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AND THE CHILDREN'S TEETH ARE SET ON EDGE

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•CHAPTER 5•

Back to Africa.

*Yet whence these horrors? This inhuman rage,
That brands with blackest infamy the age?
Is it, our varied interests disagree,
And BRITAIN sinks if AFRIC's sons be free?
- No – Hence a few superfluous stores we claim,
That tempt our avarice, but increase our shame;
The sickly palate touch with more delight,
Or swell the senseless riot of the night, -*

*- Blest were the days ere Foreign Climes were known,
Our wants contracted, and our wealth our own;
When Health could crown, and Innocence endear,
The temperate meal, that cost no eye a tear;
Our drink, the beverage of the chrystal flood,
- Not madly purchased by a brother's blood -
Ere the wide spreading ills of Trade began,
Or Luxury trampled on the rights of Man.*

William Roscoe

Of Cotton Mills and Marriage Settlements

With access to extensive capital from their privateering ventures the Hodgson brothers moved to new premises in Red-Cross Street in Liverpool.¹ Thomas Hodgson also found his marriage prospects greatly improved for, in 1781, at the age of 44, he married the 23 year old Elizabeth Lightbody, eldest daughter of Adam and Elizabeth Lightbody. Adam Lightbody's wife Elizabeth Tylston could trace her ancestry back to the Protestant Dissenter Phillip Henry through the marriage of John Tylston M.D. of Chester and Phillip Henry's daughter Katherine.² As non-conformists the family attended the Kaye St Presbyterian or Unitarian chapel, which was under the charge of the Reverend John Yates from 1777.³

Adam Lightbody had been a merchant in the town, in partnership with his brothers, William and Robert, in the linen trade.⁴ By 1777 he had retired from trade being described in the Liverpool Directory simply as a Gentleman.¹ The family lived at 1 Paradise Street, but by 1781 Adam Lightbody had died and Elizabeth Lightbody was shown as the occupant of 2 Paradise St which probably represents a

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change of number rather than residence. Elizabeth Lightbody was very wealthy having properties in Mouldsworth, Cheshire, and in Shropshire and Worcester.⁵ Thus Thomas Hodgson obtained a very respectable marriage settlement, probably in the form of property worth considerably in excess of £10,000; however, this was not simply handed over to him, but settled upon his wife as to income with title upon the eldest male heir of the marriage on his coming of age. This was a common type of settlement amongst the merchant community who were only too aware of the perils of bankruptcy. By settling this property upon the wife, it was effectively sequestered from the hands of creditors and ensured that the family and, in particular, the children would not be rendered destitute in the event of an all too common occurrence.

Not long after his marriage, Thomas Hodgson began to develop textile mills in Caton. His memorial tablet in Caton Chapel read; “*founder of the cotton and silk works in this his native place*”. Adam Lightbody had three surviving daughters, and it is a curious fact that each married a man who developed Cotton mills. In 1781, the same year that Thomas Hodgson married her sister, Agnes, the middle daughter married John Pares of Leicester, who was developing mills on the Arkwright pattern in Derbyshire.⁶ In 1789 Hannah, the youngest daughter, at the age of 23 again, married Samuel Greg of Manchester, who also began the development of a mill of this type in Styal, Cheshire.⁷ Only Hannah, by marrying Samuel Greg kept her Unitarian faith, the other sisters accepted the Anglican faith of their husbands, or, at the very least, their children were brought up in that faith. It seems unlikely that Adam Lightbody was in any way behind these mill developments, despite his involvement in the Linen trade, for he had already died by this time. He, or his wife, did however arrange generous marriage settlements for their daughters but suggestions that these settlements directly enabled the development of the mills are wide of the mark, though no doubt they provided a degree of security that acted to mitigate risk.

It seems likely that the stimulus for the development of the Caton mills came from the Pares family. Thomas Hodgson would have known of the growth in Cotton imports into Liverpool and something of the export market for textiles from the African trade. Although difficult to prove, a friendship with William Rathbone can almost certainly be presumed, and he would have been aware that Cotton was beginning to be grown in America and imported into Liverpool. Rathbone is supposed to have had the first eight bags of cotton imported from America impounded in Liverpool as the customs officers did not accept that it was the produce of America.⁸ He would know of the mechanical improvements in the preparation and spinning of yarn, and the fortune accumulated in this way by Richard Arkwright⁹ which was inspiring the world and his wife with the desire to own a cotton mill. Even the physician James Currie contemplated venturing into mill ownership following a visit to David Dale’s mills in Lanark in 1792. Indeed he purchased land in Moffat between the rivers Annan and Moffat which he considered might make a suitable mill seat. He wrote to Hannah Greg and Miss Cropper enthusiastically about his visit and his conversations with Dale about his nascent plans, which he would never pursue.¹⁰

“Though I obtained nothing immediate from him, I gained something in his acquaintance, and still more in the liberty of corresponding with him; and the promise of his advice, though not co-operation in any of my schemes. Mr. Dale did

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not seem discouraged by the present stagnation in the cotton business. He thought the scheme almost certain of success with good management, but every thing depended on that. He discouraged me from engaging in the business with any persons, whatever their fortune or character might be, that did not understand it, or could not devote themselves to it. In a word, I found many difficulties in my way, which time perhaps may remove."

There was a close and affectionate relationship between the physician James Currie and Hannah Lightbody, whose sister was married to the slave-merchant, Thomas Hodgson. He may have had a hand in her education and it is inconceivable that James Currie was not also on friendly terms with Thomas Hodgson. He may even have been his physician, but nothing can be proved.

By 1788, there were 143 water-mills, equipped with 550 mule jennies of 90 spindles, of which 41 were erected in Lancashire. By 1795 there were said to be 300 mills in operation.¹¹ The need for waterpower, led to sites being chosen in rural areas and consequently to labour problems. A number of other African Merchants in the Lancaster area also invested in textile ventures. Sometime around 1790, Robert Foster, son of Dodshon Foster, invested in a woolen mill in Sedbergh. Thomas Hinde's son had a mill at Dolphinholme.¹² Many mills erected at this time were built on the Arkwright pattern and so were some 25 – 30 ft wide and 60-80 feet long – Low Mill as originally constructed by the Hodgsons was 81ft long by 27 ft wide.¹³

Commercial acumen is not the same as expertise and this seems likely to have come through John Pares. John Pares was the second son of Thomas Pares of Leicester (1716-1805) a wealthy landowner and lawyer but with interests in the hosiery trade.¹⁴ John Pares had a large hosiery manufactory and a large part of his trade would have been with the colonies in America and the West Indies for which he would have needed contacts with Liverpool and Lancaster shipping merchants. Pares certainly used Abraham Rawlinson's Lancaster shipping concern for the export of hosiery to the West Indies.¹⁵

John Gardom was a hosier from Bakewell and news of Arkwright's intention to build a mill there may have prompted him into partnership with John Pares to build a mill at Calver based on the application of Arkwright's patents. About 1778 John Pares and John Gardom came to an agreement with Jedediah Strutt and Richard Arkwright to license the use of their water frame and carding engine. The cost for the use of the water frames was £2,000 per annum, and for the carding engine £5,000. The licensees had to agree not to divulge the patents, and not to use them beyond a stipulated number of hours. At the same time Gardom and Pares took a 21-year lease on land at Calver Bridge on which they rapidly constructed a three-story mill. The water frame patent was due to expire in mid 1783 but the carding patent not until 1789.¹⁶ In the meantime Crompton's mule emerged as a challenger to Arkwright's water frame and it had the very significant advantage of being unencumbered by patents.

In the summer of 1781 Arkwright's carding patent was successfully challenged but the legal tussles went on and on and the patent was reinstated in 1785 only for the decision to be reversed a few months later. Between May 1785 and May 1786 tradition has it that Pares began construction of a much larger mill at Calver. A letter from John Pares to his father written in October 1785 makes clear that at that

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time there was only one mill operational at Calver but there was another mill in operation at Caton.¹⁶

“We closed our statement on Thursday morning & I have the pleasure to tell you the year’s business produced £4750, so that after deducting £1050 for A’s last payment & reducing the value of our Building £100, there remained £3600 to divide & 5 p. cent paid for the Capital employ’d. The advance upon Cotton Wool is now heavy against us, but being released from further claims by A. we have still a favourable prospect of its being a good business – we are fortunately provided with Wool for at least 5 months both at Calver and Caton, bought on moderate terms, but the command of £2000 or £3000, a week or ten days ago would have been lucky, for the Article has advanced 15% in that time & is still going up.”

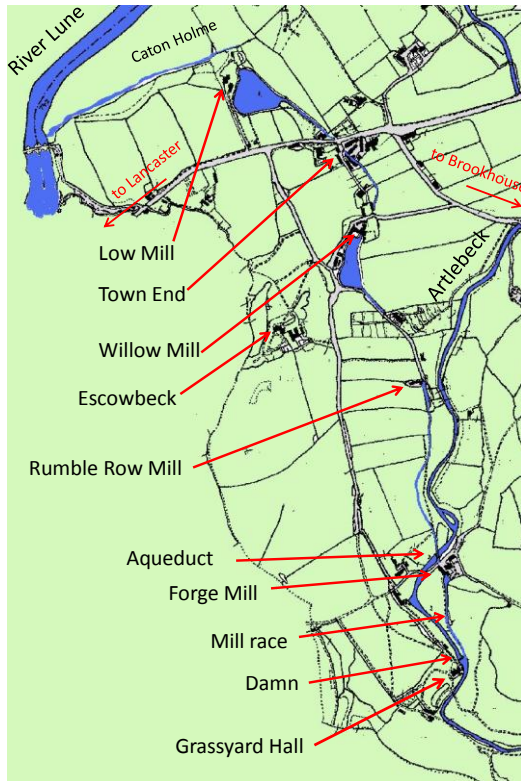
It has been suggested that the capital referred to came from Arkwright, but the terms seem rather easy at 5% given that Pares and Gardom were in dispute with Arkwright over royalty payments. Gardom had ignored some of the terms of Arkwright’s license and was unwilling to pay the fees whilst the status of the patents was uncertain. A reciprocal arrangement with the Hodgsons to provide capital to develop mills at Caton and Calver seems a reasonable speculation given their relationship by marriage and Thomas Hodgson’s investment in land in Caton with the specific aim of developing water powered spinning mills. The precise origin of the Caton Mills has always been somewhat speculative. Low Mill, in Caton, was rebuilt after a fire in 1837.¹⁷ The original mill, constructed behind a bund on the flood plain of the Lune bore a stone dated 1784. The Hodgsons built Low Mill on land acquired on a 77 year lease of which 46 years remained unexpired in 1814 giving a date for acquisition of 1783. Mary Rose has it that the mill was powered intermittently by the River Lune but it is difficult to accept that this was so, as such a power source would have been impossible to control and offered no fall, the essence of the motive power requirements of a water powered mill.⁷ By providing the mill with a specially constructed mill race extending down from Caton Forge and from a damn above the forge in the Grassyard Hall estate, the mill could be provided with an ambitious forty-foot fall of water. In order to engineer all of this a number of things had to be securely in place; capital, land ownership and water rights.

