

Akers Business Papers
(MS 999)

©Senate House Library
University of London
Ali Burdon
February 2002

Table of Contents

Table of Contents	p.2
Collection Level Description	p.3
MS999/1: Material arising from the family's general business and political dealings in the West Indies	p.6
MS999/2: Papers relating to the management of the Akers family estates in the West Indies	p.8
MS999/3: Papers relating to Aretas Akers' work as Receiver for Casual Revenue and Droits of Admiralty	p.11
MS999/4: Papers relating to the Tortola bond issue	p.12
MS999/5: Papers relating to the St Eustatius prize money	p.13
MS999/6: Papers relating directly to the proving of Aretas Akers' will	p.14
MS999/7: Papers relating to legal cases brought against the Akers' family	p.15
MS999/8: Personal and family papers	p.16

Name of Creator:

Akers, Aretas (1734-1785) plantation owner and Government agent in West Indies

Extent:

2 boxes

Administrative/Biographical History:

Aretas Akers was born on the island of St Kitts in 1734, the eldest son of Edmund Akers, a man of English descent, who owned land on St Vincent. Akers acquired his own estates on St Kitts, and much later, inherited his father's estates on St Vincent. Akers added to his position of strength and influence in the islands through his marriage to Jean Douglas, the niece of the Governor of the Leeward Islands. He maintained his connections with Great Britain - having his children educated in Scotland and England. Jean Douglas died in 1768, soon after the birth of her seventh child - Akers did not remarry.

As a substantial landowner on St Kitts and St Vincent, Akers played an important role in finance, business, trade and politics of the islands. The influence of his position is demonstrated by the fact that he was appointed 'Receiver of the Casual Revenue or Droits of Admiralty for the Leeward Carribee Islands' by the British government at the outset of the American War of Independence. This meant that he was responsible for the sale of ships and cargo captured during the war and distributed prize money to ships' crews. He was also appointed by Lord Rodney as one of the joint agents responsible for the distribution of prize money after the British conquered the island of St Eustatius in 1779.

Akers was also active in political life on St Kitts. He served as a representative on the legislative assembly, but resigned from this position in 1769 as a result of a dispute ostensibly over the Governor's attempt to prevent assembly members who also acted for the British Government from voting for new representatives. As a result of this, Akers and his 6 fellow protestors were jailed for more than a month. After his release Akers may have travelled to London to bring the matter before the House of Commons, although it is unclear what the result of this was. In time all seven members of the assembly were re-

elected to it. Akers also appears to have visited England in 1774 in order to protest against the war with America because of the effect that it would have had on trade in the West Indies.

Aretas Akers and his family left St Kitts in 1782 when the island was captured by the French. The family settled in England, but Akers travelled to Paris in order to petition the French government concerning a problem with the Stubbs estate on St Vincent. He spent the remaining three years of his life working to bring some order to his financial and business affairs which had been thrown into chaos as a result of British losses in the West Indies. He was in dispute with the British government concerning the sale of ships and cargo in Tortola, where as a result of the lack of availability of currency he had accepted bonds from purchasers rather than cash. The government regarded Akers as being responsible for the subsequent debts. The Government also had a large claim against him for Droits of Admiralty for Greenwich Naval Hospital, which received unclaimed and forfeited shares of prize money. His financial position had been further weakened by the effect that the War and poor weather conditions had had on the management of his estates and trade.

Akers died in 1785, and in his will vested his estate in Alexander Douglas, his two sons, Edmund Fleming Akers and Aretas Akers, and William Forbes in trust for his heirs. Edmund and Aretas Akers then began the long process of ordering their father's tangled affairs so that the terms of the will could be executed. This process continued for more than twenty years, Edmund Akers managing affairs in the West Indies, and Aretas Akers II working from London.

Custodial History:

These papers were deposited by Mr Richard Martineau in August 2000 and February 2001. Mr Martineau is a descendant of the Akers family.

Scope and Content:

The majority of this material consists of papers relating to the Akers family business interests in the West Indies, although there is a small amount of more personal material listed under MS999/8. Much of the material was created during the lifetime of the first Aretas Akers, but the annotations found on the majority of the documents demonstrate that the material has been subsequently used and re-used to bring order to the family's financial affairs and to fulfill the demands of

Aretas Akers' will.

System of Arrangement:

The collection is divided into eight sections:

MS999/1: Material arising from the family's general business and political dealings in the West Indies

MS999/2: Papers relating to the management of the Akers family estates in the West Indies

MS999/3: Papers relating to Aretas Akers' work as Receiver for Casual Revenue and Droits of Admiralty

MS999/4: Papers relating to the Tortola bond issue

MS999/5: Papers relating to the St Eustatius prize money

MS999/6: Papers relating directly to the proving of Aretas Akers' will

MS999/7: Papers relating to legal cases brought against the Akers' family

MS999/8: Personal and family papers

Access conditions:

Access to this collection is unrestricted for the purpose of private study and personal research within the supervised environment and restrictions of the Library's Palaeography Room. Uncatalogued material may not be seen.

