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## The Whitemans of Grenada: Illegitimacy and the "Ownership" of Family Members

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Andrew Whiteman of  
 present residing in Willow Walk Kentish Town in the County of Middlesex  
 but generally residing in the Island of Grenada in the West Indies  
 I intend shortly to return to the Island being of sound & disposing mind &  
 memory & understanding do make & ordain this my last will & testament  
 in full force & effect to take effect after my decease & to be lawful & valid

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In 2013, I came across a fascinating will which reveals much about the often complex family structures brought about by illegitimacy and slavery.

Andrew Whiteman was a planter and merchant with an interest in several estates in Grenada. I don't know much about his early life; he was born around 1760 and was probably the Andrew Whiteman who married Martha Smith in London in 1791. He appears to have been largely resident in Grenada although one of his and Martha's four children was born in London around 1798. In his will of 1811 he described himself as "at present resident of Willow Walk Kentish Town Co Middlesex but generally residing in Grenada where I intend shortly to return." He died in London in 1813. His will is particularly detailed and exacting and reveals some of his intricate business dealings. He left the bulk of his estate to his eldest son [William Henry Whiteman](#) with generous provision for his sons James Edward and John Claremont and daughter Eliza.

Also mentioned in the will are four illegitimate daughters: Judith and Catherine Louisa (whose mother was Rose Mogailas of Carriacou), Clarissa (daughter of Whiteman's slave Magdelonette) and Jane Anne (daughter of Whiteman's slave [Laurencine](#)). Andrew had paid £100 each for the manumission of Clarissa and Jane Anne in 1806.

Manumission of Regis  
 In testimony whereof I have hereunto set my hand and seal this 10th day of August 1828  
 Andrew Whiteman

A letter of manumission (1828). Image source: [The Historical Society of Frederick County](#)

Andrew Whiteman bequeathed £300 sterling each to Judith and Catherine Louisa, to be paid in three annual instalments of £100, as well as £247 10s Grenada currency due to each of them as legacies from the wills of Mitre Mogailas and Pieter Mogailas. Clarissa and Jane Anne were to be given £300 each on reaching the age of 18, again in three annual instalments, with the interest of £15 per year each to be spent on their upkeep. This wasn't unusual; planters often made provision for their illegitimate offspring, although others ignored them completely. Where the will becomes remarkable is that Andrew Whiteman also bequeathed to Clarissa and Jane Anne "ownership" of their own mothers.

Thus in the Slave Register of 1817, William Henry Whiteman registered the enslaved people Laurencine, age 27, and Gilbert, age 1, as guardian of their "owner" Jane Anne Whiteman. Likewise in the Slave Register of 1821 (which


shows only an increase or decrease in the total numbers), Clarissa Whiteman recorded that she had manumitted her mother Madelonitt [sic], age 48. By 1821, Jane Anne had acquired two more half-brothers, also her "property." At some point between 1829 and 1831, Jane Anne manumitted her mother Laurencine and one of her half-brothers; in the Slave Registers of 1831 Laurencine had the unusual role of registering her own manumission as agent of her daughter Jane Anne.

Andrew Whiteman's will provides a stark and chilling illustration of the power involved when some people are the designated owners of other people. He provides for the manumission of his "true and faithful" mulatto slave called Regis, and also gives him "ownership" of Regis's son Charles. Regis is also bequeathed all of Andrew Whiteman's clothes and the sum of £50 sterling to be paid in five annual instalments. By contrast, "In consequence of the late base and shameful conduct of the mulatto female slave named Anne (whom I ever intended to manumit and make free) I do request and direct that the said

female named Anne together with her children may be sold and disposed of for the benefit of my executors in Grenada." It's tempting to think Anne was another former mistress who had somehow 'betrayed' him; certainly his intention to manumit her would indicate she was important to him. If so, then the children he ordered to be sold would probably have been his own.

138	Laurencine 41 Yrs Black Grenada Manumitted. A Slave on the Chain	1
	Subst 15 Yrs Black Grenada Manumitted. None	1
	Deaths by death	
	Deaths by sale or otherwise	1 1
	Total Deaths	1 1
	Manumitted	
	A. of Names Yrs last before	3 1
	Annual Ret...	2

The slave register documenting Laurencine Whiteman's manumission (1831). Image source: The National Archives

 Aquatint  
portrait

This piece

has been adapted from its original form on the [Legacies of British Slave-ownership](#) blog, where it was first published in 2013. Legacies of British Slave-ownership is a project based at U.C.L., which traces the impact of slave-ownership on the formation of modern Britain. The piece has been posted here as part of the Anti-slavery Series, October 2015.

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