Forge Mill was the first to use water power from the Grassyard Hall damn, where Artlebeck flows into a short rocky gorge, and its original construction, predating its conversion to a textile mill, is supposed to have been around 1752.¹⁸ At the head of this gorge a substantial damn was constructed to feed a mill race controlling the flow of water which ran practically on the level down to Forge mill and roughly parallel to the course of Artlebeck. Once all the mills were constructed, at certain times of the year virtually the whole of the former flow of Artlebeck would pass down the mill race leaving the original beck a dry stoney bed. Forge Mill, or more properly, Caton Forge, seems to have been operated for some time by James Stockdale an Iron master from Cark in Cartmel¹⁹ with ore for the operation brought by sloop from Backbarrow.

At the beginning of the 1780’s a number of things seem to have happened to prompt the large scale engineering which resulted in four large textile mills being constructed at strategic points down a mill race constructed to run from the old forge, via an iron bridge over Artlebeck, down through the village of Townend to finally drain into the Lune on the floodplain of Caton Holme. It seems likely that

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this mill race was intended, from the outset, to provide the motive power for a series of mills constructed at strategic points along its length where the topography gave some fall to the water. For the mills to be built, land had to be acquired, water rights negotiated and the race had to be constructed, beginning with an aqueduct across Artlebeck. It is not possible to reconstruct the whole of this process in detail; however, a number of likely developments can be sketched out.



The Caton mill complex developed Thomas Hodgson based on a map of 1843. Construction of the mills antedates the Lancaster to Richmond turnpike which runs straight through Town End. The original road turned sharp right to Brookhouse at the time the mills were built.

In 1780 Abram Rawlinson purchased Grassyard Hall – some 530 acres, now known as Gresgarth Hall.¹⁹ Originally the Rawlinson family were Quakers but must, at some point, have been drummed out, with marriage outside of the faith being the most likely cause. The family began trading to the West Indies from Lancaster in the early part of the 18th century. Abraham Rawlinson went out to the West Indies in the 1730's. They had business relationships with Thomas Touchett, the Manchester cotton goods manufacturer and interests in the Backbarrow Iron Company giving access to vital trade goods. Henry Rawlinson had a factor in Tortola, and was himself agent for the Virgin Islands. They had business relations with the Lancaster

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family of Satterthwaite who also had interests in the W.I. trade. John Satterthwaite's sister Mary married John Backhouse, the Hodgson's partner in privateering during the American Revolutionary War. Abraham Rawlinson had an interest in a plantation in Grenada and became a business partner of the Lancaster merchant William Lindow who had been a factor in St Kitts and later Grenada. At the age of 47 he married Rawlinson's daughter Abigail and entered into partnership with Rawlinson. He had interests in plantations in Grenada and St Vincents and other property scattered through the West Indies as well as properties in Furness and a large house in Queen's Square, Lancaster.¹²

In November 1780 Abraham Rawlinson Senior died. One of his sons, Henry, was the M.P. for Liverpool (1780-1784) and in the same year he purchased Grassyard Hall. He in his turn died in 1786 and the estate was held by his widow Martha until 1794 when it passed to their son Abraham also a West India merchant in Lancaster. It was he who acquired the Lordship of the Manor in 1802. The estate and Lordship were sold to Thomas Edmondson in 1806.¹⁹ It was Thomas Edmondson's son John who stood out against the destruction of Caton Chapel. With its controlling position at the head of the spillway producing the water supply for all the Caton Mills the ownership of Grassyard Hall must have been highly significant in allowing the Hodgsons to proceed with their plans.

It was at this time that Thomas Hodgson purchased Escowbeck, a large estate and farmhouse to the west of the township. This would have given him control over some of the land over which the millrace was to run. He began to acquire by lease or purchase the remaining properties that stood in his way including the purchase of two cottages and surrounding pasture belonging to William Leyfield in August of 1784 for the sum of £577.10s.²⁰ The remainder of the mill race was put almost through the centre of that part of the village of Caton known as Town End and was constructed partly over land belonging to the Padgett family of Caton Hall. Bryan Padgett who owned this land, had married Isabella Hodgson who was Thomas Hodgson's cousin.¹⁹ Undoubtedly this was one of the keys to making the projected watercourse viable. Bryan Padgett's daughter Bella married Samuel Gregson and it was their son, Bryan Padgett Gregson who was among those in favour of the destruction of Caton Chapel.

The key to these developments seems to have dropped into place with a bankruptcy involving the Rowlandson brothers. In December 1779 a paper-mill at Backbarrow was offered for sale belonging to Messrs. Rowlandson, Scarisbrick and Company.²¹ It was described as;

"A Large and Commodious PAPER-MILL, lately built on a modern construction, and in complete order... consisting of two engines, two vats, two drying-rooms, ware-houses, counting house, and other conveniences and utensils, suitable thereto; four dwelling houses and gardens, a stable and hay-loft."

The partnership between Scarisbrick and Rowlandson was to be dissolved and all those with claims were to submit their accounts and all those indebted to the company to pay their debts. The company was in trouble and by August 1783 was bankrupt. James Rowlandson of Satterthwaite, Hawkshead and Richard Rowlandson of Caton, Paper Makers, were summoned to meet their creditors and to choose assignees at the Kings Arms in Kirkby Kendal.²² One of the assignees was Isaac Capstick, Thomas Hodgson's nephew, and the creditors of the estate were invited to meet him at the New Inn in Lancaster *in order to assent to, or dissent*

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*from, the assignees compounding, settling, submitting to Arbitration, or otherwise agreeing, any matter or thing touching or concerning the said Bankrupts Estate or Effects, as well at Caton Mill, in the said County of Lancaster as elsewhere, and on other special Affairs.*²³

Scarisbrook was the grandson of a Cumbria paper maker who established a paper mill at Milnthorpe in partnership with the Rowlandsons. The production of paper from rags, of which a large quantity of Osnaburg rags were available following the bankruptcy, would have required water power to operate the Hollander beaters required to break up the linen fibres following treatment with alkali derived from wood ash.²⁴ The process required copious amounts of water, which was available at the Forge Mill site. The Rowlandson's bankruptcy likely represented the vital piece in the jigsaw that led to the development of the complex of mills that dominated Caton life for over a hundred years.

When the elder Elizabeth Lightbody died, among the items making up her estate in 1807 were, rather improperly, several bonds. One, the balance of which was £860 was from John Hodgson, Thomas Hodgson, John Pares, Thomas Gardom and Isaac Capstick and another for £400 from Thomas Hodgson and John Pares.²⁵ Although this is twenty-five years after the founding of the mills the connections between the various people involved in their foundation is very apparent. Thus when Thomas Hodgson married Elizabeth Lightbody and her sister Agnes married John Pares a family alliance was forged which changed the face of life in the village of Caton. When, some six years later, the youngest daughter Hannah married Samuel Greg the family alliance was extended and strengthened.

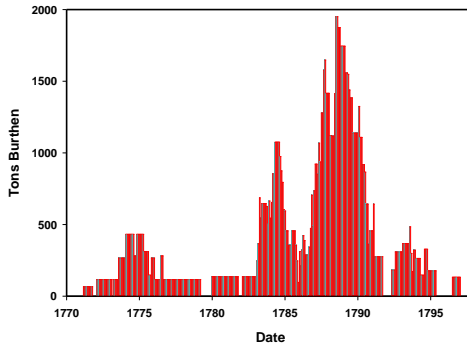
With the pieces in place Thomas Hodgson began developing a series of mills in the village beginning with Low Mill and followed in due course by the much larger Willow Mill which when it was advertised for sale in 1795²⁶ was described as a new built cotton mill. Rumble Row mill, lying between Forge Mill, at the head of the millrace, and Willow Mill, was leased from Thomas Hodgson by James Nobel about 1788.²⁷ The acquisition of the land, the construction of the race and Low Mill itself, which was completed by 1784, took time and access to a large fund of capital. The level of capital required could hardly have been derived from the limited slaving ventures in which the Hodgson's had been involved up to that date, and the Hodgson's considerably ramped up their investments in the slave trade at the same time as they invested in the large scale development of textile mills. For the Hodgson brothers the American Revolutionary War seems to have proved uniquely profitable.

Of Dominica and Carolina.

The Treaty of Paris²⁸ concluding the American Revolutionary War led to the re-establishment of trade with America and the West Indies, and with it the trade in slaves. Opposite one another at the peace conference were Henry Laurens of the Continental Congress and Richard Oswald, a Glasgow slave merchant and one of the owners of Bance Island. David Hartley replaced Richard Oswald as His Britannic Majesty's Minister Plenipotentiary, appointed by King George III to treat with the United States of America.²⁹ Thus trade on the African coast and trade with

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America could resume in earnest. There was a rush to enter the trade and 1783 saw a dramatic increase in the numbers willing to risk their capital, and individual merchants rapidly increased their investments.³⁰



J. & T. Hodgson invested tonnage in slave vessels 1770-1790

In 1783 John and Thomas Hodgson began to invest in far more voyages than they had previously made, and these voyages departed significantly from previous practice. Before the American Revolutionary war the principal outside investor in the Hodgsons' voyages was Samuel Sandys. Slaves were mostly obtained from The Gambia and the Isles de Loss, undoubtedly exploiting Thomas Hodgson's connection with Miles Barber. The voyages were destined principally for Charleston, South Carolina but with the outbreak of war these destinations changed to West Indian Islands such as Dominica and Jamaica.³⁰

In 1780 and 1782, after Sandys bankruptcy, the Hodgsons joined Samuel Hartley in two voyages with the *Charlotte*. Hartley, as we have seen was a London banker or negoceant, having close links with Miles Barber. The question of how these voyages were put together has already been raised; Miles Barber was a bankrupt and Samuel Hartley a banker; someone else must have managed them on the Liverpool docks. The arrangements may well have allowed Miles Barber to continue to operate and to supply slaves to the French West Indies. The first voyage of the *Charlotte* could have been that referred to in the Franklin correspondence, which became detained in St. Domingue, was subsequently released and returned to Liverpool in October 1781 almost 2 years after it originally cleared for Africa. If so it was particularly unfortunate and somewhat ironic that in September 1781 that it was taken en route from Tortola to Liverpool by the *Franklin* privateer and plundered of 21 bags of cotton and all her stores; note the cotton on board. The vessel was ransomed to bring the English prisoners home.³⁹ The next voyage of the *Charlotte*, in February 1782, another joint venture by Hartley and the Hodgsons, took about 200 slaves from The Gambia to Cap Francais in St Domingue³⁰ – presumably in fulfillment of Miles Barber's contract with the French and to which the passports negotiated with Franklin and Louis XVI may relate.