Copying conditions:

Copies may be made, subject to the condition of the original. Copying must be undertaken by staff, who will need a minimum of 24 hours to process requests.

MS999/1	Material arising from the family's general business and political dealings in the West Indies	1766-1823
MS999/1/1	Memoranda from Aretas Akers to Edmund Fleming Akers concerning the management of his business affairs 2 items in envelope	c.1781
MS999/1/2	Letters from Aretas Akers I to the Rev. James Ramsay concerning the management of his business affairs Some mention of family matters. 6 items in envelope	1770-1782
MS999/1/3	Bonds issued by Aretas Akers to inhabitants of St Kitts 2 bonds 2 items in envelope	1779-1780
MS999/1/4	Account of the sales of the sloop George and its cargo 1 items in envelope	1766
MS999/1/5	"The humble petition and remonstrance of William Wharton, Joseph King, William Feuilleteau, Aretas Akers, Christopher Mardenbrough, Anthony Bryan and Henry Seaton, Esquires, presented to his Excellency William Woodley Esq." Heavily annotated by Akers 1 items in envelope	1769
MS999/1/6	Letters from H Douglas-Moirou to Aretas Akers II concerning business affairs with Turnbull Forbes Relating to the management of the Akers estates in the West Indies 3 items in envelope	1823

MS999/1/7 Papers relating to Aretas Akers II's business partnership with George Rigby 1791-1793

Deed of dissolution of partnership (1791); assignment of Akers family debts from Rigby to Akers (1792); assignment of slaves from Rigby to Akers (1793).

3 items in envelope

**MS999/2 Papers relating to the management of the 1777-1810
Akers family estates in the West Indies**

This section is divided into 2 sub-sections

MS999/2A: Estates on St Vincent

MS999/2B: Estates in St Kitts

MS999/2A Estates on St Vincent 1778-1810

MS999/2A/1 Papers relating to the Stubbs estate (formerly Coubaimarou) 1778-1801

James Ramsay's statement on the dispute over the estate; Aretas Akers II's statement in French; a letter from William Greig to Aretas Akers; agreement concerning Aretas Akers II and Robert Houston; letter from David Mecier to Aretas Akers II concerning estate management; appraisement giving lists of slaves and an assessment of assets; accounts (8 sets).

15 items in envelope

MS999/2A/2 Papers relating to the management of the Layou estate 1782-1801

Letter from Malcolm McGregor to Aretas Akers II; sale notice for the Layou estate; appraisement of the estate made by Edmund Fleming Akers.

3 items in envelope

MS999/2A/3 Appraisement of the Olivees estate 1801

Giving lists of slaves and an assessment of assets.

1 items in envelope

MS999/2A/4 Accounts with MacDowall and McFarlane for the transport and sale of sugar 1804-1810

4 items in envelope

MS999/2A/5 Aretas Akers II's papers relating to the management of estates on St Vincent 1797-1809

Agreement with Alexander McDowall relating to the Park Hill estate; draft release of Monkton's Land to Edmund Fleming Akers; receipt for mortgage payment from Edmund Akers; papers relating to Daniel McDowall's mortgage.

6 items in envelope

MS999/2B	Estates on St Kitts	1777-1787
MS999/2B/1	Letters to Aretas Akers from Fred Vouga reporting on business affairs 6 letters and 1 part letter. 7 items in envelope	1782
MS999/2B/2	Papers relating to business dealings with Joseph Yellooly Note of hand to Aretas Akers II; deposition concerning estate management. 2 items in envelope	1781; 1787
MS999/2B/3	Letter from Aretas Akers to an unknown correspondent concerning various estates 1 items in envelope	1777

- | | | |
|------------------|---|--------------------|
| MS999/3 | Papers relating to Aretas Akers' work as Receiver for Casual Revenue and Droits of Admiralty | c.1775-1782 |
| | | |
| MS999/3/1 | General instructions on the work of the Casual Revenue Receiver issued by the British government
Copy. | c.1775 |
| | 1 items in envelope | |
| | | |
| MS999/3/2 | Letters from Camille Charles, Chevalier de Fresne, to Aretas Akers I concerning Droits of Admiralty payments
13 letters and a later label reading "Mons. Dufresne's orders and correspondence w. Aretas Akers Esq. respecting money to be paid as French Prizemoney". | 1782 |
| | 14 items in envelope | |
| | | |
| MS999/3/3 | Papers concerning prize money due to Greenwich Hospital
Orders issued by Arthur, Comte Dillon and the Chevalier Dufresne, and a receipt issue by Fennel of Dillon's regiment in respect of money owed to the hospital. French, with English translations. | 1782 |
| | 12 items in envelope | |
| | | |
| MS999/3/4 | A list of Prizes captured by English ships for which Aretas Akers I was agent
This list was probably compiled by Edmund Fleming Akers | c.1783 |
| | 1 items in envelope | |
| | | |
| MS999/3/5 | Copy extracts of Casual Revenue accounts
For Leeward Islands, Virgin Islands and Antigua, with extracts of correspondence relating to the accounts. | 1778-1781 |
| | 5 items in envelope | |

