

MEMORY OF THE WORLD REGISTER

Registry of Slaves of the British Caribbean 1817-1834 (Bahamas, Belize, Dominica, Jamaica, St Kitts, Trinidad and Tobago and the United Kingdom with Addendum from Bermuda approved in 2011

PART A – ESSENTIAL INFORMATION

1 SUMMARY

Enslaved Africans made up the great majority of transatlantic migrants who were forcibly removed to the Americas from Columbus' first voyages in the fifteenth century until the nineteenth century. The Trans-Atlantic slave trade, originating in Africa and ending in the Caribbean and the Americas, remains a sensitive subject for several reasons, including issues of race, morality, ethics, identity, underdevelopment and reparations. Europeans defended the trade mainly for its role in providing renewable plantation labour and stimulating economic growth, best manifested in the phenomenal expansion of mercantilist Britain. By the eighteenth century the trade had become the "most advantageous and most abundant source of wealth" to participating European nations;¹ which indubitably accounts for its longevity and resilience against the forces of abolition.

In 1807 the Trans Atlantic trade in enslaved Africans to the British West Indies was legally terminated by Britain. Nonetheless, inter-colonial slave trading remained legal until 1811. In an effort to more closely monitor the state of the enslaved populations, slave registers were first established in Trinidad and in St. Lucia in 1813 and 1815 respectively, by legislation originating from the British Government. The other West Indian colonies were urged by the British Government to introduce similar slave registers, and the majority including Antigua, Barbados, Berbice, Dominica, Demerara-Essequibo, Grenada, Jamaica, Montserrat, Nevis, St. Kitts and St. Vincent were compiled between 1816 and 1817. The Virgin Islands and Tobago established theirs in 1818 and 1819 respectively. However, Bermuda and The Bahamas did not establish their registries until 1821 and 1822 respectively, and the Cayman Islands (then a dependency of Jamaica) and Honduras did not make any returns until 1834.

In 1819, the British Government established a central slave registry in London which was intended to record all sales, inheritance, transfer, or inter-colonial movement of enslaved persons. Furthermore, in 1821, governors of West Indian colonies were required to send copies and indexes of the local registers to London. Under the terms of the Abolition of Slavery Act 1833,² slavery was abolished in most British possessions on 1 August 1834 and the slave registers were used by the local authorities to determine who were to be apprenticed labourers; and by the Slave Compensation Commissioners to establish legal ownership and final evaluations for compensation purposes. The majority of slave registers were set up as scheduled by local colonial legislation; hence, a fair degree of variability in

¹ Philip Curtin et. al., *History of Africa* (Canada: Little Brown & Co., 1978) 213; Basil Davidson, *Africa in History* (Macmillan Publishing Co., 1974) 180; Eric Williams, *Capitalism and Slavery* (1944. London: Andre Deutsch, 1981) see chapter 3 for an overview of several industries linked to the slave trade. Manning refers to the same as "mankind's second largest transoceanic migration;" see his "Migration of Africans, Africa and the New world" in Patrick Manning, ed. *Slave Trades, 1500-1800: Globalisation of Forced labour* (Vermont: Variorum, 1996) 65.

² An Act for the Abolition of Slavery throughout the British Colonies and for promoting the industry of the manumitted slaves; and for compensating the persons hitherto entitled to the services of such slaves, 28 August 1833, 3 & 4 Will 4, c73. Under the terms of the act registered ex-slaves in the American colonies over the age of 6 on 1 August 1834 became bound apprenticed labourers until 1 August 1840. Slavery was not abolished in Cape of Good Hope or Mauritius until four and six months later respectively (s65); the territories of the East India Company, St Helena and Ceylon are expressly excluded from this act (s44). Slaves living in Britain or arriving in Britain after the passing of the act were freed (s3).

formatting and data collected exists across the registers. Nevertheless, in spite of such variability and the local colonial peculiarity of these records, they collectively comprise an invaluable set of archives for the study and understanding of one of the world's foremost slavery systems, and provide the basis for international comparability.

Bahama Islands
New Providence & Return of twelve Slaves the joint property of
Lucretia Diana Fernander of the Island of New Providence Widow and her
three Children William Augusta Fernander, Louisa Ann Fernander and
Charlotte Augusta Fernander all of the Island of New Providence aforesaid
this Twenty first day of April One thousand eight hundred and twenty one.

Number	Name	Sex	Age	Colour	Place of Employment at the time of the return	Whether African or Creole
1	Louisa	Female	^{Years} 30	Black	New Providence	African
2	Emeline	Female	6	Black	New Providence	Creole
3	Senty	Female	21	Black	New Providence	Creole
4	Kate	Female	^{Months} 2	Black	New Providence	Creole
5	Frederick	Male	^{Years} 9	Black	New Providence	Creole
6	Jane	Female	16	Black	New Providence	Creole
7	Nelly	Female	8	Black	New Providence	Creole
8	Sylvester	Male	35	Black	New Providence	African
9	Will	Male	10	Black	New Providence	African
10	Tulip	Female	11	Black	New Providence	Creole
11	Rose	Female	14	Black	New Providence	Creole
12	Harry	Male	18	Black	New Providence	Creole

Bahama Islands
New Providence & Lucretia Diana Fernander of the Island of New Pro-
vidence Widow being duly sworn saith that the above is a full perfect and
faithful return to the best of the deponents knowledge and belief of all the Slaves
the joint property or otherwise of the said Lucretia Diana Fernander and her
Children William Augusta Fernander, Louisa Ann Fernander and Charlotte
Augusta Fernander within or appertaining to these Islands on this Twenty
first day of April One thousand eight hundred and twenty one.