In February 1783 The Hodgsons may have invested in the voyage of the *Madam Pookata*, jointly owned by Thomas Leyland and James Penny, to Angola and Havana although only Thomas Hodgson is listed as an owner their subsequent investment in two later voyages of the vessel suggests the possibility.³⁰ As 1783 began the investment strategy of the Hodgsons changed; they were not putting

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together their own voyages but investing in the voyages of other Liverpool merchants. In March 1783 they invested in the 120-ton brig *Doe* with four new partners, including William Mcleod, George Johnston, and John Chambres Jones, under the management of Thomas Twemlow.³ The destinations were New Calabar and Antigua, quite different destinations from previous voyages, probably reflecting the preferences of the ship's husband.

Two weeks later they invested in the 100-ton brig *Edward* bound for the Windward Coast and St Kitts along with Joseph Brooks, with whom they had operated at least one privateer, and Joseph Coutts and William Allanson. 190 slaves were delivered to the West Indies at the end of June 1784.³⁰ At the same time they invested in the 120-ton ship *Juba* bound for Bonny and Tortola with a large group of investors including William Rutson, John & Thomas Backhouse and William Pole, some of whom they had previously joined in privateering ventures. Thomas Backhouse was the son of John Backhouse from Milnthorpe where they had, or later acquired, considerable property.³²

Perhaps the strategy was a means of getting into the market quickly and spreading the risk. Another implication of investing in voyages to previously unvisited destinations could be that the old destinations were no longer viable. The Hodgson's may also have been distracted by their developing interests in cotton mills and not in a position to fit out their own voyages and so placed their capital with trusted slaving houses.

It was not long before the Hodgsons began equipping their own voyages. In April 1783, the 100 ton Snow *Bassa*, under a master they had used before, Hugh Glenn, was dispatched for the Windward Coast. The voyage seems to have been a disaster because the vessel was condemned as unseaworthy on the African coast.³⁰ Whether the trade goods were saved and stored in a coastal trading facility is not known. Perhaps they were, because by mid June they had equipped another vessel, the recently built (1780), 100 ton brig *Eliza*, named for his new bride, bound again for the Windward Coast and Bance Island to trade for slaves. The Bance Island slave factory must once again have been in operation following its destruction in 1779. The island was owned by a syndicate including Richard Oswald, Sir Alexander Grant, and the father and son team of Augustus and John Boyd. Indeed Oswald dispatched a vessel to Bance that same year. After Oswald's death in 1784 management of the factory fell to his nephews Alexander and John Anderson of London.⁴¹ The ultimate destination of this voyage was Dominica, and some new investors, Isaac and Richard Capstick and William Nielson, joined them.³⁰ Isaac and Richard Capstick were nephews of John and Thomas Hodgson. The Gregsons, Capsticks and Hodgsons were all related via marriage with the Padgett family of Caton of whom one descendent was Bryan Padgett Gregson.¹⁹ Richard Capstick's will reveals that he spent some time in Dominica before returning to Liverpool and finally retiring to his native Caton.³⁴ In 1783 he was resident in Tortola as was William Nielson. They were probably acting as the Hodgsons' agents in the West Indies arranging the consignment of slaves and thus vitally important to the success of this and subsequent voyages.

Isaac and Richard Capstick were the children of Isaac Capstick and Thomas's sister Elizabeth. Isaac junior was, as we have seen, in Caton in 1783, aged 29, an

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assignee in the bankruptcy of two Backbarrow paper makers. Isaac seems to have been employed by or incorporated with Thomas Hodgson in developing the Caton Mills. Richard, on the other hand, went out to the West Indies, either directly employed by the Hodgsons, or indentured to, or a partner in, a Merchant house. He also had sufficient capital to take a share in several slaving vessels. It is not known when Richard went out to Tortola and Dominica, perhaps it was shortly before the re-establishment of the colonial government of Dominica in 1784. In September of 1778, during the war with America, the island of Dominica, was occupied by the French under the Marquis de Bouille and a French governor was appointed who imposed restrictive laws upon the British inhabitants.³⁵ On April 12th 1782 the Battle of the Saintes took place off the north coast when Admiral Rodney defeated the French navy under the Comte de Grasse.³⁶ The Treaty of Versailles, ratified in September 1783 returned Dominica to British rule and in January 1784 the new British Governor Sir John Orde arrived.³⁷

Tortola continued to be Richard Capstick's domicile for each subsequent vessel after the *Eliza* until the registration of the *Caton* in November 1786, when he was domiciled in Dominica, along with William Heathcote and William Nielson.³⁸ By the re-registration of the *Fly* in October 1787 his domicile was Liverpool. He wrote his will, "*being weak in body, but of sound and perfect mind and Memory*" which was signed and witnessed, in Caton, by Thomas Capstick and Mary Hudson (Thomas Hodgson's sister and the wife of his mill manager) on September 11th 1788.³⁴ Richard Capstick died in 1789 and his will was proved in February 1790 with a value under £1000 for probate. His executors were his mother, brother and his "*honoured Uncles*", John and Thomas Hodgson. He left everything in trust to his mother; "*And I do this in full confidence that she will divide whatever she may be possessed of equally between and amongst my Brother Isaac, my Sisters Ann, Mary, Alice, Dorothy and Bella and my Niece Mary Whiteside Share and Share alike.*" Clearly the Capstick nephews were involved by the Hodgsons in the development of their widening business interests, with Richard taking part in the disposal of slaves in Dominica and Isaac in the development of the mill complex.

In September 1783 the Hodgsons invested in a large syndicate for a voyage to the Cameroon River, again with men who they had previously joined in privateering including Thomas Staniforth, William Pole, Thomas Ryan and Joseph Brooks. Also among the investors was Thomas Cropper who had invested in slaving voyages in the period before and after the American Revolutionary war. The Cropper family was friendly with James Currie, perhaps patients, and they would cease to be active in this trade from about 1790 perhaps influenced by the abolitionist movement. The vessel, the *King George*, an 80-ton brig, was bound for the Cameroons and St Lucia but was condemned on arrival.³⁰

In November 1783 the Hodgsons invested in the 270-ton ship *Iris*. After the American War the registered ton type changed from previous practice due to a change in the regulations. Burthen became an estimate based on vessel dimensions and resulted in a figure which was as much as 3 times higher than before, although the exact relationship was variable. Once again they invested in a consortium involving many of the men from their privateering ventures including; William Rutson, John & Thomas Backhouse and William Dickson. The vessel traded in Angola and at Cape Coast and delivered 448 slaves to Kingston, Jamaica at the end of October 1784, arriving back in Liverpool in February the following year.³⁰

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In late 1783 or early 1784 the 50-ton sloop *Louisa* cleared Liverpool for The Gambia and arrived in Charleston delivering 60 slaves in July 1784 to Ball, Jennings and Co. The *Louisa* attempted the rapid voyage strategy and returned directly to Africa but was then found un-seaworthy and condemned. The firm of Hartley & Co. also used Ball, Jennings & Co as their Carolina agents but when their huge slaver the *Comte du Nord*, under Captain James Penny, arrived at the same time as the *Louisa* they found the market glutted, which led to no small degree of vituperation between owners and consigning agents.³⁹

Toward the end of January 1784 the Hodgsons invested in the 110-ton, ship rigged, *James* in a consortium lead by Ralph Fisher, James Kewley and William Dickinson. This seems to have been one of the first vessels to begin trading again in The Gambia after the voyage of the *Charlotte*, and the final destination for 290 slaves was Charleston.³⁰ 10 out of a crew of 25 were lost on the *James*, which returned to Liverpool at the end of November 1784. The voyages of the *Louisa* and the *James* to Charleston were re-establishing the old trade routes, which had been disrupted by the war. The Carolina planters were restocking their plantations and the slave traders were assuming that the market was back to normal, an unwise assumption.

In February 1784 the Hodgsons exploited their old connection with Barber and their new connections in the West Indies with the 80-ton brig *Isaac*, bound for the Isles de Loss, again in partnership with the Capsticks and Neilson, which finally delivered 180 slaves to Dominica.³⁰ The *Isaac*, named for Thomas Hodgson's newly born first son, returned to Liverpool in November 1784. Isaac Hodgson would later become prominent in the Liverpool Society for the Emancipation of the Empire slaves.

In March 1784 the Hodgson's continued their association with the consortium led by Thomas Twemlow and William Macleod in the 120-ton brig *Doe* that had returned at the end of October 1783. It was refitted for the Isles de Loss and again delivered 350 slaves to Charleston, returning to Liverpool in January of 1785. Macleod seems to have been the consigning agent in Charleston.³⁰

In mid April 1784 John and Thomas Hodgson joined Ralph Fisher, James Kewley and William Dickinson again to outfit the 100-ton brig *Matty and Betty* for Sierra Leone and Granada, landing 242 slaves, and returning to Liverpool in April 1785. In June 1784 they continued their association with Rutson and Backhouse in the 120-ton ship *Juba* that had returned to Liverpool in November 1783 and was refitted again for Bonny but now bound for Dominica and Antigua delivering 504 slaves and returning to Liverpool in January 1785.³⁰

Likely all these voyages were profitable; there were few complete losses. The structure of this surge in activity perhaps reflected a need to maximize investment rapidly and to spread risk widely but also reflected both recent relationships and relationships developed over the last ten or more years. Slaving destinations suggest that the slavers' barracoons on the African coast were being restored. The ultimate destination of the voyages was increasingly to Dominica reflecting its return to British rule. However, their investment in new voyages then markedly decreased probably because of marketing difficulties. Trusted trading partnerships in the West Indies were needed to replace the Carolina trade as the colonies were now,

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following the revolution, in some legal chaos and a poor credit risk. By establishing agents in Tortola and Dominica Thomas Hodgson could concentrate on outfitting his own small vessels with targeted consignments to reliable factors. A number of events, particularly the Maroon Wars in Dominica may have voided this strategy and account for the declining investment; the outlets for his trade in slaves, may have become restricted and unreliable.

Dominica.

