By Birth	none	Scars	1	Male
Decrease								
						Scars by birth	1	Male
						Scars by birth	1	Male
						Total decrease	1	
Procreate								
John	Young	Black	Guinea	By Birth	none	Scars	1	Male
Decrease								
						Scars by birth	1	Male
						Scars by birth	1	Male
						Total decrease	1	
Procreate								
John	Young	Black	Guinea	By Birth	none	Scars	1	Male
Decrease								
						Scars by birth	1	Male
						Scars by birth	1	Male
						Total decrease	1	
Procreate								
John	Young	Black	Guinea	By Birth	none	Scars	1	Male
Decrease								
						Scars by birth	1	Male
						Scars by birth	1	Male
						Total decrease	1	
Procreate								
John	Young	Black	Guinea	By Birth	none	Scars	1	Male
Decrease								
						Scars by birth	1	Male
						Scars by birth	1	Male
						Total decrease	1	
Procreate								
John	Young	Black	Guinea	By Birth	none	Scars	1	Male
Decrease								
						Scars by birth	1	Male
						Scars by birth	1	Male
						Total decrease	1	
Procreate								
John	Young	Black	Guinea	By Birth	none	Scars	1	Male
Decrease								
						Scars by birth	1	Male
						Scars by birth	1	Male
						Total decrease	1	
Procreate								
John	Young	Black	Guinea	By Birth	none	Scars	1	Male
Decrease								
						Scars by birth	1	Male
						Scars by birth	1	Male
						Total decrease	1	
Procreate								
John	Young	Black	Guinea	By Birth	none	Scars	1	Male
Decrease								
						Scars by birth	1	Male
						Scars by birth	1	Male
						Total decrease	1	
Procreate								
John	Young	Black	Guinea	By Birth	none	Scars	1	Male
Decrease								
						Scars by birth	1	Male
						Scars by birth	1	Male
						Total decrease	1	
Procreate								
John	Young	Black	Guinea	By Birth	none	Scars	1	Male
Decrease								
						Scars by birth	1	Male
						Scars by birth	1	Male
						Total decrease	1	
Procreate								
John	Young	Black	Guinea	By Birth	none	Scars	1	Male
Decrease								
						Scars by birth	1	Male
						Scars by birth	1	Male
						Total decrease	1	
Procreate								
John	Young	Black	Guinea	By Birth	none	Scars	1	Male
Decrease								
						Scars by birth	1	Male
						Scars by birth	1	Male
						Total decrease	1	
Procreate								
John	Young	Black	Guinea	By Birth	none	Scars	1	Male
Decrease								
						Scars by birth	1	Male
						Scars by birth	1	Male
						Total decrease	1	
Procreate								
John	Young	Black	Guinea	By Birth	none	Scars	1	Male
Decrease								
						Scars by birth	1	Male
						Scars by birth	1	Male
						Total decrease	1	
Procreate								
John	Young	Black	Guinea	By Birth	none	Scars	1	Male
Decrease								
						Scars by birth	1	Male
						Scars by birth	1	Male
						Total decrease	1	
Procreate								
John	Young	Black	Guinea	By Birth	none	Scars	1	Male
Decrease								
						Scars by birth	1	Male
						Scars by birth	1	Male
						Total decrease	1	
Procreate								
John	Young	Black	Guinea	By Birth	none	Scars	1	Male
Decrease								
						Scars by birth	1	Male
						Scars by birth	1	Male
						Total decrease	1	
Procreate								
John	Young	Black	Guinea	By Birth	none	Scars	1	Male
Decrease								
						Scars by birth	1	Male
						Scars by birth	1	Male
						Total decrease	1	
Procreate								
John	Young	Black	Guinea	By Birth	none	Scars	1	Male
Decrease								
						Scars by birth	1	Male
						Scars by birth	1	Male
						Total decrease	1	
Procreate								
John	Young	Black	Guinea	By Birth	none	Scars	1	Male
Decrease								
						Scars by birth	1	Male
						Scars by birth	1	Male
						Total decrease	1	
Procreate								
John	Young	Black	Guinea	By Birth	none	Scars	1	Male
Decrease								
						Scars by birth	1	Male
						Scars by birth	1	Male
						Total decrease	1	
Procreate								
John	Young	Black	Guinea	By Birth	none	Scars	1	Male
Decrease								
						Scars by birth	1	Male
						Scars by birth	1	Male
						Total decrease	1	
Procreate								
John	Young	Black	Guinea	By Birth				