Sworn to at Nassau New Providence
this Twenty first day of April 1821

Before me

James Ambrister
Registrar

Lucretia Diana Fernander
her
mark

Lucretia Diana Fernander
her
mark

Figure 1: A page from the Register of Slaves, Bahamas, 1821

Harris

			Employment
			Set of the Family
			the Family of
James	Slave	Black	
John	Slave		
Isaac	Slave		
			The Family
James	Slave	Black	Armsman
Smith	Slave		Blacksmith
John	Slave		
Isaac	Slave		
Isaac	Slave		
Isaac	Slave		
Isaac	Slave		
Isaac	Slave		
Isaac	Slave		
Isaac	Slave		
			The Family
John	Slave	Black	Handicraft
Isaac	Slave		Blacksmith
Isaac	Slave		Handicraft
Isaac	Slave		
Isaac	Slave		
Isaac	Slave		
			The Family
James	Slave	Black	Handicraft
John	Slave		
Isaac	Slave		
Isaac	Slave		
			The Family
Isaac	Slave	Black	
Isaac	Slave	Black	
Isaac	Slave	Black	
Isaac	Slave	Black	
			The Family
Isaac	Slave	Black	
Isaac	Slave		

Slaves beloned		
Lovers (Belonged)		
8	Slaves	Children of James
7		
3		
of James		
20	Slaves	
22		
11		
24		Children of James
28		
7		
2		Children of James
3		
of Betty		
25	Slaves	
24		Children of Betty
22		Children of Betty
9		
4		Children of Betty
of Anna		
25	Slaves	
9		Children of Anna
6.5		
of Robert		
9	Slaves	
7		Children of Robert
7		
3		
of Betty		
18	Slaves	
2		Children

Figure 2: Belize - Image Showing Condition of Slave Register, 1834 (Folios: 214-328)

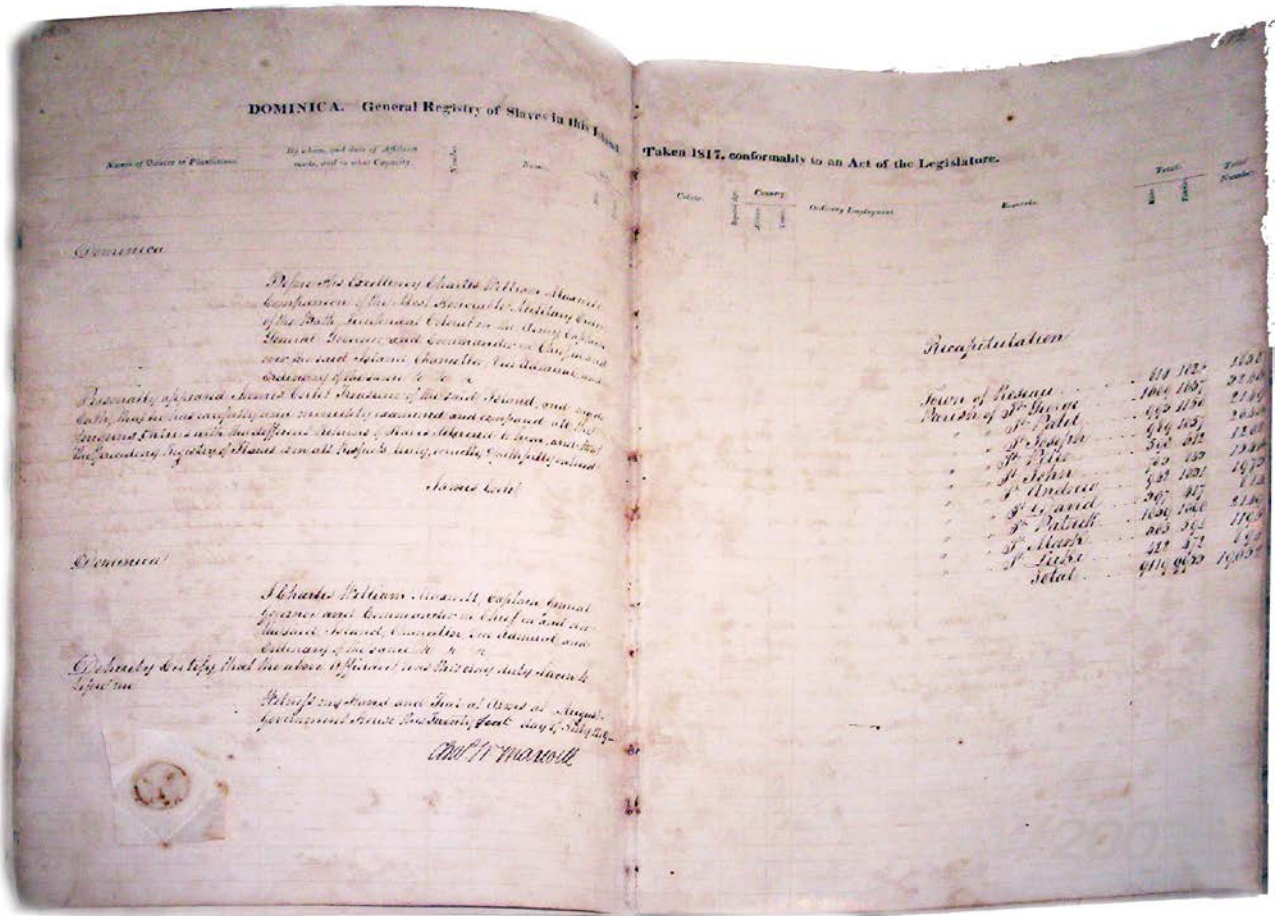


Figure 3 Dominica Slave Register 1817 - Final page showing total number of slaves

Original returns of Slaves

Name	Description of Person making the return	Name	Sex	Color	Age	Country	usual Employment
Richard	Abegal	Forn	Black	fifty			
Cardin	Arinda	d	d	fifty eight	African	Free	Business Clerk
Attorney	Breba	d	d	fifty eight	Breba	d	Superannuated
of Carl	Wafidene	d	d	sixty	d	d	waiting on the Garrison
Tommy	Barla	d	d	sixty	d	d	Superannuated
Proprietor	Praschady	d	d	forty eight	d	d	Superannuated
	Bette	d	d	forty five	d	d	Jack's man's foot
	Douglas	d	d	forty five	d	d	Jack's case of her two children
	Beneta	d	d	twenty six	d	d	Field
	Matthews	d	d	twenty six	d	d	Field
	Betty	d	d	twenty two	d	d	Field
	Stephens	d	d	twenty two	d	d	Field
	Betsy	d	d	forty two	d	d	Field Nurse
	Matthews	d	d	forty two	d	d	Field Nurse
	Betsy	Mela	d	twenty five	d	d	Seamstress
	Barba	d	d	sixteen	d	d	Field
	Celia	d	d	thirty eight	d	d	wait ^r on Mr. Denton
	Caukey	d	d	forty five	d	d	Field
	Anna	d	d	forty five	d	d	Field
	Caukey	d	d	thirty	d	d	Field
	Anna	d	d	thirty	d	d	Field
	Charlotte	d	d	twenty	d	d	House Servant
	Cuthalenge	d	d	thirty	d	d	Field
	Coomba	d	d	forty	d	d	wait ^r on Mr. Denton
	Charlotte	d	d	forty	d	d	wait ^r on Mr. Denton
	Cette	d	d	forty five	d	d	Jack's Foot bags
	Jefferson	d	d	forty five	d	d	Jack's Foot bags
	Caukey	d	d	forty eight	d	d	attending Arinda
	Jenny	d	d	forty eight	d	d	attending Arinda
	Cutta	d	d	forty two	d	d	Cripple
	Langdon	d	d	forty two	d	d	Cripple
	Cutta	d	d	forty two	d	d	one hand pick ^r
	Susannah	d	d	forty two	d	d	one hand pick ^r
	Catharine	d	d	thirty two	d	d	Field
	Kisham	d	d	thirty two	d	d	Field
	Denah	d	d	fifty	d	d	Slave wife
	Denah	d	d	fifty	d	d	Slave wife
	Meridian	d	d	fifty	d	d	Slave wife
	Meridian	d	d	forty eight	d	d	Slave wife