The *James* returned to Liverpool at the end of November 1784 and, under the same consortium, returned to sea in January 1785 with the same itinerary to Gambia and Charleston. 260 slaves were delivered to the firm of Wm Macleod and Co. and inoculated against smallpox prior to sale. It returned to Liverpool in mid October 1785. The *Eliza*, which returned in September 1784, was refitted under the same ownership of Hodgson, Capstick and Nielson, and sailed in February 1785 for New Calabar delivering 380 slaves to Dominica in July 1785. Apparently 14 crew were lost on the voyage out of a complement of 37. The vessel returned to Liverpool in October 1785. At the same time the *Bellona* cleared Liverpool apparently under the sole ownership of the Hodgson brothers. The vessel was bound for Bonny and Dominica and delivered 340 slaves with the loss of 19 crew out of 44. The vessel returned to Liverpool at the end of November 1785. The brig, *Matty and Betty*, owned by the Hodgsons, Fisher, Kewley, and Dickinson returned in April 1785 and was refitted under the same owners and ready to sail by early July 1785 for Sierra Leone delivering 296 slaves to Dominica and returning to Liverpool at the end of January 1786.³⁰ Captain Holmes, who brought home an account, dated December 7th 1785, from Roseau, Dominica, of the sudden outbreak of a slave revolt.^{40, 41}

At about 7 o'clock the previous day, "*near grass throwing*," (- insane though it may sound, slaves on the West India plantations were sent out daily to pick grass to feed the livestock -) a party of maroons attacked the Rosely estate, "*where they carried their usual attendants, fire and devastation.*" A domestic slave named Catherine was shot in the arm on her way to the manager Mr. Gamble's house which was a turret detached from the main buildings. Gamble summoned the slaves at "*the works*" but was wounded in the breast. Two slaves named Augustine and Robert came to assist him but Robert was killed in the attempt. Gamble and Augustine managed to shoot three maroons including "*the son of the chief Congoree.*" Three white employees tried to arm the swivels in the house but found no ammunition and instead tried to use the powder in their muskets to flash the swivels to no avail. Armstrong, a carpenter, and Lile, an overseer, were shot and Armstrong was bayoneted as they tried to flee. Augustine and Gamble were killed when the maroon leader, Congoree, fired the house. The slaves then "*continued in riot and plunder 'till ten o'clock the next day, when they departed, leaving an estate, in point of building, one of the first in the island, a heap of ruins.*"

The antecedents to the slave rebellion seemed to be that the maroons had been armed and organised by the French government under the Marquis de Chaileau.⁴² According to contemporary accounts the indiscipline of the colonial representatives had thwarted the governor's plans to suppress the maroons and they had increased in numbers and confidence. Until September 1784 their activities had been confined to pilfering food from various estates but then an armed body

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attacked the Eden estate and a month later there was an attack on the Marigot estate in which a Mr. Generand was killed. In December they began harrying various estates in the Heights of Calihant leading to some being abandoned. Things remained relatively quiet until the end of July when they attacked and looted the Cassado Garden estate burning the negro huts and destroying several buildings.

Then six maroons were captured in an attack on an estate at Machverchery. Five were punished by banishment and one was sentenced to death but pardoned on promising to guide a party of militia to the rebel camp at Facelle. The attack was a failure; the maroons fled without loss after killing the guide, one of the militia and wounding several more and the troops "*returned defeated and dispirited to Roseau.*" In August they again attacked the Machverchery estate burning the slave huts and outbuildings and robbing the house, after the owner Mr Vidal and his family had fled. In September they attacked an estate belonging to Mr Coollet at Mount George, killing the cattle and firing the slave huts. In early November they attacked Mr Haddoc's estate at Farrau burning the works and the slave huts killing several of his slaves and one belonging to Mr Grogg. They also threatened to return and kill Mr Curry a planter and magistrate in Layon.

They then attacked Dixon's estate at Mahaul where it seems they were distinguishing between French and English planters; "*that it was the English dogs only that they were determined to extirpate from Dominica.*" This was then followed by the attack at Rosalie. The reports concluded that the Governor was now able to take action to defend the colony and "*there is every reasonable ground to hope a few weeks will put an end to one of the greatest evils that ever cursed an unfortunate colony.*"

The first Dominican Maroon War of 1785/6 was lead by Chief Balla and several other slave leaders. After the attack on Rosalie the colonial militia counter attacked near Belles, resulting in the death of 150 maroons. The maroon leader was captured and impaled on a gibbet at Roseau until dead. The slave who betrayed Bella was given his freedom and £165 and came from the Belfast estate, which was owned, coincidentally, by the Greg family.

Dominica, Carolina and the Curious History of the Family Greg.

The Greg family, to whom Thomas Hodgson would come to be related by marriage, had extensive property in Dominica. Whether this brought the Gregs and Hodgson's into association is unclear. They also had strong connections with Carolina but there is no evidence of any specific business connection between the two families. John Greg, born in 1693, from Ayr in Scotland emigrated to Ireland after the Stuart rebellion of 1715. He established himself as a merchant in Belfast and produced two sons by intermarriage with the family of Cunningham. John Greg's eldest son, (1716-1795) emigrated to the West Indies in 1765 to become Government Commissioner for land sales. He married in the islands and had two estates in Dominica, Hertford of 250 acres and Hillsborough of 120 acres. Hillsborough was originally named Layou, which may be the Layon of the above reports, but was renamed in honour of Viscount Hillsborough, the Marquis of

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Downshire. John Greg sold the Hertford estate at some time but his wife inherited an estate in St Vincents in 1773.^{43,44}

John Greg's brother Thomas (1719-1796) married Elizabeth Hyde with whom he had 13 children one of whom was Samuel Greg. His childless uncle Edward Hyde, whose textile business he eventually inherited, brought Samuel Greg up in Manchester. Thomas Greg was the business partner of Waddell Cunningham (1729-1797). Waddell Cunningham of Killead, County Antrim was a Presbyterian involved in the linen trade. He emigrated to New York in the 1750's and established himself as a merchant in partnership with Thomas Greg trading as Greg & Cunningham. The firm prospered during the French and Indian War through privateering, smuggling and military contracts.⁴⁵

John Greg also had mercantile interests in South Carolina. In 1761 the colonial government enacted a measure to encourage settlement. A bounty of £4 per head was offered to poor Protestants from Europe, but was actually paid to ship owners for their transport across the Atlantic. The Charleston firm of John Torrans, John Greg and John Poaug worked hard to influence the passage of the bill and were also granted land on which to settle the immigrants. Between 1762 and 1768, when the bounty system was ended because of abuses by merchants and masters, dozens of vessels sailed from Ireland to South Carolina. Most of these voyages were made from Belfast and were operated by the cooperating firms of Torrans, Greg and Poaug and Cunningham and Greg.⁴⁶ Henry Laurens, the slave trader, remarked that he "*never saw an instance of Cruelty in ten or twelve Years experience in that branch equal to the Cruelty exercised upon those poor Irish.*"⁴⁷

Waddell Cunningham returned to Belfast in 1764 and became one of the town's wealthiest merchants. Greg and Cunningham assisted Lord Donegal to clear the peasantry off his estates in County Antrim by raising rents and forcing evictions. This led to the agrarian revolt of the "Hearts of Steel" when disgruntled insurrectionaries attacked Belfast and tore down Cunningham's house.⁴⁵ Cunningham and Greg purchased an estate in Dominica, which they called Belfast and where the slave betrayed the leader of the maroons during the first Maroon war. Thomas Greg died in 1796 and left the Belfast estate to his youngest son Cunningham. The estate was sold for £17,000. John Greg died in 1795 and left his West Indian interests to his nephews Thomas and Samuel Greg. Thomas ceded his interests to Samuel for an annuity and on Samuel's death the Hillsborough and Cane Garden Estates went to his son Thomas. On Thomas's death five years later interest passed to his brothers including Robert Hyde Greg of Quarry Bank and John Greg of Caton.⁴⁴ So when Adam Hodgson referred in his *Letters from North America* to many of "*our friends*" having plantations this may be who he had in mind.

The Loss of the Caton

Despite the effects of the first Maroon War John and Thomas Hodgson continued to concentrate their efforts on restocking slaves in Dominica. At the turn of 1785 the *Eliza* (owned by the Hodgsons, Capstick and Nielson) was once again dispatched on another African voyage to New Calabar, delivering 390 slaves to Dominica and returning in December 1786. For this vessel the effect of the re-organization of trade at the conclusion of the war with America when all vessels

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were required to re-register at their home ports under new regulations was to increase the registered tonnage of the vessel from 100 tons to 216 tons burthen.

The Fisher, Kewley, Dickinson vessel **James**, in which the Hodgson's, were investors, returned to Liverpool in October 1785 and sailed for Africa in February 1786 bound for the Windward coast.³⁰ It was apparently condemned there as unfit for service, but this was only the second failure in almost twenty voyages in which the Hodgsons were involved. With access to slave factories on the coast the voyage might not have been a complete loss, trade goods could have been saved and in any event insurance might have covered the vessel and its contents if it arose from '*the perils of the seas*'. However the **Matty and Betty**, which returned to Liverpool at the end of January 1786 and sailed again towards the end of March 1786 was also apparently condemned at Cape Mount, crucially after slaving, but no details are known.³⁰

During 1786 the Hodgsons were major investors in two relatively small vessels both intended to deliver slaves to Dominica. At the end of April 1786 the 76-ton sloop **Bee**, with the Hodgsons as sole owners, sailed for the Windward coast and Dominica delivering 82 slaves in April 1787. The vessel did not return to Liverpool until July 1788. Given its small size it should have completed the round trip in much shorter order, unless of course it had doubled the Atlantic crossing in the meantime.