George Cruikshank went on to claim compensation for 3 enslaved people. There was a black African called John who was one of them but born c.1791. As birth dates of enslaved Africans were not recorded by traders, their age was assumed and manipulated for commercial gain. Could this in fact be the John we are following. If so, he managed to survive through this entire ordeal!

Dick appears in James McBurnie's 1825 register, age 59. Now known as **Dick C** as there was another Dick in the register. There was an African John listed too but the dates don't match the one we are following and the country marks would be a change from the earlier records – but we saw this change with Dick. This was the last we saw of Dick.

A List of Slaves belonging to James McBurnie in the Town of St. George					
No	Names	Age	Colour	Country	Conspicuous marks
				Male	
	Jack	54 years	Black	Caribbean	None
	John	33 "	Black	African	Country marks
	Sho George	34 "	Black	ditto	None
	Henry	29 "	Black	Guadalupe	ditto

Annual Return of the Increase and decrease of Slaves belonging to James McBurnie in the town of St. George for the year 1825					
No	Names	Age	Colour	Country	Conspicuous marks
	Dick R	59	Black	Africa	by New Castle brand and black eye
	Dick C	53	black	dito	by George Cruikshank country marks
					Increase by birth 0
					Increase by purchase 2
					Total Increase 2



Jack, Dick and Peggy

Jack (21), Dick (28) and Peggy (51) were sold to William Pitt in 1820. They faced another sudden displacement. This was further impacted by their onward sale as William sent them to Trinidad with a few others.

Their fortitude lies in the courage with which they confronted the unknown: torn from familiar surroundings, yet carrying with them unspoken resilience that they needed to survive.

	Names	age	Colour	Decrease Country	Conspicuous Marks	Manner of Death	
By Death	Mark	41	Black	African	None	died of the Dropsy	1 0
						<i>Total</i>	1 0
						How Disposed of	
By sale or how otherwise	Tom	29	Black	African	none	Sent to Trinidad	1
	Patrick	34	ditto	Creole	do	Manumitted	1
	George	40	ditto	African	country marks	Sold to Violet Purser	1
	John Pierre	35	ditto	Creole	none	do. John M. McIntyre	1
	Brigitte	24	Mulattress	ditto	do	Sent to Trinidad	" 1
	John Saturday	23	Black	ditto	do	Ditto	1
	Francois	19	Mulatto	ditto	do	Ditto	1
	Jack	22	Black	ditto	do	Ditto	1
	Dick	27	ditto	ditto	do	Ditto	1
	Peggy	34	ditto	African	do	Ditto	" 1
	Rosette	23	ditto	Creole	do	Ditto	" 1
	John	15	ditto	new Providence	do	Ditto	1
	Ned	30	ditto	Creole	do	Manumitted	1
	William	22	Yellow	ditto	do	Sold to Owsley Bowley	1
						<i>Total</i>	11 3
Dec 31/1820	Number of Slaves Per Return up to the 31 st December 1819						5 1
Recapitulation	Increase during the Year 1820, as above						10 8
	Deduct Decrease during the Year 1820, as above						13 9
	Total Number of Slaves this Day - Three Males & Six females						12 3
	So Help Me <i>Wm Pitt</i>						3 6
January 24 - 1821							

671 of 856



Peter

Peter was born enslaved in Grenada and was transported to Trinidad just as he entered adulthood in 1821. His fortitude is found in his journey: the heartbreak of removal, the strength to adapt again, and the courage to continue living in a world that repeatedly uprooted him.

John Louis, Peggy, Matty, Charlotte, Mary Clare and Amelia

We can see from John Aerstin's register that these were all sold to Richard James Warren in 1818.