Figure 2 Page from the Original List of Slaves 1817 for St. Kitts showing the name of Betto Douglas who claimed that she had been promised her freedom and went to great lengths to obtain it.

2 DETAILS OF THE NOMINATOR

2.1 Name (person or organisation)

- Dr. Gail Saunders, Director General of Heritage, The Bahamas
- Kevin Montero, Ag. Archivist, Belize

- Magdalene Robin, Chief Librarian, Dominica
- John Aarons, Government Archivist, Jamaica
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- Victoria O'Flaherty, Director of Archives, National Archives, St.Kitts
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2.2 Relationship to the documentary heritage nominated

Custodians for the states' archival holdings

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3 ***IDENTITY AND DESCRIPTION OF THE DOCUMENTARY HERITAGE***
3.1 **Name and identification details of the items being nominated**

Antigua

Still pursuing contact. Earlier reports indicate 7 volumes

The Bahamas

Returns of Slaves	1821 (1 vol)
Returns of Slaves	1822 (2 vols)
Returns of Slaves	1825 (2 vols)
Returns of Slaves	1828 (1 vol)
Returns of Slaves	1831 (1 vol)
Returns of Slaves	1834 (2 vols)

Belize

Register of Slaves of British Honduras 1834

Dominica

Part of Index to Triennial Register of Slaves	no date	
Register of Slaves	1817	
Register of Slaves	1819	
Register of Slaves	1820	
Register of Slaves	1823	
Register of Slaves	1826	
Register of Slaves	1829	
Register of Slaves	1832 (Vol 1)	Roseau, St. George, St. Paul, St. Joseph, St. Peter, St John
Register of Slaves	1832 (vol.2)	St. Andrew, St. David, St. Patrick, St. Mark, St. Luke

Jamaica

Triennial returns various parishes	1817	22 vols
Triennial returns various parishes		
Combining returns from 1817 and 1820	1817-1820	9 vols
Triennial returns various parishes	1820	18 vols
Triennial returns various parishes		
Combining returns from 1820 and 1823	1820-1823	7 vols
Triennial returns various parishes	1823	19 vols
Triennial returns various parishes	1826	19 vols
Triennial returns various parishes	1829	24 vols
Triennial returns various parishes		
Combining returns from 1829-32	1829-1832	5 vols
Triennial returns various parishes	1832	17 vols

St. Kitts

Original Registry of Slaves, St. Christopher	1817	
Triennial Returns St. Christopher	1822	(2 vols)
Triennial Returns St. Christopher	1825	(2 vols)
Triennial Returns St. Christopher	1829	(1 vol)
Triennial Returns St. Christopher	1831	(1 vol)
Triennial Returns St. Christopher	1834	[Book left blank]
Triennial Returns St. Christopher	1834	(1 vol)

Trinidad and Tobago³

Tobago

Return of Plantation Slaves 1819-24

Registry of unattached slaves Tobago 1819

Registry of Annual Returns of unattached slaves Tobago. January 1822

³ Currently being catalogued

Register of annual returns of plantation slaves 1 January 1824
Registry of Annual Returns of unattached slaves Tobago January 1832

Trinidad

List of Slave Families on Plantations in Trinidad – 1815 – 1816
Registry of Annual Returns of unattached slaves 1821
Annual Return of unattached slaves 1824
Registry of Annual Return of Plantation Slaves 1824

United Kingdom

Jamaica	1817-1832	249 vols and 6 indexes
Antigua	1817-1832	7 vols
Honduras	1834	2 vols
St. Christopher	1817-1834	8 vols
Anguilla	1827-34	3 vols
Grenada	1817-1834	67 vols and 2 indexes
Dominica	1817-1834	26 vols
Nevis	1818-1834	6 vols
St. Lucia	1815-1834	12 vols and 2 indexes
Demerara	1817-1832	37 vols and 6 indexes
Berbice	1817-1834	8 vols and 2 indexes
Montserrat	1817-1831	5 vols
Bermuda	1821-1834	4 vols
Bahmas	1822-1834	5 vols
Tobago	1819-1834	30 vols
St. Vincent	1817-1834	6 vols and 2 indexes
Trinidad	1813-1834	8 vols and 10 indexes
Barbados	1817-1834	37 vols and 7 indexes

