

# James Townson letters

James Townson letters

1833-1846



WILLIAM  
& MARY

CHARTERED 1693

## Title Statement

James Townson letters Guide to the James Townson letters SC 01621

**Author:** Christina R. Luers, CA

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spcoll@wm.edu

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## Descriptive Summary

**Unit ID**

SC 01621

**Unit ID**

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**Unit Date**

1833-1846

**Language**

English

**Creator**

Townson, James

**source**

Michael Brown Rare Books, LLC

**Extent**

0.05 Linear Feet

**Repository**

Special Collections Research Center

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## Scope and Contents

Collection of 33 letters which detail the economic issues concerning the effective production on a sugar plantation in Kingston, Jamaica immediately after the abolition of slavery in that country. Included in the correspondence is a period of time referred to as the "apprentice" system which was not a successful endeavor.

The letters span a period of 13 years and follow the progress of the plantation that Townson managed for absentee owners. They detail his disillusionment with the English government, the failed efforts of the apprentice program, to the final failure of the plantation as a whole. Townson ultimately brokered the sale of the plantation as a failed enterprise and received no personal reimbursement from the absentee owners despite his lien on the property. He ultimately blamed the absentee owners for the failure of the business stating: "Our misfortune is that the Land is owned by absentees who cannot bring their mind's eye to view the changes going on and... Are always willing to be flattered by the hope of changes for the better than could only be carried through some magical power."

Townson was also disillusioned slightly by Emancipation as a whole because the new wages they were required to pay their laborers could not sustain the new expenses hence the newly freed individuals found themselves now with no wages to support themselves since the plantation had failed.

## Keywords

Sugar plantations

Slaves -- Emancipation

Jamaica--History--19th century

## Description of Subordinate Components

### **Letters, 1833-1839**

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/300781

**Mixed Materials** SC Box 113 (Box)

**Container** 1 (folder)

**Language** English

### **Letters, 1840-1842, March**

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/647659

**Mixed Materials** SC Box 113 (Box)

**Container** 2 (Folder)

**Language** English

### **Letters, 1842, May-1844, June**

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/647660

**Mixed Materials** SC Box 113 (Box)

**Container** 3 (Folder)

**Language** English

### **Letters, 1844, July - 1846**

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/647661

**Mixed Materials** SC Box 113 (Box)

**Container** 4 (Folder)

**Language** English