*Annual Return of the African and American of the Negro belonging to the late
Purchase of John Aerstin in the Town of St. George*

	Names	Age	Native Name	Colour	Country	Complexion	Markings	Remarks
By Birth			None					
By Purchase	Names	Age	Colour	Country	Complexion	Markings	Remarks	
By Purchase	Peter	13	Black	Crook	Native of Surinam	Dark of Complexion		1
							Total Surinam	1
By Birth	Names	Age	Colour	Country	Complexion	Markings	Remarks	
By Birth			None					
By Purchase	Names	Age	Colour	Country	Complexion	Markings	Remarks	
By Purchase	John	51	Black	Africa	None	Scars on the face	Scars on the face	1
By Purchase	Thomas	50	do	do	do	do	do	1
By Purchase	Dick	46	do	do	Markings on the face	do	do	1
By Purchase	John Louis	6	do	Crook	None	do	do	1
By Purchase	Peggy	40	do	Africa	do	do	do	1
By Purchase	Matty	41	do	Crook	do	do	do	1
By Purchase	Charlotte	18	do	do	do	do	do	1
By Purchase	Mary Clare	8	do	do	do	do	do	1
By Purchase	Amelia	3	do	do	do	do	do	1
				Carried forward			Total	45



Richard Warren's slave register for 1819 tells us more. Richard was the legal owner but they were for his sister Matilda Warren who was a business owner in St George. He recorded Amelia's death that year, age 47 from a fever. He also sold Charlotte (20) to John Aerstin.

325

Annual Return of the Increase and Decrease of the Slaves belonging to in the lawful Possession of Rich^d. Warren for Matilda Warren his Sister Proprietor in the Township of St George

1818

By Birth	Names	Age	Mothers Name	Colour	Country	Conspicuous Marks	How Acquired	
By Purchase or otherwise	Lucey	23		Black	Crook	No Marks	Purchased from Mary Louise Fanchin	1
							Total Increase	1
By Death	Amelia	47 years		Black	Crook	No Marks	Starving Death	1
							after occasional sickness	1
							Total	2
By Sale or how otherwise	Charlotte	20 years		Black	Crook	No Marks	Sold to John Aerstin	1
							Total	2
Dec 31, 1819	Number of Slaves per Return up to the 31 st December 1818 one Male & five females							1 5
	Increase during the Year 1819 as above one female							1 1
	Deduct Decrease during the Year 1819 as above two females							1 6
	Total Number of Slaves this day one Male four females							1 4
1819	"So the whole is 100" Rich ^d . J. Warren							
	St George's January 1820							

867 of 986

The following year, we see that Matty gave birth to a daughter Betsey and that the holding was in the lawful possession of Matilda and not Richard. In fact, it might be safe to assume that he had died as his name disappears from all future records.



317

Annual Return of the Increase and Decrease of the Slaves belonging to and in the lawful Possession of Matilda Warren Proprietress in the Town of St. George

No 269

	Names	age	Mothers name	colour	Country	Conspicuous marks	How Acquired	Total
By Birth	Betsey	4 months	Matty	Black				1
By Purchase or otherwise								
By Death								
By Sale or otherwise								
							Total Increase	
							Manner of Death	
							How Disposed of	
								Total
Decapitated	Numbers of Slaves Per Return up to the 31 st December 1819							14
	Increase during the Year 1820 as above							1
	Deduct Decrease during the Year 1820, as above							15
	Total Number of Slaves this Day - One male and five females							15
	To Help Me God: Matilda Warren							
	St. George 5 th Janry 1821							

No 270

Unfortunately, Betsey died in infancy aged 4 months. The record says that she died from eruption of the skin which was a term used to describe a range of issues including ulceration, yaws (a common chronic infectious disease) or even smallpox. As enslaved people had limited access to medical treatment, a mild skin eruption could become life-threatening through infection, fever or septicaemia.