Table 2.1. *Slave Registration Dates*

Colony	Date of Original Registration Act or Order in Council	Date of Original Return (Census)	Dates of Subsequent Registration Returns ^a
Barbados	17 Dec. 1816	1817 (1 May)	1820 1823 1826 1829 1832 1834 (1 Mar.)
St. Kitts	17 May 1817	1817 (1 June)	1822 (1 Jan.) 1825 1828 1831 1834
Nevis	16 Apr. 1817	1817 (1 July)	1822 (1 Jan.) 1825 1828 1831 1834
Antigua	18 Mar. 1817	1817 (1 Oct.)	1821 1824 1828 (1 Apr.) 1832 (1 Jan.)
Montserrat	10 July 1817	1817 (31 Dec.)	1821 1824 1828 1831
Virgin Islands	6 Sept. 1817	1818 (1 Feb.)	1822 1825 1828 1831 1834
Jamaica	11 Dec. 1816	1817 (28 June)	1820 1823 1826 1829 1832
Dominica	10 Mar. 1817	1817 (1 Mar.)	1820 1823 1826 1829 1832
St. Lucia	26 Sept. 1814	1815 (1 Nov.)	1819 (1 Jan.) 1822 1825 1828 1831 1834
St. Vincent	28 Mar. 1817	1817 (27 Mar.)	1822 (1 Jan.) 1825 1828 1831 1834
Grenada	31 Mar. 1817	1817 (30 Apr.)	1818 (1 Jan.) 1819 1820 1821 1822 1823 1824 1825 1826 1827 1828 1829 1830 1831 1832 1833 1834
Tobago	8 Feb. 1817	1819 (1 Jan.)	1820 1821 1822 1823 1824 1825 1826 1827 1828 1829 1830 1831 1832 1833 1834
Trinidad	26 Mar. 1812	1813 (1 Apr.)	1815 (1 Jan.) 1816 1819 1822 1825 1828 1831 1834 (1 Mar.)
Demerara-Essequibo	18 Mar. 1817	1817 (31 May)	1820 1823 1826 1829 1832
Berbice	3 Sept. 1817	1817 (1 Nov.)	1822 1825 1828 1831 1834
British Honduras		1834 1834 (1 May)	
Cayman Islands		1834 1834 (2 Apr.)	
Bahamas	6 Apr. 1821	1822 (1 Jan.)	1825 1828 1831 1834 (31 July)
Anguilla		1827 1827 (1 Jan.)	1832 1834

(Barry Higman, *Slave Populations of the British Caribbean, 1807-1834*. Kingston: The Press, UWI, 1995 p.8)

3.2 DESCRIPTION

Centuries of enslaving activities contributed to the largest forced inter-continental labour migration in history.⁴ According to contemporary estimates, one-third of newly arrived Africans in the West Indies died within three years, while life expectancy was reduced to less than fifteen years. For three hundred years there were in excess of 25,000 voyages. While accurate numbers remain unavailable, estimates suggest that between 11,000,000 and 15,000,000 ethnic Africans, mainly from West Africa and the Congo, disembarked in the New World. These numbers graphically illustrate the sheer scale of the trade in African captives, and do not take into account the very considerable illegal trade which never found its way into the official ledgers. The numbers proffered by Curtin, Eltis, Williams, *et. al.* acknowledge the existence of survivors and their descendants, and illustrate the horror and sheer brutality of the trade, especially when juxtaposed with statistics on mortality and eyewitness descriptions of the treatment of the enslaved.

⁴ See David Eltis et al, *The Transatlantic Slave Trade: A Database* on CD-ROM (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 5-6. (They refer to higher estimates of about 15,000,000, although they suggest that the data tend towards downward revision. However, whether the lower or higher estimates are used, the acknowledgement of fairly large mortalities in Africa on the march towards the coast and on the Middle Passage, as well as the fact that much of the trade was simply not reported, might support considerable upward revision.

Slavery flourished in colonies from Canada to Argentina and formed the foundation of society in most tropical and subtropical lowland regions. The wealth generated by slave labour tied together four continents in new networks of global trade, but it was in the West Indies that these structures reached their apogee. At the same time major political upheavals in Africa and the Caribbean, economic disintegration, the dislocation of indigenous social structures, the degeneration of traditional bonds, the disconnection of families, the dispossession of captive humans, and the reshaping of modes of cultural expression and authentic standards of civilization, were all traumas which eventuated from the critical role of slavery in the trans Atlantic commercial system. Along with the geo-political and ideological underpinnings that identified Africa as the ideal source of slave labour for four centuries, the trade evolved into one of the most revolutionary transformations in world history.

The slave trade from Africa to the British colonies was made illegal from 1807,⁵ but other forms of slave trade, for example between the islands and importations from foreign countries did not become illegal until 1811.⁶ As a means to monitor the illicit transportation of slaves the British government attempted to pass a bill to set up colonial slave registries. There was much opposition and the bill was withdrawn, but an Order in Council was passed on 26 March 1812 to establish a registry of slaves in Trinidad (PC 2/192). This registry was extended to St Lucia and Mauritius by a second Order in Council on 24 September 1814 (PC 2/196). Following renewed pressure by government and the anti-slavery lobby the other colonies were encouraged to pass their own slave registry legislation. Between December 1816 and May 1817 most colonies passed acts to establish their own registries. These were submitted to the Privy Council and approved on 9 January 1818 (PC 2/200). However, this did not include all colonies or dependencies: Bermuda and The Bahamas did not establish their registries until 1821 and 1822 respectively, and the Cayman Islands (a dependency of Jamaica) and Honduras⁷ did not make any returns until 1834 in a pragmatic approach to enable their slave owners to be compensated when slavery was abolished on 1 August 1834.

A Colonial Office circular of 6 February 1818 (CO 854/1, fos 58-61) was sent to West Indian Governors with instructions for the registrars of slaves. The instructions described how a register was to be maintained: each volume was to have an index to owners and plantations at the front and on completion of each register the registrar was to compile in a separate book an index to slaves. Since very few indexes to slaves are found in T 71 (holdings at the National Archives, U.K), either the instructions were not followed or few transmitted to the Registry of Colonial Slaves. The former is likely to be the case as it was not practical in the vast majority of cases where slaves did not have last names and the indexes would have pages of Williams and Marys (see T 71/493 for St Vincent, 1817 as the only example). However, there are indexes for St Lucia (T 71/376-377, 1815 only) and Trinidad (see T 71/502-519⁸) where the slaves had surnames registered.

An act of 1819 established the Registry of Colonial Slaves in London,⁹ which was to receive copies and duplicates of all registries or returns of slaves, indexes and abstracts and associated papers. Under the act no slave could be bought, sold, conveyed, imported, exported, or inherited etc without first being registered in the appropriate island registry. A Colonial Office circular of 1 May 1821 (CO

⁵ *An Act for the Abolition of the Slave Trade*, 25 March 1807, 47 Geo 3, session 1, c36. All references from this point are to documents in the National Archives, UK. We are grateful to Guy Grannum for providing the information.

⁶ *An Act for rendering more effectual an Act made in the Forty seventh year of His Majesty's Reign, intituled, An Act for the Abolition of the Slave Trade*, 14 May 1811, 51 Geo 3, c23.

⁷ The Honduras slave registry was established under the British Abolition of Slavery Act, 1833, (s62).

⁸ The first Trinidad registers (1813-1816, T 71/502-505) index all slaves, thereafter only new born or imported slaves are indexed

⁹ An Act for establishing a Registry of Colonial Slaves in Great Britain, and for making further provision with respect to the removal of slaves from British colonies, 12 July 1819, 59 Geo 3, c120.