Then in October 1786 the Hodgsons invested in the **James**, a 78-ton brig part owned by Captain Joseph Story. This small vessel with a crew of 20 traded in The Gambia and delivered 91 slaves to Dominica at the end of October 1787 returning to Liverpool in February 1788. This is the only venture known to have been operated by Story apart from one further voyage of this vessel in 1788 to the Isles de Loss and Dominica. The Hodgson's were not registered as owners but they may have been involved.³⁰

In September 1786 the **Mercer**, a small 54-ton sloop, just over fifty feet long and sixteen feet wide, with a single mast, a single deck, and an 8-foot deep hold was entered in the Liverpool register. It was registered to a consortium of owners including the Hodgsons and Fisher, Dickinson and the Kewleys (John & Patrick) along with John Hewan, Joseph Cazneau, and Ayton Martin. They were all Liverpool men except Patrick Kewley whose domicile was Grenada.³⁸ The vessel cleared Liverpool in June 1787 for the Windward coast under Master John Bellis but suffered a slave insurrection and did not return to Liverpool until July 1789. Ownership was then transferred to John and Thomas Hodgson and William Gibson and it returned to Africa under Master John Parr but was lost on the coast sometime in 1790. It is not known to have successfully transported any slaves to the Americas. Despite its small size this vessel was not intended as a supply vessel or tender. It first cleared Liverpool in September 1786 for Africa arriving on the coast about March 1787. However by May it was back in Liverpool and cannot have completed a triangular voyage. It may have been taking out additional trade goods but on arrival in Liverpool was described as **Mercer**, late Bruce.⁴⁸ It may have suffered insurrection and been in no position to continue. On clearing again in June, under John Bellis, it was reported on the African coast in October and in December as being, "*well at Africa to sail in 15 days*".^{49,50} In April it was reported to have been "*cut off by the slaves on the Middle Passage and afterwards retaken by the African*

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King, Bristol.⁵¹ It returned with William Fell as captain and sailed again from Liverpool in August 1789, under Joseph Parr, but was lost on the African coast sometime in 1790. It seems to have been an unlucky and presumably unprofitable vessel.³⁰

On October 6 1786 the *Liver*, another single masted vessel with a transom and square stern, of 53 tons burthen, and described as a fishing smack was registered in Liverpool to a large consortium of owners. The owners were; Jacob Nelson (not known as a slave trader), George Case (frequent associate of the Gregsons), William Gregson (junior and senior), Thomas Golightly (not known as a slave trader), John Webster (trader for many years), Joshua Roose, Richard Kent (not known as a slave trader), Thomas Hodgson jnr (John Hodgson does not appear and thus beware), Thomas Moore (not known as a slave trader), Gill Slater (slave trader 1761-1792), Robert Moss (not known as a slave trader), John Fisher (also a shipbuilder and minor trader who operated alone), Joseph Brooks jr. (major Slave trader), Thomas Staniforth (major involvement), and Alexander Wotherspoon (minor involvement from 1777-84). So was this in fact what logic seems to suggest – a floating fish shop for use on the African coast?³⁸

In November 1786 the Hodgsons registered a new, purpose built slave-ship. It was built by Thomas Noble and Thomas Wilson on the banks of the Lune at Lancaster and was 232-tons burthen, ship-rigged with only 4ft 7 in between decks, and bore the homely name of *Caton*. A brand new vessel in the slave trade was unusual and perhaps extravagant. The vessel was registered to the Hodgsons along with Richard Capstick, William Nielson and William Heathcote, the latter all of Dominica. Richard Capstick was in still Dominica at the time but by the re-registration of the *Fly* 11 months later he was back in Liverpool and by April 1789 was dead.³⁸ Perhaps he returned following the terrible events of August 1787.

The *Caton* barely completed one voyage. In the late summer of 1787 the island of Dominica was struck by three hurricanes in quick succession.⁵² The first on August 3rd was brief and did little damage inland but a Guinea ship was cast on shore and several small craft lost. The second began on the 23rd in the late morning and continued “*with unabating fury until late in the evening; the wind now shifting from N.W. to S.W. cast on shore another African ship, three brigs, and all the droughing vessels about the island.*” There was considerable damage inland but the *Caton* slipped anchor and got off to weather the storm at sea. There followed a third and even more powerful storm which struck in the early morning of the 28th and this time the *Caton*, which had returned, was cast on shore at the mouth of the Roseau River with a cargo estimated to be worth £10,000. All the houses at Prince Rupert’s Bay, along with the barracks, and other buildings on Morne Bruce were blown down, and “*several capital houses*” in Roseau were unroofed. Food, cash crops and entire plantations were devastated. Vessels damaged or lost included; the ship *Swallow*, belonging to the Gregsons, from the Gold Coast, wrecked in Woodbridge Bay; the brig *Dolphin*, of Bristol, from Newfoundland, wrecked at Point Mitchel; the brig *Liberty*, from Canada, loaded, wrecked at Louburre; the brig *Delight*, loaded for Ireland, stranded at Roseau River; the shallop *Betsy*, sloop *Nancy*, and a French sloop, on shore; the ship *Caton*, Fell, stranded at the mouth of Roseau River; the brig *Queen Charlotte* (probably from Bristol) put to sea but returned having lost fore-mast and bowsprit; the brig *Aurora*, Capt. Du Cay, loaded, wrecked; and the

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brig **Henry and Elizabeth**, Capt. Arundel, put to sea and returned with loss of masts, and sails.

A letter from the Antigua Gazette gave more details about the loss of the **Caton**; “*the ship Caton, nearly loaded and about to sail ..., was stranded at the mouth of the river Roseau, and so much damaged that she must be broke up. – Every article in the cabin was washed away, by which, we are peculiarly sorry to add, that Captain Fell, whose fortitude and perseverance, as well in this as in other instances, had been sufficiently tried, and who bears the most amiable character, lost a large sum in cash, besides other valuable property to a large amount....*”

Captain Fell was Miles Barber’s nephew by the marriage of his sister Sarah to Captain Thomas Fell, a Lancaster Guinea captain. Quite why Captain Fell is spoken of in such sympathetic terms in the Antigua Gazette is a mystery. Drouching used earlier in the account is Caribbean English and means drawing or dragging and probably refers to coastal transport vessels, perhaps flats. The slave trade to Dominica had risen exponentially year-by-year after its return to Britain in 1783 and it still remained close to the peak it achieved in 1786 by 1788. However, it fell rapidly away to only a third of this in the years 1789/90 where it remained until the war with France put a stop to it entirely in the years 1793/4 after which it continued at a low level until abolition.³⁰

The Hodgsons’ next vessel was the 153-ton ship, **Heart of Oak**, of which they were sole registered owners. It left Liverpool at the end of December 1786, embarked slaves at the Isles de Loss, and delivered 143 to Tortola rather than Dominica in July 1787 and arrived back in Liverpool at the end of September.

The Hodgsons’ next venture was with the 93-ton cutter, **Fly**, first registered on January 3rd 1787 under their sole ownership. However, in October 1787 they sold a 1/6th share to Richard Capstick, who was then back in Liverpool, and almost a half share (5/12) in the vessel to Samuel Hartley. This was a major investment and the first investment by Hartley in a Hodgson voyage since the **Charlotte** of 1782. The first documented voyage of **Fly** was not until May 1789. However this was the Hodgsons’ rapid transit specialist and there was plenty of time between first registration for at least one, if not two trips to Africa. On January 3rd 1787 the master was Daniel Innis but changed to Thomas Powell on January 19th 1787 when the vessel sailed.³⁰ Shipping reports gave “**Fly, Powell, at Africa from Liverpool**” on July 7th 1787⁵³ and “**Fly, Powell, at Liverpool, from Africa**” on September 21st 1787.⁵⁴ Followed on March 4th 1788 by; “**Fly, Withering, from Africa at Liverpool from the Isles de Loss having left the coast the 24th of January**”.⁵⁵ From this it seems the vessel undertook two roles; to rapidly shift trade goods from Liverpool to Africa and to make rapid voyages between Africa and the Americas sometimes without returning to Liverpool. From this point the Hodgsons had a particular interest in targeting the Isles de Loss for the acquisition of slaves and Samuel Hartley was back on the scene as a major investor in their voyages.

Samuel Hartley and the Carolina Problem

Following the voyage of the **Charlotte** with the Hodgsons in 1780 Samuel Hartley’s involvement as Hartley & Co. in the Liverpool slave trade continued but it

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is a bit of a stretch to imagine that this London and International banker sitting in a compting house on the Liverpool Docks. It is difficult not to believe that Samuel Hartley's activities were a front for the continued activities of Miles Barber – bankrupt, formerly of Liverpool, late of Lothbury in the City of London. Perhaps it was simply a means of exploiting assets that were not in the hands of his creditors, his contract with the King of France or his factories on the Coast of Africa. They may of course have been operated with the knowledge of and on behalf of his creditors.

In April 1780 Hartley was principal investor in a vessel partly owned by James Penny, the 120-ton ship *James*, Captain Ralph Fisher. The slaving destination is unknown but the market appears to have been St Kitts. It arrived back in Liverpool in April 1781.³⁰ Penny of course was a highly experienced slave ship captain who learned the trade in the company of the master, Miles Barber.⁵⁶ In June 1780 Hartley was sole registered owner of the 130-ton ship *Two Brothers*, Captain John Sheppard, bound for the Isles de Loss but nothing more is known of the voyage.

April and June 1781 found Hartley investing in two vessels with William Barrow, a Lancaster man resident in St Kitts, where both vessels were registered, the *Susannah* (Captain John Hughes, and part owned by Ralph Fisher) and the *Nelly* (Captain John Owens).³⁰ The latter on the way from St Kitts to Liverpool was captured and ransomed for 5000 guineas in October.⁵⁷ The former arrived in Liverpool from Tortola at the end of June 1781. At the end of September 1781 Hartley was sole owner of the 150-ton brig *Pidgeon* (Captain Ralph Fisher) which cleared out of London but was taken by the French before slaves were embarked. On October 8 1781 it was reported to have been taken by the privateer *Eagle* of Dunkirk and carried into there whilst bound from Margate to Ostend.⁵⁸

At the end of October 1781 the 200 ton ship *Carolina* (Captain John Hughes) cleared Liverpool for Angola and St Lucia delivering 545 slaves in April 1782, 26 having died in the Middle passage. It returned to Liverpool in August 1782.³⁰ In February 1782 he was principal investor in the Hodgsons vessel *Charlotte* bound for Gambia and Cap Francais, St Domingue, arriving in March 1783. It seems an easy assumption that this is one of Miles Barber's contract vessels for the supply of slaves to the French West Indies, some 200 probably. Indeed on the same day, February 7th 1782, Hartley's vessel the 40-ton brig *Dembia* cleared Liverpool apparently bound for Sierra Leone and Cap Francais arriving in March 1783, with possibly another 200 slaves for the French.³⁰

In May 1782 Hartley's 240 ton ship, *Lion* departed Liverpool for Sierra Leone. Little else seems to be known but it is undoubtedly the same vessel which in 1785 cleared from London.³⁰ In September Hartley invested in the 130-ton ship *Sam*, with William Woodville (Capt) and John Shaw which purchased 400 slaves in Angola but little else is known. Then in mid November Hartley's ship, *Carolina*, was dispatched to the Isles de Loss, Barber's factory, captained by Andrew White who it seems, since his bankruptcy, is reduced to sailing again, which is how he entered the trade, as a Captain for Miles Barber in the 1760's and 70's.⁵⁹ It was captured by the French; it seems to have been Andrew White's last roll of the dice.