Annual Return of the Increase and Decrease of Slaves belonging to Matilda Warren Proprietress during the year 1821

Names	Age	Colour	Country	Manner of death	Conspicuous mark	Remarks	Male	Female
Betsey	4 mos	Black	Antigua	died of Eruption of the skin	None		1	1
I hereby certify that the Infant child named Betsey, died from Eruption of the skin to the best of my knowledge comes Relief. J. Remond, Surgeon								



Sadly Peggy died in 1823. An inquest concluded that she had died by the visitation of God which really meant she passed by natural causes, at 54 years old. The inquest may have been called for because of the suddenness of her passing. The Amelioration Act that was passed in 1823 required such an inquest if a death had been sudden, suspicious or resulting from severe punishment. The act was passed as the British government were facing huge pressures from abolitionists and wanted the system to appear more humane and reassure Parliament that the system was being reformed. A coroner would be appointed and a white jury. Even if the death had been as a result of brutal treatment, the enslaved witnesses were not allowed to testify and prosecutions of the perpetrators were almost non-existent.

Annual Return of the Increase and Decrease of Slaves belonging to Matilda Warren in the Town of Saint George for the year 1823.

Names	Age	Colour	Country	Decrease		Remarks	Male	Female
				manner of death or how disposed	conspicuous marks			
Peggy	54 years	Black	African	suddenly at the River				

Inquest held on the Body "decedit" died by the Visitation of God

Identify that the Inquisition on the above named slave has been returned into this office. John Douglas. T. Clerk of the Crown and Peace.

5th Jan^y. 1824



We see John Louis (13), Mary Claire(15) and Matty (27) and in Matilda's register of 1825.

A List of Slaves belonging to Matilda Warren of the Town of St. George

No	Names	^{supposed} Age	Colour	Country	Conspicuous Marks	Remarks
				<u>Males</u>		
34	John Louis	13 years	Black	Grenada	None	
				<u>Females</u>		
	Matty	27 years	Black	Grenada	None	
	Mary Claire	15 do	do	do	do	
	Mary Sainte	21 do	do	Trinidad	do	
	Charlotte	7 Mo ^{ts}	do	Grenada	do	
	One Male & Four females Slaves the 31 st Dec. 1825					
	Mat ^r . Warren her & Mark					

There was mixed news in 1829.

Matty was manumitted in that year and was free from bondage that had been part of her whole life to that point. At 31, she could finally start planning the rest of her life.

Mary Claire died of consumption. This was a common condition in enslaved people due to the unsanitary and confined conditions they had to live in. She was just 19.



Annual Return of the Increase and Decrease of Slaves belonging to Matilda Warren in the Town of Saint George for the Year 1829

Names	Age	Colour	Country	Decrease		Remarks	Notes
				Manner of death	How disposed		
Matty	31 Yrs	Black	Grenada	Manumitted	None		1
Mary Claire	19	"	"	Kind of Consumption			1
I certify that the above specified cause a manner of death is true and correct to the best of my judgment and belief. J. Brown, Surgeon							
One Male and One female the 31 st Dec ^r 1829.				Decrease by death			0 1
Matilda Warren				Decrease by Sale or otherwise			0 1
1 st April 1830				Total Decrease			0 2
				Increase			0 0
				No of Slaves per last Return			2 3
							1 1

Matilda went on to claim compensation for the 5 people she had enslaved in 1834. One of which was **John Louis**. He survived! He was also just 21 years old so, after the period of apprenticeship, he would have been free to live a life more of his choosing.

A List of Slaves, belonging to Matilda Warren in the Town of St. George on the 31st Day of July 1834

N ^o . 235 ✓	Names	Age	Colour	Country	Conspicuous Marks	Remarks
<u>Males</u>						
	John Louis	21 Yrs	Black	Grenada	No Marks	N. P.



Cesarine and May

Cesarine was a black woman born in Grenada. She gave birth to May in 1819 from a white father (likely to have been an overseer). She was transported to Trinidad, thankfully with May, for onward sale in 1821. Despite all this, she remained a mother, a survivor, and an important constant for her daughter.