854/1, fo94) instructed governors to forward duplicates of the slave registers and associated abstracts and indexes to the Registry of Colonial Slaves.¹⁰

Generally, all slave registers served as an initial census of the enslaved populations, recording critical data such as the name of every enslaved person, sex, age, colour, place of birth (creole or African-born), physical condition, occupational allocation and manumission. In some cases, the ethnic origin of the enslaved Africans is provided as well as descriptions of any physical ethnic marks. Subsequent returns recorded new births, deaths, manumissions, transportation and marronage. The Slave Registers collectively constitute the foremost comprehensive set of records critical to any study of the lives of the enslaved populations of the British West Indies, especially between 1814 and the emancipation of the slaves in 1834. Professor Barry Higman, the leading historian of the nineteenth-century enslaved populations of the British West Indies, emphasised that the information from the returns to the slave registers ‘...comprise an extraordinarily rich and comprehensive collection of information, rarely surpassed in comparable slave societies and generally standing up to quite strict tests of reliability.’¹¹

In addition to the enslaved populations of the region, the slave registers provide very useful genealogical information on the slave owners such as the gender of owners, marital and social status (i.e. whether white or a free person of colour).

4 JUSTIFICATION FOR INCLUSION/ ASSESSMENT AGAINST CRITERIA

4.1 Authenticity

In 1815, James Stephen, lawyer and abolitionist who had spent several years in St. Kitts strongly suggested the keeping of a register of slaves to guard against smuggling of new slaves into the British colonies. Two years later most of the British West Indian colonies had a system of public registration, (established under separate local slave registration acts or orders of council) meant to identify slaves brought to the West Indies in the illicit trade that continued after Britain’s Abolition of the Slave Trade in 1807. The taking of a complete census of the slave population and recording all subsequent movements resulting from birth, death, sale, or manumission, was expected to effectively close off the Atlantic Slave Trade, by policing the movements of enslaved persons within the West Indies, and requiring regular reports of any changes in slave holdings, whether through births, deaths, purchases or sales.

Under the terms of the Slave Registration Act (1819) provision was also made for a central registry in London, subject to the control of the Commissioners of the Treasury. The comprehensive scope of the reporting and the extraordinary extent of the Records of the Office of Registry of Colonial Slaves and Slave Compensation Commission, has created an unprecedented resource for the study and analysis of the region’s development and the human capital invested.

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E. C. Baker, *A guide to the Records of the Windward Islands*, (Oxford: Blackwell for UWI, 1968)

¹⁰ The National Archives, U.K. does not hold any registers for Cape Colony after the 1819 return.

¹¹ Barry Higman, *Slave Populations of the British Caribbean, 1807-1834*. Kingston: The Press, UWI, 1995 p.36

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Robert L. Schuyler, 'The Constitutional Claims of the British West Indies,' *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 40, No. 1, (Mar, 1925)

[James Stephen] *Reasons for Establishing a registry of slaves in the British Colonies being the report of a committee on the African Institution* (London, The African Institution, 1815)

Charles H. Wesley, 'The neglected Period of Emancipation in Great Britain, 1807-1823,' *Journal of negro History*, Vol. 17, No. 2 (Apr 1932)

4.2 World significance, uniqueness and irreplaceability

- The Registers of slaves of the Caribbean are of world significance because they are the first official documentation of people who were considered property and therefore remained undocumented in official records of births and deaths.
- The enslaved that are recorded in these registers are the ancestors of the vast majority of Afro-Caribbean people and are therefore of immense social significance.
- They constitute a unique record of the Caribbean's connections with Africa, and North America, and demonstrate the mobility of people in the region.
- They are evidence of the inequalities of the plantation societies and of the valuation of human life on mere economic grounds.
- They are evidence of the forced migration of Africans but also of the mobility of the white population.
- They provide information familial relations and property ownership on persons of European descent.
- Their creation was advocated by James Stephen, a prominent British abolitionist who had spent several years in Barbados and St. Kitts, because he felt that the smuggling of slaves would be "fatal to one of the dearest hopes of abolitionists, the melioration of

the treatment of those unfortunate fellow creatures, our West Indian slaves.”¹² The idea was accepted by the British Government and its use was extended to Mauritius and its dependencies in the Indian Ocean, Cape of Good Hope (South Africa), Ceylon (Sri Lanka)

- They are linked to the Eric Williams papers and the Barbados Documentary Heritage of Enslaved Peoples which are already on the Memory of the world register. Like the Barbados Documentary Heritage, the Registry of Slaves is an original and primary source of historical information. The Registry however was created and maintained by the government as the official record of the colony at the insistence of the Colonial Office in London and provided a different point of view and interest from the privately created Documentary Heritage. The registers could have been one of the sets of records that would have informed Eric Williams’ research and historical writing on Caribbean History

4.3 Criteria of (a) time (b) place (c) people (d) subject and theme (e) form and style

Time: The Registers are limited to a fourteen year period 1817-1834 but their significance continues into the present. The vast majority of the people of Caribbean are descendants of enslaved Africans. Records relating to the enslaved were mostly of a legal nature – the selling of slaves, manumissions and wills of owners, all of which only give piecemeal information about the demographics of the slave population. The Registry is significant because for the first time all enslaved individuals were named and identified.

Place: All registers identify the enslaved as either African or Creole born in the Caribbean) but some include greater detail. The Registers of St. Kitts and Dominica contain evidence of the presence of specific African ethnic groups such as the Ebo, Mandé, Bambara, Fulani, Sousou, Chamba, and Gulla people and links with locations such as Congo, Senegal, Goree. Others still had been born on the North American mainland. It shows links with the wider Caribbean. A significant number of the enslaved had been born in places other than the place of registration.

People: The registers’ main focus is the slave population of the British Caribbean listing each individual enslaved person in the region for the period 1817-1834. They provide information related to age, colour, sex, place of origin, and work performed, showing the diversity of skills that were present among enslaved males and the reliance of the plantations on both male and female enslaved labour. The Register of British Honduras (now Belize) also gives familial relations of the enslaved.

The registers also named enslavers who were mostly of European descent but some were of African or mixed parentage. The economic value of the enslaved is clearly shown when an aged or sick slave was listed as “useless” in the space where an occupation should have been named. The reputed age, the number of children born, the deaths and the occupations or lack thereof give indications of the general health of the population. The presence of slaves born in other islands is an indication that society was quite mobile despite difficulties in travel.

