

# Mary ALLAN

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## Fact File:

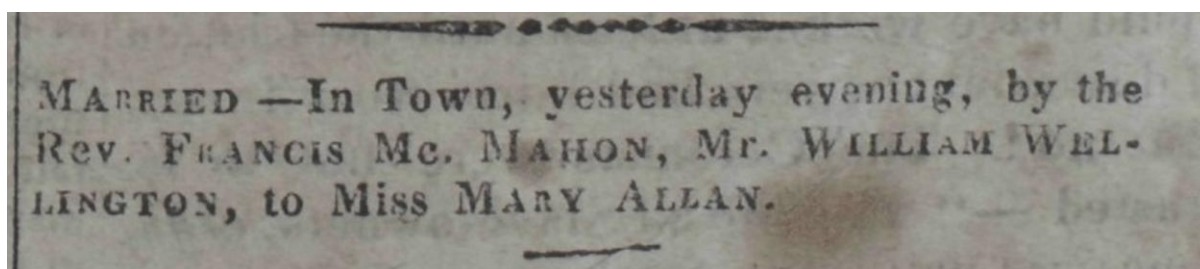
### MARY URSEAL ALLAN

Claim Number:	182
Compensation:	£20 12S 10D
Number of Enslaved in Claim:	1
Parish:	St George
Parliamentary Papers:	P. 95

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## Family

Little is known about where she was from or even her ethnicity. However, she may have been the Mary Allan who married William Wellington in St George in 1827. A notice of the wedding was posted in the St Georges Chronicle And Grenada Gazette 26 May 1827.



This public notice of her marriage is significant as it strongly suggests that Mary Allan was socially recognised within the white colonial community. Newspapers of this kind routinely reported marriages of white and elite “free coloured” residents, but interracial marriages were exceptional, and likely framed with explicit racial descriptors. The absence of any qualifying language in the notice points to a marriage considered socially unremarkable, most consistent with both parties being white.

## **Business Interests**

Mary Urseal Allan emerges from the records as a modest but telling figure within the domestic landscape of slavery in urban Grenada, her life illustrating how enslavement permeated even small households beyond the great plantation estates.

She lived in the parish of St George, where she was recorded as the owner of a single enslaved woman, Catherine. Catherine had been born enslaved in Grenada in 1787 and appears consistently in the island's slave registers up to 1834. By the final register, Catherine was 47 years old, suggesting a lifetime spent in bondage. Given the scale of Mary Allan's household, Catherine was almost certainly employed as a domestic worker, responsible for the daily labour that sustained Mary's domestic life rather than plantation production.

Mary would have grown to be very reliant on Catherine's services.

## **Compensation claim**

Mary Allan's claim for compensation following the abolition of slavery reflects this small-scale ownership. Under claim number 182, she received £20 12s 10d for the loss of Catherine's labour. Though a relatively small sum compared to major estate awards, it nonetheless places Mary firmly within the compensation system that prioritised enslavers' financial interests while offering nothing to the formerly enslaved themselves.



## Death

There are no conclusive records of her civil record, however, she may be the Mary Allan recorded as having died on 7 February 1884 in Upper Monserrat, St George, aged 82. If so, she lived through the profound transformation of Grenadian society from slavery, through apprenticeship, to full emancipation and beyond.

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No.      Register of Deaths in the District of <i>St George in Grenada</i> for the Year 1884.													
Brought forward	No. of Entry.	Date of Registration 1884	Name of the Party (if any)	Age.	Sex.		Date of the event registered 1884	Place, or in whose house the event occurred.	Place of Birth when known.	Names of Parents in the case of Infants.	Name of party giving the information.	Cause of Death if known.	Remarks and Observations.
					Male.	Female.							
	1179	February 13	Mary Allen 82 yrs.	1	1	Female	February 7	Upper Montserrat Grenada		-	Lowdowning	Senile Debility	

The cause of death was given as senile debility. At this time, *senile debility* was a catch-all medical diagnosis used by doctors and registrars to describe death resulting from old age and gradual physical decline, rather than from a single identifiable disease. It literally meant a weakening (*debility*) associated with advanced age (*senile*), and it was commonly applied to elderly people whose bodies had slowly failed. It was often used where someone had lived to what was considered a respectable old age and had declined gradually. In Mary's case, dying at around 82 years old in Grenada would have been regarded as exceptional longevity for the period, particularly in a tropical climate.





gave them far greater autonomy than before. So, it is possible that Catherine chose to stay with Mary. Others moved between households, offering their services independently and choosing employers who treated them with respect or who were connected through church or community networks.

Catherine may also have become part of Grenada's emerging free Black community, building relationships beyond her Mary's household. Churches played a crucial role at this time, particularly Anglican and Methodist congregations, which provided spiritual support, social networks, and sometimes schooling for children and adults alike. Women of her generation were often central figures within these networks.

At her age, Catherine may also have taken on a mentoring or caregiving role, looking after younger women or children, passing on skills and knowledge shaped by lived experience. In many post-emancipation households, older women became anchors of stability and widely respected figures.

Most importantly, Catherine lived her final years as a legally free woman. She could choose where to live, whom to work for, how to spend her time, and with whom to form family or community bonds. Even if material conditions remained hard, this freedom represented a profound and meaningful transformation.

Catherine's life, traced across the registers from 1819 to 1834, is therefore a record of survival and a quiet testimony to endurance, skill, and dignity in freedom. Like many women of her generation in Grenada, she helped to lay the foundations of post-emancipation society.

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## Acknowledgements

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