Margaret

Margaret saw many changes in her early life. She first appears in the register of 1817 under the control of John Aerstin. She was then transferred to Sarah Aerstin in 1821 who sold her to Samuel Weatherhead in 1825.

Annual Return of the Increase and Decrease of Slaves belonging to Sarah Aerstin on the town of St. George for the year 1824

Increase						
Names	Age	Colour	Country	Manner of death	Conspicuous Marks	Remarks
Margaret	13 yrs	Black	Grenada	Slaveship	None	1
Weatherhead						

She was on the move again in 1827 as Samuel sold her on. She was still just 15 years old.

168

Names	Age	Colour	Country	Manner of death	Conspicuous Marks	Remarks
Margaret	15 yrs	Black	Grenada	Slaveship	None	1
decrease by death						
decrease by sale						
Total decrease						1
One Male and two Females 31 st Decem 1827						
Increase						12
Samuel Weatherhead						
No of Slaves last return						1
						12



Margaret's childhood consisted of constant reassignments between households. Each shift required adaptive strength. Her ability to withstand separation, reattachment and new environments is itself remarkable.

Lucy

Lucy possesses one of the longest and clearest life histories in the Aerstin records. She was transferred to Elizabeth Aerstin in 1821 and remained with her through 1834. Her survival from infancy to adulthood during the harshest years of slavery demonstrates deep resilience. In 1834 she finally saw the end of enslavement at 22, living proof that fortitude endures even when freedom is delayed.

<i>A List of Slaves, belonging to Elizabeth Aerstin in the Town of Saint George on the 31st July 1834</i>					
<i>N^o 178</i>	<i>Names</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Colour</i>	<i>Country</i>	<i>Conspicuous Marks</i>
					<i>Remarks</i>
				<i>Males</i>	
	<i>None</i>				
				<i>Females</i>	
	<i>Lucy</i>	<i>22 1/2 years</i>	<i>Black</i>	<i>Grenada</i>	<i>None N.P.</i>
	<i>No Increase or Decrease since last Return to St. Geo. 1833</i>				
	<i>One Female Slave 31st July 1834</i>				
	<i>Elizabeth Aerstin</i>				
					<i>19th Aug^r 1834</i>



Angel and Francoise

Angel was taken under John Aerstin's control in 1820 and gave birth to a daughter, Francoise soon afterwards. She was 21. Angel would have to negotiate a life of demands, long hours on top of motherhood. Yet she continued, nurturing her daughter despite uncertainty about their future. Francoise represents the fragile but determined emergence of new life in an environment built on oppression.

John

This Martinique-born man, present in 1829, had already endured migration between islands. His appearance suggests a life shaped by multiple colonial systems. His fortitude lies in surviving across borders, labour regimes, and decades of upheaval.



Summary

The stories of the enslaved associated with the Aerstin family reveal lives marked by relentless upheaval, resilience, and adaptability. Though many of their names appear briefly in the records, their legacies were anything but small. They became the ancestors of many Grenadians living today, the builders of villages and farming communities, the first to negotiate wages, purchase land, educate their children, and establish the foundations of the island's modern society. Their transition from bondage to freedom was a generational rebirth.

In this way, the stories of the enslaved connected to the Aerstins do not end in tragedy but in continuity. Their endurance ensured that Grenada's cultural, familial and historical lines survived, and their descendants inherited not only freedom but a strength rooted in centuries of perseverance. Their lives, though obscured in the archival fragments, are testament to the courage, adaptability and quiet triumph of a people who refused to be erased.

References

Slave Registers for:

- John Aerstin from [1817](#), [1818](#), [1819](#), [1821](#), [1822](#)
- Catherine Aerstin [1817](#), [1821](#)
- Elizabeth Aerstin [1821](#), [1834](#)
- Sarah Aerstin [1824](#)
- George Cruikshank [1825](#)
- William Pitt [1820](#)
- Richard Warren [1819](#)
- Matilda Warren [1820](#), [1821](#), [1825](#), [1829](#), [1834](#)
- Samuel Weatherhead [1827](#)