¹² [James Stephen] *Reasons for Establishing a registry of slaves in the British Colonies being the report of a committee on the African Institution* (London, The African Institution, 1815), p. 3

Table 4.2. *Estimated Slave, Freedman, and White Populations by Colony, 1810 and 1830*

Colony	Percentage Slave		Percentage Freedman		Percentage White		Total Population	
	1810	1830	1810	1830	1810	1830	1810	1830
<i>Old sugar colonies</i>								
Barbados	80.6	80.3	2.7	5.2	16.7	14.5	93,040	102,150
St. Kitts	85.4	81.6	7.8	12.0	6.8	6.4	24,350	23,400
Nevis	90.0	83.2	5.2	12.7	4.8	4.1	11,550	11,050
Antigua	89.6	80.0	5.2	14.9	5.2	5.1	40,200	37,000
Montserrat	88.9	84.0	5.2	11.3	5.9	4.7	7,650	7,500
Virgin Islands	85.4	69.1	9.1	22.8	5.5	8.1	8,780	7,450
Total	84.3	80.3	4.5	9.3	11.2	10.4	185,570	188,550
Jamaica	85.7	84.4	7.4	10.6	6.9	5.0	404,200	378,050
<i>New sugar colonies</i>								
Dominica	83.7	77.4	10.6	18.9	5.7	3.7	22,700	19,000
St. Lucia	84.8	72.8	9.2	21.7	6.0	5.5	21,800	18,400
St. Vincent	91.8	82.5	4.4	12.5	3.8	5.0	29,850	28,000
Grenada	92.5	84.1	4.9	13.4	2.6	2.5	32,450	28,400
Tobago	91.8	88.7	4.1	8.1	4.1	3.2	19,600	14,150
Trinidad	75.1	54.1	17.8	38.0	7.1	7.9	35,270	42,065
Demerara-Essequibo	93.8	87.7	3.5	8.3	2.7	4.0	85,300	77,500
Berbice	94.8	89.6	3.5	7.8	1.7	2.6	28,800	23,100
Total	89.4	79.4	6.7	16.1	3.9	4.5	275,770	250,615
<i>Marginal colonies</i>								
British Honduras	70.7	45.2	24.4	47.6	4.9	7.2	4,100	4,200
Cayman Islands	69.1	66.7	6.5	10.0	24.4	23.3	1,230	1,500
Bahamas	68.9	55.8	8.3	14.8	22.8	29.4	14,500	17,030
Anguilla	73.9	78.8	8.7	12.1	17.4	9.1	2,300	3,300
Barbuda	99.2	99.4	—	—	0.8	0.6	353	503
Total	70.3	58.4	11.0	19.2	18.7	22.4	22,483	26,533
TOTAL	86.2	81.2	6.6	12.2	7.2	6.6	888,823	843,698

Sources: Calculated from data in table S2.1; and Jerome S. Handler, *The Unappropriated People* (1974), p. 18; Douglas Hall, *Five of the Leewards* (1971), p. 8; Elsa V. Goveia, *Slave Society in the British Leeward Islands at the End of the Eighteenth Century* (1965); Stobo, "Statistical Table of the British Virgin Islands," C.O.239/9; Gad J. Heuman, *Between Black and White* (1981), p. 7; J. F. X. Pugnet, *Essai sur la topographie de l'île de Sainte-Lucie* (1804), p. 35; Robert Montgomery Martin, *Statistics of the Colonies of the British Empire* (1839); O. Nigel Bolland, *The Formation of a Colonial Society* (1977), p. 51; *P.P.*, 1823, vol. 18 (89), "Slave Population."

Note: Amerindians and Chinese are excluded.

Table 3.1 . *The British Colonies in the Caribbean c.1834*

Colony	Area (sq mi)	Maximum Altitude (ft)	Slave Population	Slaves per sq mi	Year of British Coloni- zation
Barbados	166	1,100	83,150	500.9	1627
St. Kitts	65	3,792	17,525	269.6	1625
Nevis	36	3,232	8,840	245.6	1628
Antigua	108	1,319	28,130	260.5	1632
Montserrat	39	3,002	6,400	164.1	1632
Virgin Islands	59	1,760	5,135	87.0	1672
Jamaica	4,411	7,402	311,070	70.5	1655
Dominica	305	4,672	14,165	46.4	1763
St. Lucia	233	3,145	13,275	57.0	1803
St. Vincent	150	4,048	22,250	148.3	1763
Grenada	133	2,756	23,645	177.8	1763
Tobago	114	1,860	11,545	101.3	1763
Trinidad	1,864	3,085	20,655	11.1	1797
British Guiana	83,000	9,000	83,545	1.0	1803
British Honduras	8,867	3,000	1,895	0.2	1670
Cayman Islands	100	165	985	9.9	1734
Bahamas	5,548	200	9,995	1.8	1648
Anguilla	35	200	2,260	64.6	1650
Barbuda	62	100	505	8.1	1685

Sources: B. W. Higman, *The Caribbean Today* (1975); table S1.2.

The registers are the only complete record of the ancestors of present day Caribbean people. With the use of other sources, it is now becoming possible to trace the story of individuals named in the registers. Betto Douglas of Romney Estate in St. Kitts is known for the fact that at the age of about fifty she attempted to secure the freedom she thought she had been promised. She escaped from the plantation when an intransigent attorney would not give credence to her claim. Marcus of Cunningham's also in St. Kitts, a career runaway, became a feared rebel leader. Only rarely can the incomplete life story of an enslaved person be constructed. This is an indication of the enormous silence of the majority that exists in Caribbean archives of the slave period.

Subject and Theme: The registers represent a unique record of the enslaved population almost two hundred years after the institution of slavery was introduced in the British Caribbean. It also marks a turning point in the relationship between the Colonial power and the colonies as the record was an attempt to give support to the interest of the Crown against that of the planter class.

Form and Style: Following the passage of laws in the various islands a register of slaves was drawn up. This first register was the most comprehensive, listing every enslaved person in the particular colony. Later registers were issued on a mostly triennial basis although there might have been some variations. These contained references to the earlier registers followed by updates with decreases in the number of slaves being caused by manumissions, sales and deaths while increases reflecting births, acquisitions and transfers. The collection came to an end in 1834 when Emancipation made its maintenance redundant. All volumes were written in excellent calligraphy.