A trial in the Court of Kings Bench shows that Hartley was indeed engaged in trade with the French West Indies. In December 1782 William Smith entered into a charter party of afreightment with Samuel Hartley to transport merchandise to the West Indies from London. The goods were to be delivered to Point Petrie in

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Guadeloupe (a French colony lying near Dominica). The agent in the West Indies was William Barrow – of the Lancaster merchant family with property and connections in the West Indies, in particular with the Baillies and Thorntons (also of Lancaster).¹² At Barrow's request Smith loaded his vessel with French troops, stores and provisions and delivered them to L'Orient in France then returned to London. The charter was contracted at the rate of eighteen shillings per ton per month amounting to £2,485. This was payable by two months deposit at the outset in bills at two months, the remainder payable at her first port of lading in the West Indies at 60 days sight and the final payment on return to London also at 60 days sight plus any port charges which amounted to £46. Although Hartley paid the two months advance amounting to £477 the remainder, £2,054, was still outstanding. Smith obtained a judgment in the sum of £2044:0:9 $\frac{3}{4}$.⁶⁰

The French and Lancaster connections involved in this affair cannot help but suggest once again the involvement of Miles Barber behind the scenes. The planning for the voyage, though perhaps not the voyage itself, were undertaken at time of war with France and bring to mind Hartley and Barber's visits to Franklin and the French Court. However, cases like this also encapsulate the difficulties in discovering the activities of the men involved in the slave trade – perhaps any historical trade – which of their nature are private and not public affairs. Their activities only emerge from the record at points of regulation, or public notoriety. Sometimes the public record conceals as much as it reveals. The registration of vessels hired out for freights reveals nothing about the promoters of the enterprise. Only in the case of a dispute which went to law, and was of sufficient interest to be reported, is anything visible. Such was the case of Pashley et al. vs. Hartley which came to trial at the Court of King's Bench in 1793 but concerned events that had taken place ten years before beginning in May 1783.⁶¹

Pashley et al. were the assignees of one Gibbon, a bankrupt. In May 1783, Gibbon chartered a vessel on behalf of Hartley for a voyage from England to the "Island of Delos" and from there to the West Indies and then to return to any port in England. The contract was to be completed within twelve months. It sailed in June 1783 and discharged her cargo at the Isles de Loss. Before sailing for the West Indies it was used to make some trips to Sierra Leone, and other places on the African Coast. It then sailed for the West Indies where it arrived in 1785 to take in a cargo for Europe but was found unseaworthy, condemned and broken up. Pashley was trying to recover the value of the vessel. Hartley's counsel produced evidence to show that it was unseaworthy from the beginning. They also argued that the vessel by making several trips on the African coast had departed from the terms of the Charter. Hartley's defence seems to have been at least partly successful.

The voyage was that of the 200 ton Ship, *Eagle*, which cleared London on June 21st 1783, Capt John Olderman, bound for the Isles de Loss. This old Dutch vessel of 1765, delivered 340 slaves, consisting of 160 Men and Menboys, 30 boys and girls and 70 women to Charleston on July 29th 1785.³⁰ The slaves were sold on terms of one third payable in January with the remainder on two years credit with interest. The dates of departure and arrival in the records agree with those given in the trial but the destination is quite different. It is difficult to understand why this case took so long to resolve, and why both plaintiff and defendant are content to

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present the case as if the ultimate destination had been the West Indies and not Charleston. Despite these difficulties there is good evidence for the identification. The vessel was registered in London to one G. Gibbons and among Henry Laurens' papers is a letter that makes clear Hartley's involvement.⁶² The letter also shows that it was extremely difficult to obtain redress in the Carolina courts in the years following the revolution, which may explain the coyness of the plaintiff. Why the defendant should have agreed to participate in the subterfuge is not obvious. The case of another of Hartley's vessels the *Comte du Nord* – see later - is very similar in this regard.

Although numerous voyages went to Carolina at this time as the planters restocked, the economy had not recovered from the war and credit worthiness was an issue. Henry Laurens, in part of a long letter to the London and Charleston trading house of Bourdieu, Chollet and Bourdieu, in October 1785, mentions the outcome of this voyage.

“Captn. Olderman of the late Ship Eagle, now a sunken Wreck, has solicited me to write to Mr Hartley my opinion of his conduct in this place, I prefer signifying it to you who if it shall become necessary I am persuaded will communicate to his Owners. All the Captain's transactions which have come within my knowledge appear to me to have been calculated for their Interest, times and circumstances considered I think no other Master could have acted with greater propriety. Now upon closing accounts with his Merchants he meets some difficulties I have recommended, if the Gentlemen refuse to comply with every article of their engagement to enter a protest which is all he can do in this Country, Mr Hartley may hereafter find means for compulsion. I speak however from the information of one party the other should he heard.”

It seems Olderman had no instructions from Hartley for the disposal of his slaves, perhaps they were to have been forwarded to him and collected on arrival in the Americas. Thus the original destination could have been the West Indies and the voyage diverted on arrival. That was certainly the case with the *Comte du Nord*, which had arrived in Charleston two years earlier. Olderman waited two weeks before making arrangements with the merchant houses of Theodore Gaillard and Scarborough & Cooke. Word finally arrived from Hartley in August with the request that Henry Laurens make the arrangements or nominate someone else and to use the house of Bourdieu, Chollet & Bourdieu. With Olderman's arrangements already made Henry Laurens said *“it would be dishonourable to interfere”* and wrote to Hartley *“I think (Olderman) has acted in all respects with propriety and judgement”*. Henry Laurens also wrote to Bourdieu, Chollet & Bourdieu on the same day, remarking that Hartley's lack of attention to business had the happy result that, *“I fancy You & I should have been unpleasantly involved in a Debt which We are now happily clear of.”*⁶² There may have been some justification for Samuel Hartley's inattention to business for a notice appeared on January 19th 1785 *“Yesterday, died at Duncroft, near Staines Mrs Hartley, wife of Samuel Hartley, Esq., of Bedford Square.”*⁶³

On September 26th 1783 Hartley, in concert with another owner called Lamb, dispatched the large, 700-ton, *Comte du Nord*, a French prize, under the experienced Captain James Penny, from London to Melimba in Angola to purchase 701 slaves. 90 died before they were landed in Charleston on July 21st 1784. Thus 611 are supposed to have arrived in Charleston consisting of 165 men, 81 women,

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208 manboys, and 109 womangirls. It arrived back in Liverpool on October 26th 1784 having left Chareleston on the 16th September.³⁰ This was Penny's second voyage for Hartley both of which went to Angola. The voyage was the subject of litigation, which came to trial in 1785. The root cause of the trouble was the glutted market for slaves in Charleston. In the early part of the year slaves had been selling for ready money or produce but by the end of the year sellers had to accept bills on at least one year's credit.

In the period leading up to the arrival of the *Comte du Nord* several large consignments of slaves had already come to market.³⁹ On July 8th the *Antigallican*, Capt William Parke, from Liverpool landed 216 slaves from New Calabar, consigned to the firms of Ball, Jennings & Co and Smith, Desaussure and Darrell. On the 15th John Garnett of the *Old England*, owned by James Sawrey & John Addison of Lancaster, landed 181 slaves from the Gold Coast consigned to Fisher, Hughes and Edwards. Garnett may be related to the family which purchased Quernmore Park near Caton with a fortune made in the West Indies. On the same day the same firm took up a further 199 Gold Coast slaves from Thomas Walker of the *Alert*, owned by John Anderson. On the 26th, the same day that James Penny arrived, John Court of the *Louisa*, part owned by the Hodgsons along with Ralph Fisher and John Kewley, landed 56 slaves from the Gambia for the Ball, Jennings and Smith house.

Samuel Hartley ended up suing James Baillie in the Court of Common Pleas in December 1785.⁶⁴ Samuel Hartley's case was that he had fitted out the *Comte du Nord* for a voyage to Africa to purchase slaves which, on the advice of Miles Barber, he proposed to sell in Havana. However he changed his mind and decided to send them to Carolina. He looked around for London merchants who would guarantee him payment in bills of 9, 12, and 15 months sight. He wrote to James Baillie who recommended he send his cargo to Messrs. Ball and Jennings of Charlestown, South Carolina, giving his guarantee saying; "*And we further promise that the sight of such bills for the ensuing session shall not exceed 9, 12, and 15 months JAMES BAILLIE*"

Hartley wrote a letter to James Penny, enclosing a copy of the guarantee, to be collected at St Kitts, ordering him to proceed to Charleston, to Messrs. Ball and Jennings. When Penny arrived Ball and Jennings would not accept the cargo on the terms of the guarantee, but only on bills at 15, 21, and 24 months. The cargo was sold, and bills drawn bearing the later dates for £23,245.18s; an average face value price of just over £33 per head on the total slaves purchased, 90 slaves having died on the middle passage.

When Penny arrived in Charleston he was unable able to see Ball or Jennings, but their representative, a Mr. Woodruffe, told him, "*that such was the state of affairs, that he could not take him up, on any other terms, than at bills for 15, 21, and 24 months.*" Penny protested that the terms did not conform to the guarantee but was told flatly "*that if he would not accept of those terms, he must seek some other consignee.*" Penny spent two days negotiating but he was over a barrel. He only had Baillie's guarantees and he could not trust his valuable cargo to another American house without security in England. So he was forced, under protest, to let

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them have the cargo on their terms. The cargo of about 550 slaves was sold at an average price of £56 per head on these terms.

<i>16 Bills at 15 months,</i>	<i>for,</i>	<i>£7645. 18s.</i>
<i>16 Bills at 21 months</i>	<i>for,</i>	<i>£7800.</i>
<i>16 Bills at 24 months</i>	<i>for,</i>	<u><i>£7800.</i></u>
<i>Total</i>		<i>£23,245.18s</i>

There is an inexplicable discrepancy between the number of slaves supposed aboard on landing, 611, and the number sold according to the trial evidence, 550. There is also a difference between the stated average price and the total remuneration, which could be accounted for by the consignees sale costs and their percentage on the sales and remittances.

Penny protested that other cargoes were being discharged on more favourable terms, for example to Calvert and Camden of London. But Ball and Jennings insisted that affairs had altered since the war and they would give him no other terms. In court Penny gave further details of the transaction. The sale took place in August 1784, and the goods were sold to the planters, to be paid for half in January 1785, and half in January 1786, on a bond given by the planter to the factor, bearing interest at 7 percent. The factor also took 5 per cent on the sales and 5 per cent on the remittances and thus it was in the factor's interests to sell the slaves on as long credit as possible, because the bonds bore interest until the money was paid.

William Camden was active in the London slave trade from 1776 to 1800 in partnership with Anthony Calvert. Their slaves were conveyed aboard John Anderson's vessel the *Alert* as was apparent from Calvert's evidence. When cross-examined Penny admitted that the extension of credit raised the average price and it was impossible to dispose of such a large cargo for ready money. He admitted £56 was a large amount but said that whilst in Charleston he had witnessed a cargo discharged for £60 per head. However these were from The Gambia and fetched £3 or £4 per head more than Angolan slaves. These were Thomas Hodgson's human cargo landed from the *Louisa*.³⁹ Penny also said that such was the demand for slaves at South Carolina, and the condition of his cargo, that the weakest slave he had fetched £35.

