

The Dottin Family of Dartmouth

The Dottin family of Dartmouth were wealthy merchants with slavery connections, owning several Barbados plantations. They were related to the Prideaux family (see separate article on Prideaux).

The Dottins traded extensively across the Atlantic. George Dottin, for example, imported tobacco from Virginia and sugar from Antigua, while exporting woollen serges to America and strong beer to Barbados (Prideaux, 1989). They were part of the network that enabled the transatlantic slave-based economy to operate.

They owned several sugar plantations in Barbados on which they used slave labour. Dottins are listed as owning the following Barbados plantations: 1671 and 1691 Baxter's in the parish of St Andrews; 1717, Greenland, St Andrews; 1817, Coverley, Christchurch; 1729, Husbands aka Jordans, St James; 1703, 1760, 1783, Farley Hill aka Grenade Hill, St Peter; 1727, Nicholas Abbey, St Peter; 1721, Mount Edge, St Thomas (www.creolelinks.com/barbados-plantations-index.html).

They were clearly large scale slave-owners from the earliest days of colonisation.

Over the years most of the Dottin plantations were sold so that, by 1835, on the abolition of slavery, only two Dottins received compensation: one was Abel Rous Dottin who owned the Coverley plantation previously mentioned, taking compensation of £3,885 for 189 enslaved persons; the other was a free mulatto named Thomas Dottin who received £48 for the two persons he owned. Abel Rous Dottin was an absentee owner who became MP for Southampton and was an early investor in railways. Thomas Dottin would most likely have been a descendant of a white Dottin father and enslaved African mother, who was fortunate enough to be freed by his father, who himself acquired enslaved people, albeit on a small, domestic scale. In the early twentieth century several Dottins are recorded as emigrating to the USA (www.houseofnames.com/dottin-family-crest) while in the present-day the Barbados women's cricket team has a renowned member in Deandra Dottin.

Walter Prideaux (1676-1759) (see separate article on Prideaux), who participated in the slave-trading voyage of the Daniel and Henry (Tattersfield, 1991), was a beneficiary in at least two Dottin wills. He received £40 in his uncle George Dottin's will of 1702 (www.genuki.org.uk/big/eng/DEV/Dartmouth/GeorgeDottin1702) and was an heir of his cousin Sarah Dottin, widow of Dartmouth who died in 1719. (www.genuki.org.uk/big/eng/DEV/Dartmouth/SarahDottin1719).

The Dottin family were heavily involved in the transatlantic plantation economy of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries as traders and planters. Whether they were also slave-traders has not been established.

References

Prideaux, R.M. (1989). *Prideaux: A Westcountry clan*. Sussex: Phillimore.

Tattersfield, N. (1991). *The forgotten trade*. Jonathan Cape: London.

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