Social Value: The collection is the first documentation of a people who had previously been made to live, work and die without an identity. For the present people of the Caribbean it

represents a link with their unknown ancestors. Although many cannot trace their family to the days of enslavement, there is, at times, a feeling of satisfaction in knowing that an ancestor has to be listed in one of the registers. The registry has therefore given some people a sense of history and a grounding in society.

4.4 Issues of rarity, integrity, threat and management

This joint nomination links the registry of the enslaved in the various countries that had been British Colonies. The registry was brought into existence by separate laws in these islands and maintained by a Registrar of Slaves until 1834 when slavery was brought to an end. The records have remained in the care of colonial administration and then passed on to the government of independent states.

The respective colonies were to submit copies of their registers to the Colonial Office in London, which had a vested interest in the maintenance of the registries. It was meant to control the possibility of smuggling of slaves for other European colonies and from the United States which had not ended the slave trade. These copies still survive in the National Archives of the United Kingdom. However many islands, the tropical climate, neglect and disasters, both natural and manmade have caused losses in the collection. Dominica reports missing pages in the registers. St. Kitts has damaged bindings and two registers in fragile condition.

The volumes that survive are managed as part of the archival collection by the different countries where they were created. Although the resources for conservation are extremely limited the volumes have been either boxed or wrapped and are preserved in environmentally controlled, limited-access secure vaults. Preservation and access policies as well as disaster control plans provide additional security.

Microfilms of the registers have been made in The Bahamas, while St. Kitts has transcribed the Original list of 1817 into Microsoft Excel. The National Archives UK has microfilmed most of the registers and has given www.ancestry.co.uk permission to digitize these and make them available on line

5 LEGAL INFORMATION

5.1. Owner of the documentary heritage (name and contact details)

The archives are owned by the governments of The Bahamas, Belize, Dominica, Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, St. Kitts-Nevis and the United Kingdom

5.2 Custodian of the documentary heritage

Department of Archives
P.O. Box SS6341
Nassau,
The Bahamas
Tel: 242-393-2175
Fax: 242-394-2340
Email. archives@batelnet.bs

Belize Archives and Records Service.
26/28 Unity Boulevard,
Belmopan City, Cayo
Belize, C.A.
Email: archives@btl.net

National Documentation Centre
Kennedy Avenue, Roseau
Dominica
Tel : 1 767 266 3408
Fax : 1 767 448 7928
Email : library@cwdom.dm

The Archives Unit
Corner of King and Manchester Streets
Spanish Town
St. Catherine
Jamaica
Tel: (876) 984-5001
Fax: (876)984-8254
Email: jarchives@jard.gov.jm

National Archives, Government Headquarters,
Church Street,
Basseterre,
St. Kitts
Tel: 869-467-1208
Email: nationalarchives@gov.kn

National Archives Trinidad and Tobago
PO Box 763
105 St. Vincent Street
Port-of-Spain
Trinidad and Tobago
Tel: 868 625 2689
Fax: 868 625 2689
Email: natt@tstt.net.tt

The National Archives
Kew,
Surrey TW9 4DU
United Kingdom
+44(0)208 392 5200
www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/contact/

5.3 Legal status:

(a) Category of ownership

Full legal status

(b) Accessibility

Publicly accessible except in cases of concerns over preservation

(c) Copyright status

There is no copyright restriction except for the regulations of the various agencies concerning the use and publication of documents in general.

(d) Responsible administration

The agencies of the various governments are legally responsible for the safekeeping of the Registry

(e) Other factors

None

6 MANAGEMENT PLAN

6.1 There is no separate management plan for these collections of archives. However all are held in responsible state archives which have developed access and preservation policies as well as disaster prevention and management plans.

7 CONSULTATION

7.1 Provide details of consultation about this nomination with (a) the owner of the heritage (b) the custodian (c) your national or regional *Memory of the World* committee

All agencies involved in preparing this nomination were the members of the Caribbean Committee for the *Memory of the World*. Special contributions were made by Guy Grannum, Alissandra Cummins and Elizabeth Watson. Prof. Parry Higman graciously agreed to the reproduction of aspects of his research.

PART B – SUBSIDIARY INFORMATION

The following information will **not** be taken into account in deciding whether or not to inscribe documentary heritage on the *Register* but will be included in the database as additional information. Some of this information may be drawn from the management plan (item 6 above).

8 ASSESSMENT OF RISK

8.1 Nature and scope of threats to documentary heritage

A number of the registers are in poor physical condition and require conservation work. This is due in large measure to the effects of a tropical climate which increases the speed of deterioration of paper. It is also due to the late development of archival programmes in the region many of which emerged with little or no technical assistance.

The registry has already been microfilmed in The Bahamas where public access to the original is now restricted. Jamaica has microfilmed 34 of its 142 registers. Lack of resources

limit what can be done especially in countries with relatively new archive programmes but microfilming and/or digitization is desirable.

Listing of the Registers on the UNESCO Memory of the World Register will generate interest in the archive and might encourage private organizations to contribute towards their preservation.

INCLUDED AS AN ADDENDUM IN 2011

Registry of Slaves of Bermuda 1821 - 1834

PART A - ESSENTIAL INFORMATION

1. SUMMARY

The national archives of the islands of the Bahamas, Dominica, Jamaica, St. Kitts, Trinidad and Tobago as well as UK National Archives nominated their slave returns and registers for inclusion in the UNESCO Memory of the World Register in 2008 (Ref No. 2008-50). The nomination was approved and Inscribed under the title "Registry of Slaves of the British Caribbean 1817 – 1834" in 2009. The Bermuda Slave Registers were created according to the terms of the regional registry system mandated for all of the British Caribbean islands as set out in instructions sent to colonial governors on 6th February 1818 (CO 854/1. Fos 58-61). The Bermuda Archives now applies for inclusion in the Memory of the World Register as an addendum to the British Caribbean inscription as laid out in submission No. 2008-50. This submission will draw and quote from the regional submission where applicable.