Counsel for Hartley said their client had asked Baillie to honour his guarantee, but he would honour the bills only as drawn on him by Ball and Jennings. They maintained their client had been deceived with serious consequences, even insolvency. He was entitled to the interest due on the money from the time that the notes would have become due according to Baillie's promises. Mr Wilding was called to give evidence of a previous transaction in which Baillie had refused to honour bills drawn at a shorter sight than he had agreed insisting on the terms of his guarantee. Wilding was a significant Liverpool slave trader in the period 1777 to 1790 for whom Penny had been master of a voyage aboard the vessel *Nicholson* in 1777 which had delivered slaves to Jamaica likely consigned to Baillie's Company in the West Indies.³⁰ He was also one of Miles Barber's former agents.

Counsel for Baillie tried to show that the long credit had increased the price by £10 per slave and the consigner could not expect to have it both ways. They also maintained that Penny had agreed new terms and the old ones were void. It emerged from depositions first heard in the Court of Exchequer in South Carolina, that opinions had been voiced that the sale had been advantageous for the owner of the ship but also that the province was in a confused state.

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“Mr. Calvert was called and declared, that in the whole length his time in the slave trade, he had never known a cargo of Negroes from Angola fetch as high a price as those of the **Count du Nor**, which was because they were sold on long credit. A cargo of slaves, he sent from the Gold Coast, worth £4 per head more than those from Angola, being sold at shorter credit, averaged no more than £55 per head. However, he agreed that at that time in South Carolina, there was a great demand for slaves, because the war had taken away great numbers.”

Some of these slaves had been induced by the British to join Black regiments to fight alongside American loyalists against the American revolutionaries. These loyal blacks now had nowhere to go and a scheme was hatched to relocate them to a province of freedom in Sierra Leone. Although moved initially to Nova Scotia, where they found themselves destitute in a harsh and unfamiliar environment, they would have been better advised not to listen to the blandishments of the promoters of the Sierra Leone project.⁶⁵

Another witness agreed that the difference in credit would have made £10 per head difference in price and the confusion in the province was so great, that the Courts of Justice was shut, and it was almost impossible to recover money on a bond as writs could not be issued; therefore, a good guarantee in London, was better than bills at a shorter credit. The difficulties of trading to Carolina in these immediate post war years highlighted by these witnesses seem to have killed the trade, at least from Liverpool. The Hodgson’s dispatched several vessels to Charleston in 1784 and 1785, but thereafter chose alternate destinations.³⁰

After the judges summing up the jury found for the Plaintiff, in the sum of £15,694, the amount of the two sets of bills due at nine and twelve months, plus interest. The third set, for £7800 at 15 months sight, was omitted because they were not yet due and conformed to the guarantee given.

In early July 1785 Samuel Hartley was sole registered owner of the 240 ton ship **Lion** for another voyage to Africa. As with the **Comt du Nord**, Hartley apparently organised this voyage and the next of the 220-ton ship **Tiger**, Captain John Connor, from London. The place of trade on the African coast is unknown but the vessel is supposed to have arrived in Santo Domingo in October 1786. Beyond the fact that it cleared London in October of 1785 nothing seems to be known about the destination or fate of the voyage. It is noticeable that after the voyage of the **Carolina** in 1782 all Hartley’s vessels clear from London and that after the voyage of the **Tiger** he had no further involvement in the independent registration of vessels. Hartley continued to be a major investor in several voyages made by the Hodgsons in the period 1787 to 1790, particularly **Eliza**, **Sally** and **Fly**, all of which cleared out of Liverpool.³⁰ The reason for this, Hartley’s initial operations out of Liverpool, the later move to operating out of London, followed by his part withdrawal from the trade to confine his interests to taking shares in several Hodgson vessels, is not hard to find. In two words, Miles Barber!

The Return of Miles Barber

Because of his bankruptcy Miles Barber put together no voyages registered in his own name, from the voyage of the **Young Hero** in 1778 until the voyage of the

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Bee towards the end of June 1785.³⁰ However, the suspicion is almost inescapable that the firm of Hartley & Co was a front for his continued operations. However, it is far from clear why Hartley's later voyages cleared from London for when Barber re-entered the trade he commenced operations again in Liverpool. Liverpool may have been too small a place and Miles Barber too well known to permit any such subterfuge. The 80-ton brig *Bee* sailed from Liverpool for Sierra Leone. It appears that the vessel was lost on the African coast.³⁰

Barber was also sole owner of the 70 ton ship *Lark*, Captain James Corbett, which left Liverpool for Sierra Leone and Cape Mount in September 1785. The vessel was reported at Cape de Verde in February 1786, and delivered 310 slaves to Dominica in February 1788. It left for Liverpool in April and arrived in May.³⁰ Barber too seems to have decided that there was little to be gained from the high risks involved in trading to Carolina.

Barber's vessel the *Speedwell*, an 85-ton Schooner, Captain Brownbill, left Liverpool for the Windward Coast in November 1785. Nothing is known of its fate after arriving on the African coast. Nor does it seem to be known what happened to the 250 ton ship *Caroline*, Captain J. Smith, once it had left London in May 1786 for Cape Mount.³⁰ Barber's 230-ton ship-rigged vessel *Dove*, Captain Thomas Eagles, left Liverpool for Cape Mount, Lahou and Anamobu in June 1786 and began slaving in October loading 385 slaves for St Vincent where it arrived on 31st of December completing the return voyage to London in July 1788.³⁰

Barber was co-owner with a Mr Birch of the 100-ton ship *Favourite*, Captain Thomas Holliday, which left Liverpool in August 1786 for Bonny delivering perhaps 500 slaves to Dominica in May 1787 and concluding in London on the of 28th July.³⁰ Barber also owned the *Hercules*, Arthur Bold, which left London in May 1786 for Anomobu, Cape Coast Castle, and Dixcove arriving on the coast around July 1786 and leaving in March 1788 with 400 slaves. 370 were delivered to Dominica on May 26th 1788. The ship left in June and returned to London in August 1788. This is a very slow voyage and it is difficult to explain if Miles Barber still has access to shore based factory facilities on the African coast. A noticeable feature of these renewed voyages is that they do not use The Gambia nor the Isles de Loss for embarkation. It appears that the Hodgsons acquired the Isles de Loss for their operations but when they acquired them from Barber is not known. The disposition of his voyages strongly suggest that they were not in his possession at this time.

The next voyage that Barber put together was in partnership with Josiah Hort, who was also captain of the vessel, *King Joe*, a 201-ton snow, a Spanish prize registered in Liverpool in 1786. The voyage left Liverpool in November 1786 for the Windward coast where it was reported well on March 26th 1787 but then was reported lost on the coast on September 13th 1788. Again the vessel was involved in a protracted stay on the coast. Josiah Hort seems to have made his way into the trade with the firm of James Sawrey & Co of Lancaster.¹² James Currie, the Liverpool physician, told tales out of school about Josiah Hort's apparently brutal behaviour in command of this vessel; "*tales of a deeper die than usual*", which he could not substantiate and was forced to withdraw.⁶⁶ There seems to be no surviving account of the story itself.

During 1786 and 1787 the winding up of the Barber, Sandys, White bankruptcy was still going on, with dividends continuing to be paid to the creditors.

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However on November 19th 1787 a notice appeared in the press⁶⁷ requesting that persons with claims on the estate of Miles Barber who had not yet rendered their accounts, particularly those who had claims on his property, were to furnish particulars without delay to solicitors in Blackfriars, Manchester and Liverpool, so that his debts and engagements could be ascertained. William Roscoe was aware of these events in the winter of 1787 when writing his pamphlet, *“On the Abolition of the Slave Trade; A General View of The African Slave-Trade, Demonstrating Its Injustice And Impolicy: With Hints Towards A Bill For Its Abolition.”* In discussing the general profitability of the trade Roscoe remarked that of 30 Liverpool slaving houses active since 1773 no less than twelve had gone bankrupt⁶⁸ and he concluded with a cryptic flourish; *“With respect to the private advantages which have been reaped from these foreign engagements, the recent fate of an eminent adventurer, who is generally allowed to be possessed of extraordinary mercantile talents; and the complaints of those industrious tradesmen who now, for the third time, lament the uncertain nature of the slave-trade, will be the most striking comment.”* There can be little doubt that these comments were intended to refer to Miles Barber’s 3rd bankruptcy. To those with more than a passing knowledge of the trade, the reference would have been blindingly obvious, and a potent symbol of his argument.

And so, at the end of 1787, Miles Barber’s affairs were signed over to trustees once again prior to the commencement of bankruptcy proceedings. It was not until April of 1790 that the first meeting of creditors was called to formally commence a Commission of Bankruptcy. Miles Barber, late of Lothbury in the City of London was to surrender on April 20th, at ten, and May 4th, and 15th, at nine, at the Guildhall.⁷⁰ A subsequent notice in May announced that the time for Miles Barber’s bankruptcy had been enlarged and he was now to surrender on June 5th.⁷⁰ A notice in July indicated that the affairs of Miles Barber and Samuel Hartley were seriously entangled for a meeting of the Assignees was called on the 28th July at the George and Vulture, Cornhill;⁷¹ *“in order to assent to or dissent from submitting to arbitration a claim on the estate made by Samuel Hartley. Also to submitting to arbitration certain claims made by the former trustees of the estate before the commission was issued in respect of wages, privileges and commissions of certain captains, agents and servants of the estate. Also the accounts of the ship **Hercules** dispatched to Africa under the direction of the creditors or any other ship or account of the bankrupt.”*

The assignees of Miles Barber’s estate were probably James Baillie, William Taylor and William Clay who were the registered owners of Miles Barber’s vessel **Hercules** when it sailed to the Isles de Loss from London in July 1789.³⁰ This was the only one of his vessels to visit the Isles de Loss at this time suggesting that his assignees had made their own arrangements. It is recorded as delivering 445 slaves to Dominica in February 1791, returning to Liverpool in June where it was sold to John Dawson. Dawson & Co. held the Spanish assiento, a contract to supply slaves to the Spanish colonies which was the cause of a certain amount of friction between the Liverpool merchants at the time. James Baillie was of a West India Merchant house based in Grenada and London. Less is known about the other assignees.

At this point Miles Barber seems to have fled to France, a not uncommon tactic, in order to avoid the demands of his creditors, and the possibility of

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imprisonment for debt as a much later notice in the Morning Chronicle in August 1795 shows.⁷²

“DIED. The 21st July, at Havre, of an apoplectic fit, in the 72d year of his age, Mr. Miles Barber, formerly a Merchant in Liverpool.”