MS999/4	Papers relating to the Tortola bond issue	1779- c.1790
MS999/4/1	Extracts of letters between Edmund Fleming Akers, Aretas Akers and Aretas Akers II Concerning the government's investigations into events in Tortola 3 items in envelope	1785-1786
MS999/4/2	Papers relating to the case brought by Harry Webb against Aretas Akers and his executors Draft memorial drawn up by Aretas Akers II; James Ramsay's statement in relation to the case; a letter from Rose to Stanley. 3 items in envelope	c.1790
MS999/4/3	Bonds, receipts for bonds and lists of bonds taken as Droits of Admiralty 2 original receipts (1779); 1 copy receipt (original dated 1784); 1 copy bond; 2 lists of bonds. 6 items in envelope	1779-c.1790

- | | | |
|------------------|---|------------------|
| MS999/5 | Papers relating to the St Eustatius prize money | 1781-1787 |
| | | |
| MS999/5/1 | Papers relating to legal cases arising out of the capture of St Eustatius
Aretas Akers' unfinished response to a bill in Chancery relating to the case; outline of the case for the opinion of the King's Advocate; letter from Stephen Lushington to Aretas Akers II giving notice of the army's intention to appeal; agreement for sale of a captured schooner. | 1781-1787 |
| | 3 items in envelope | |
| MS999/5/2 | Financial papers relating to the sale of ships and prize money
Bond; memoranda of monies due (2); agreement for sale of a captured schooner. | 1781-1787 |
| | 5 items in envelope | |

MS999/6	Papers relating directly to the proving of Aretas Akers' will	1783-1815
MS999/6/1	Statements of cases and legal opinion 4 items in envelope	1787-1791
MS999/6/2	Papers relating to Aretas Akers II's dealings with John Houston Akers 2 items in envelope	1796-1802
MS999/6/3	Agreements, accounts and legal bills 8 items in envelope	1788-1815
MS999/6/4	Receipts for bond payments made by Aretas Akers II Many of these are made to other members of the Akers family, and some appear to arise out of the administration of George Alexander Akers' will. 29 items in envelope	1797-1802
MS999/6/5	Wrappers used to identify bundles The wrappers generally are annotated in different hands in relation to the development of the Akers family affairs. 17 items in envelope	1783-1799

MS999/7	Papers relating to legal cases brought against the Akers' family	1781-c.1786
MS999/7/1	Letter from Richard Brathwaite to Aretas Akers II concerning a case brought by Brathwaite and his ship's crew	1784
	1 items in envelope	
MS999/7/2	Papers relating to a case brought by Simon Fraser	c.1786
	5 items in envelope	
MS999/7/3	Papers relating to a case brought by Henry Berkeley	1781
	2 sets of notes concerning the case; Aretas Akers' instructions to his lawyers on the matter.	
	3 items in envelope	

MS999/8	Personal and family papers	1766-1893
MS999/8/1	Aretas Akers' passport	1784
	1 items in envelope	
MS999/8/2	Receipts relating to payment of interest on annuities owned by Aretas Akers II	1799-1813
	49 items in envelope	
MS999/8/3	Papers appearing to relate solely to Aretas Akers II's business and personal affairs	1790-1812
	2 letters; 6 miscellaneous receipts in name of Mrs Akers; 7 receipts of rent payments on Burlington House, Tonbridge in the name of Mrs Akers; agreement concerning his marriage; 3 loan agreements; statement of account.	
	20 items in envelope	
MS999/8/4	The will and probate documents of Jonas Akers	1796-1797
	1 items in envelope	
MS999/8/5	Letter from Rev J Ramsay to his nephew James Walder	1786
	Giving avuncular advice. Also biographical notes on James Ramsay.	
	2 items in envelope	
MS999/8/6	Bundle of papers belonging to Sir Charles Middleton, the Constable of the Navy and relating to his work	c.1783
	Material relating to the arrest of Major General Stuart; the governance of India; the management of the navy	
	11 items in envelope	

MS999/8/7 Photocopies of Akers family letters

1766-1783

Correspondence between:

Correspondence between:
Jane Akers and her children; Aretas Akers and
James Ramsay; Aretas Akers and Edmund Fleming
Akers; Aretas Akers and Aretas Akers II.

32 items in envelope

**MS999/8/8 Photocopy of "Aretas Akers I and St Kitts" by M
E Cator**

1893

An account of the family of Aretas Akers based on the letters listed elsewhere. It was written for a

family magazine of the descendents of the Akers family. With material added by Richard Martineau consisting of a family tree, copies of family portraits and a copy of Jonas Akers' will.

3 items in envelope