2. DETAILS OF THE NOMINATOR

2.1 Name (person or organisation)

Karla M. Hayward, Director, Bermuda Government Archives

2.2 Relationship to the documentary heritage nominated

Custodian for the state's archival holdings

2.3 Contact person (s)

Karla M. Hayward, Director

2.4 Contact details (include address, phone, fax, email)

Bermuda Government Archives
30 Parliament Street
Hamilton HM 12
Bermuda

Tel: 441-295-2007 Fax: 441-295-8751

Email: khayward@gov.bm

3. IDENTITY AND DESCRIPTION OF THE DOCUMENTARY HERITAGE

3.1 Name and identification details of the items being nominated

Register of Slaves	1827	RS 01/02
Register of Slaves	1830	RS 01/03
Register of Slaves	1834	RS 01/04
Index to Slave Registers (enslavers)	1830	RS 01/05
Returns of Slaves	1827-1830	RS 02/01

3.2 Description

The Bermuda Registration of Slaves Act of 1819, passed the same year as the act that established the London Slave Registry, proscribed how the registers were to be maintained: each volume was to have an index of owners and plantations at the front and on completion of each register the registrar was to compile in a separate book an index to slaves. According to the British Caribbean nomination (No. 2008-50), very few separate indexes to slaves were actually kept. None at Bermuda contain indexes to slaves. The Slave Registration Act of 1819 expired after two years. It was followed by a second registration act which was passed by the Legislature in 1827 and was in effect until 1834.

Bermuda's four registers record the name (in few cases last names) of every enslaved person, sex, age, colour, place of birth, and occupational allocation. There is no other information such as physical condition or manumission, in the Bermuda registers. The registers also provide genealogical information on the slave owners and their agents.

4. JUSTIFICATION FOR INCLUSION/ASSESSMENT AGAINST CRITERIA

4.1 Is authenticity established? (see 4.2.3)

Bermuda's first Registrar of Slaves was an Englishman John Lee Lewes (CO 41/4 for appointment), who also served as a Customs Searcher. Lewes produced two known registers, one in 1821 (RS 01/01) and the other in 1827 (RS 01/02). Lewes was replaced by a full-time registrar, George F. Mallory, following passage of the island's 1827 Registration Act. Mallory produced the 1831 Register (RS 01/03) and the 1834 Register (RS 01/04) as well as the index to the 1830 Register (RS 02/01). The 1821 & the 1834 registers are signed by the Registrar and the Governor and all have been in the continuous possession of the Bermuda Government since that time. Copies of the Registers were made and sent to the central registry in London.

4.2 Is world significance, uniqueness and irreplaceability established? (see 4.2.4)

The Registers of slaves of the Caribbean are of world significance because they are the first official documentation of people who were considered property and therefore remained undocumented in official records of births and deaths." (Source: Nomination 2008:50). This is as true of Bermuda as elsewhere.

4.3 Is one or *more* of the criteria of (a) time (b) place (c) people (d) subject and theme (e) form and style (f) social, spiritual and community significance satisfied?

Time: The Bermuda Slave Registers, particularly the first register compiled in 1821, provide a comprehensive census of the Islands enslaved people. The Registers may be viewed as the Domesday Book for Bermuda as previously information about enslaved individuals could only be incompletely reconstructed from scattered legal documents such as wilds; bills of sale; manumissions.

Place: Whereas at the periphery of the Caribbean geographically, Bermuda was at the centre of a maritime trade that linked it with the Caribbean, North American and Britain for almost two and a half centuries. The Slave Registers reflect that link through the occupation (mariners/boatmen) and origin of the enslaved individuals listed in the Registers. Whereas most of Bermuda's enslaved populations were Afro-Bermudian by the early 19th century, many individuals were born African, West Indian or North American. A significant number of the enslaved originated in the Turks & Caicos Islands reflecting Bermuda's involvement in the salt raking industry on those Islands.

People: “The registers' main focus is the slave population of the Islands listing each individual enslaved person...” in Bermuda for the period 1821 - 1834. “They provide information related to age, colour, sex, place of origin and work performed. The registers also named enslavers who were mostly of European descent but some were of African or mixed parentage.” (Source: Nomination 2008:50)

Social Value: “Although many [present day Bermudians as elsewhere] cannot trace their family to the days of enslavement there is, at times, a feeling of satisfaction in knowing that an ancestor has to be listed in one of the registers. The registry has therefore given some people a sense of history and grounding in society.” (Source: Nomination 2008:50)

4.4 Are there issues of rarity, integrity, threat and management that relate to this nomination? (See 4.2.6)

The nomination compiled in 2008 comments on the rarity of the regional registers and notes that copies from the London Registry are kept by the UK National Archives. Much care and attention has been paid to the Bermuda Registers where they are safely housed in the national repository. (See 6.1 below.)

5. *LEGAL INFORMATION*

5.1 Owner of the documentary heritage (name and contact details)

The archives are owned by the Government of Bermuda.

5.2 Custodian of the documentary heritage (name and contact details, if different to owner)

Bermuda Government Archives
30 Parliament Street
Hamilton HM 12
Bermuda

5.3 Legal status:

(a) Category of ownership
Full legal status

(b) Accessibility
Publicly accessible

(c) Copyright status
There is no copyright restriction except the policies of the Bermuda Archives concerning the use and publication of documents in general.

(d) Responsible administration
The Bermuda Archives is legally responsible for the safekeeping of the Registry.

(e) Other factors
None

6. *MANAGEMENT PLAN*

6.1 Is there a management plan in existence for this documentary heritage? YES/NO

There is no separate management plan for these collections of archives. The registry records have been restored and bound; they have been microfilmed, digitized and indexed and will be presented on the Bermuda Archives website in searchable form in 2010. Since they have been extensively copied, public access to the originals is now restricted. The repository where the archives are held maintains

environmental conditions that meet international standards for the storage of paper (40% rh & 65 F).

If yes, attach a summary of the plan. If no, please attach further details about current storage and custody of the materials.

7. CONSULTATION

7.1 Provide details of consultation about this nomination with (a) the owner of the heritage (b) the custodian (c) your national or regional *Memory of the World* committee

The Bermuda Archives has consulted with the National Archivist of St. Kitts, the coordinator of the original submission, who gives full support to the nomination of the Bermuda Slave Registers as an addendum to the Registry of Slaves of the British Caribbean 1817 - 1834 (Nomination 2008-50). Letter attached.

PART B - SUBSIDIARY INFORMATION

8. ASSESSMENT OF RISK

8.1 Detail the nature and scope of threats to this documentary heritage (see 5.5)

The risk to this collection is minimal. The preservation, restoration and copying of the collection has stabilized the originals while making the information widely available through, initially microfilm and, this year, digital copies. The preservation management of the repository provides an excellent standard in terms of environment lighting, security.