Dividends on Miles Barber’s activities continued to be paid until the early 1800’s but meanwhile he was operating out of Le Havre. There is no evidence of this from vessel registration but there is evidence of his continued activity by the later presence of his son or nephew on the African coast and from a 1789 pamphlet; *“An Appeal to the Candour and Common Sense, Respectfully Addressed to the Members of both Houses of Parliament and the Community at Large.”* This appeared as a contribution to the slave trade debate on the side of the planters and merchants which attacked what it saw as Wilberforce’s mistaken views. In one passage the author, known only as *“An Individual of Little Note”* declares of Wilberforce;⁹¹

“He then tells you, ‘that it is not likely the French should carry on the African Trade if we abolish it.’ From whence does he draw this Conclusion? Is it from the Premium of eight Pounds per Head which the French pay on the Importation of Negroes into their Colonies? - Is it from the great Encouragement which they give to the fitting out of Ships for the Slave Trade from Havre; where Mr. --- a Bankrupt from Liverpool is absolutely established under the immediate Protection of Government for the purpose of forwarding the Trade to Africa?”

A number of vessels cleared Le Havre for Sierra Leone and the Isles de Loss between the years 1785 and 1790. The majority cleared in 1786, and one of the earliest was commanded by William Woodville the author of the then definitive maritime charts for the area around the Isles de Loss. Woodville prepared the first map of these islands about 1777 which were later published in a compilation (1799 *“The Volcanic Islands named Ilhas Dos Idolos and by the English and French Sailors Isles de Loss”*) including contributions from Robert Norris, William Woodville, Archibald Dalziel, and George Maxwell of Liverpool.⁷⁴ Norris and Dalziel would involve themselves prominently in the slave trade debates after 1787 on the side of the merchants. Woodville was first employed as a slave captain by Miles Barber in 1775 aboard the *Meredith* bound for the Isles de Loss, it may have been on this voyage that he prepared his maps.³⁰ Samuel Hartley had also employed Woodville in 1782. Woodville was a Liverpool slave merchant throughout 1760’s until going bankrupt in 1774. It seems that he may have assisted Miles Barber to set up his Havre operation, but caution is in order as William Woodville’s son William (Jr.), followed his father into the trade attaining his first command in 1787.⁷⁶

The voyages of the Hodgsons’ vessels *Heart of Oak*, *Fisher* and *Fly* were concentrated increasingly on the Isles de Loss and Sierra Leone areas and were typical of a number of Hodgson voyages from this time forward. The Hodgsons’ are believed to have operated a slave factory on the Isles de Loss and possibly another in the mouth of the Sierra Leone river; it is a moot point when these were acquired, since it has also been suggested they were the property of Miles Barber. It seems no great stretch to imagine that they were acquired when his business ran into difficulty.

Having brought up the subject of the Abolition Movement in Liverpool there is little left to do but run out the remaining voyages that the Hodgsons made in the

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period leading up to the momentous visit of Thomas Clarkson to Liverpool in pursuit of his investigation into the enormities of the slave trade.

In January 1787 the Hodgsons invested in the 186-ton ship, *Fisher*, with principal owners Ralph Fisher and James Kewley along with John Hewan, Joseph Cazneau, Ayton Martin, Thomas Dickinson and Patrick Kewley. The vessel traded at Sierra Leone and Cape Mount (see *Alert* below) and delivered 412 slaves to Grenada arriving back in Liverpool in April 1788.³⁰ The Hodgson brothers thus continued to invest in voyages put together by other Liverpool slaving houses. In early March 1787 the Hodgsons invested in the 93-ton Brig *Hope*. The principal owners were James Penny and Peter Rigby. James Penny, following his beginnings as a Captain in the trade, was now pursuing a career as an investor having invested in the *James* in 1780 and the *Madam Pookata* in 1785. The voyage was dispatched to Angola but apparently lost on the coast. Other investors included the Hodgsons, John Backhouse and William Rutson.³⁰

In mid March 1787 the Hodgson's were sole investors in the single masted 39-ton cutter, *Chance*, reported at Gambia in August 1787, but otherwise not heard from again and apparently condemned on the coast of Africa.³⁰ In April 1787, the Hodgsons invested in the newly built 31-ton, twin masted schooner *Alert*; other principle investors were Ralph Fisher and Thomas Dickinson and included Joseph Cazneau, Ayton Martin, John Hewan and Patrick Kewley. The fate of the vessel is unknown. It was reported well at Cape Mount in the on the 2nd of August and again on the 20th of August in company with the *Fisher*, Kendal, - in which the Hodgsons had an interest -, and the *Brothers*, Clark, another Ralph Fisher vessel.⁷⁸ Clark and Kendal exchanged vessels on the African coast. Kendal spent his retirement in the village of Caton.¹²

In May 1787, the Hodgson's vessel *Eliza*, William Garnett, master, was readied for another voyage having returned in December 1786. Slaves were to be procured at the Isles de Loss and 405 were sold in Granada in December 1787 and the vessel returned in late January 1788. The vessel had been re-registered at the end of March 1787, and the investors changed; Richard Capstick remained but Isaac Capstick and William Nielson apparently dropped out and were replaced by Samuel Hartley, his first investment in a Hodgson voyage since the *Charlotte* in 1782. On the 21st June 1787 the sloop *Mercer* with unchanged investors was dispatched to Africa having returned to Liverpool in May. On clearing again for Africa in June, under John Bellis, it was reported on the African coast in October,⁷⁸ and in December, as being "well at Africa to sail in 15 days".⁷⁹ In April it was reported to have been "cut off by the slaves on the Middle Passage and afterwards retaken by the African King, Bristol."⁸⁰ It returned with William Fell as captain in July of 1789.

In June 1787 the Hodgsons invested in James Penny's vessel *Madam Pookata* which sailed in July of 1787 for Angola to deliver some 192 slaves to Dominica in February 1788. This vessel first sailed for Africa in February 1783 with Thomas Leyland, James Penny and Thomas Hodgson as investors, and again in April 1785 and August 1786 with James Penny as the sole owner on each occasion bound for Angola. The first voyage was to Havana but subsequent voyages were to Dominica. Some details of the log of this voyage are in Williams⁸¹ and another log exists for a

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different voyage.⁸² The owners for this voyage were, as well as James Penny and the Hodgsons, Peter Rigby, William Rutson, John Backhouse and John Dixon. It returned to Liverpool in April 1788.

In July 1787, the Hodgsons invested in the large, 232-ton 2 deck ship *Thomas* a French prize condemned in Tortola in July 1783, and registered in Liverpool July 1787. The Investors were an interesting and unusual list; John Hodgson, Peter Kennion jnr., Joseph Matthews, Thomas Hodgson jnr., John Lightbody, Robert Norris, Edward Rogers, and Joseph Dattera. Some of these owners, such as John Lightbody, are not known slave traders. There is no record of the voyage and the vessel was condemned as unfit for service but no date was given. It may have been a rare investment in a trade unrelated to slavery.³⁸

At the end of August 1787 the Hodgson's invested in another James Penny, Peter Rigby voyage with the 130-ton single decked, ship rigged, *Shirburn Castle* which sailed for Angola in September 1787 delivering 211 slaves to the Bahamas at the end of August 1788 and returning to Liverpool in mid November 1788. In December 1788 the Hodgson brothers sold their shares in the vessel to James Penny.³⁸

In September 1787 the Hodgsons invested in the 2 deck ship rigged 190-ton *Tartar*. The principal investors were John Backhouse, John Kilvington, John Hughes, William Rutson, Henry Gardener, Charles Pole and Henry Butler. The registration indicates that Henry Butler was of Baltimore, and carried on trade in Great Britain as a partner of Henry Gardener and Charles Pole.³⁸ Few details are known of the voyage, which took slaves in Benin and delivered them to the British Caribbean returning to Liverpool in January 1789.³⁰ On October 1st 1787 the *Thynne* packet from Jamaica spoke the *Tartar*, Hughes 20 leagues west of the Isles of Scilly, all well.⁸³ On October 30th it was reported at Lisbon.⁸⁴ On October 23rd the *Tartar*, late Hughes, was reported arrived at Barbadoes.⁸⁵ At the same time, September 1787, the same group of investors registered the barely 10-ton 2 masted schooner *Little Tartar*. The vessel is not known to have made any slaving voyages and was clearly the tender for ship based trading for the previous vessel *Tartar*. The vessel was sold on the coast of Africa and her certificate of registration delivered up on June 17th 1789. Presumably no further voyages of the *Tartar* were planned.³⁸

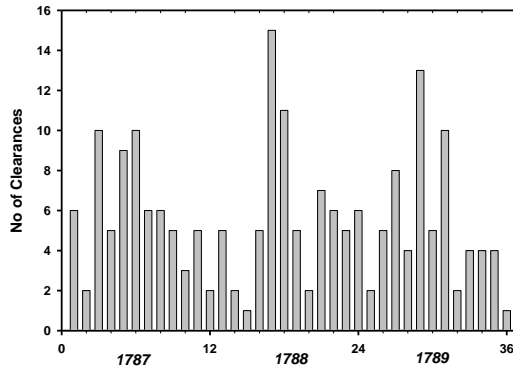
At the end of September 1787 the Hodgsons invested in the 223-ton twin decked, ship rigged *Juba* with a figurehead of a fiddle. The vessel seems to have been a replacement by William Rutson and John Backhouse of an earlier vessel of the same name. It was sold on in July 1790 to Michael Humble and others.³⁸ In mid October 1787 John and Thomas Hodgson sold 1/6 and 5/12 shares in the 93 ton cutter *Fly* to Richard Capstick and Samuel Hartley.³⁸ There is no reason these shares could not have been sold with the vessel at sea but there was time for this fast cutter to have made a triangular voyage. Richard Withering replaced the master Thomas Powell on 4th March 1788.³⁸ The first fully documented voyage was in 1789 when in April John Edson took over.³⁰

At the end of March 1788 the 216-ton Ship *Eliza* cleared Liverpool under master Thomas Huson and with the same ownership of the Hodgsons, Richard Capstick and Samuel Hartley. 315 slaves were delivered to Dominica in November of 1788 and the vessel returned to Liverpool at the end of February 1789.³⁰

Then on April 8th 1788 it was reported that the African trade in Liverpool was at a stand. Many vessels were fitting out for the West Indies instead of for Africa in

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anticipation of the abolition of the slave trade,⁸⁶ which could find them at sea conducting an illegal trade. This was the immediate result of the agitation begun by the London Committee for the Abolition of the Slave Trade who had enlisted the support of William Wilberforce to promote a bill for abolition in parliament. The evidence from the number of vessels clearing Liverpool for Africa shows that this was not wishful thinking or journalistic hype. In February and March the number of vessels clearing out of Liverpool fell to very low levels followed by a rapid resurgence once it was clear that abolition at any rate was unlikely to occur in the current parliamentary session. The pressure on the Liverpool slave traders had been building since the previous summer when Thomas Clarkson visited the town.



Liverpool clearances for Africa 1787 - 1789