

WILLIAM BLIGH'S ORIGINAL MANUSCRIPT RUTTER DESCRIBING HIS NAVIGATION IN THE CARIBBEAN AND A QUOTE MENTIONING CAPTAIN JAMES COOK.

Bligh (William) (1754-1817). Original manuscript entitled "Remarks by Lieut Willm Bligh," inscribed on front cover concerning navigation in the West Indies, and with a MANUSCRIPT MAP. Inscribed on the inner front cover is a dedication to "To the Right Honble Lord Howe with a Plan of the Harbour of Lucca in Jamaica & view of part of Cuba," 9 pages, 4to, laid paper, sewn, (some light wear at fore-edges). preserved in a half calf box, [ca. 1782].

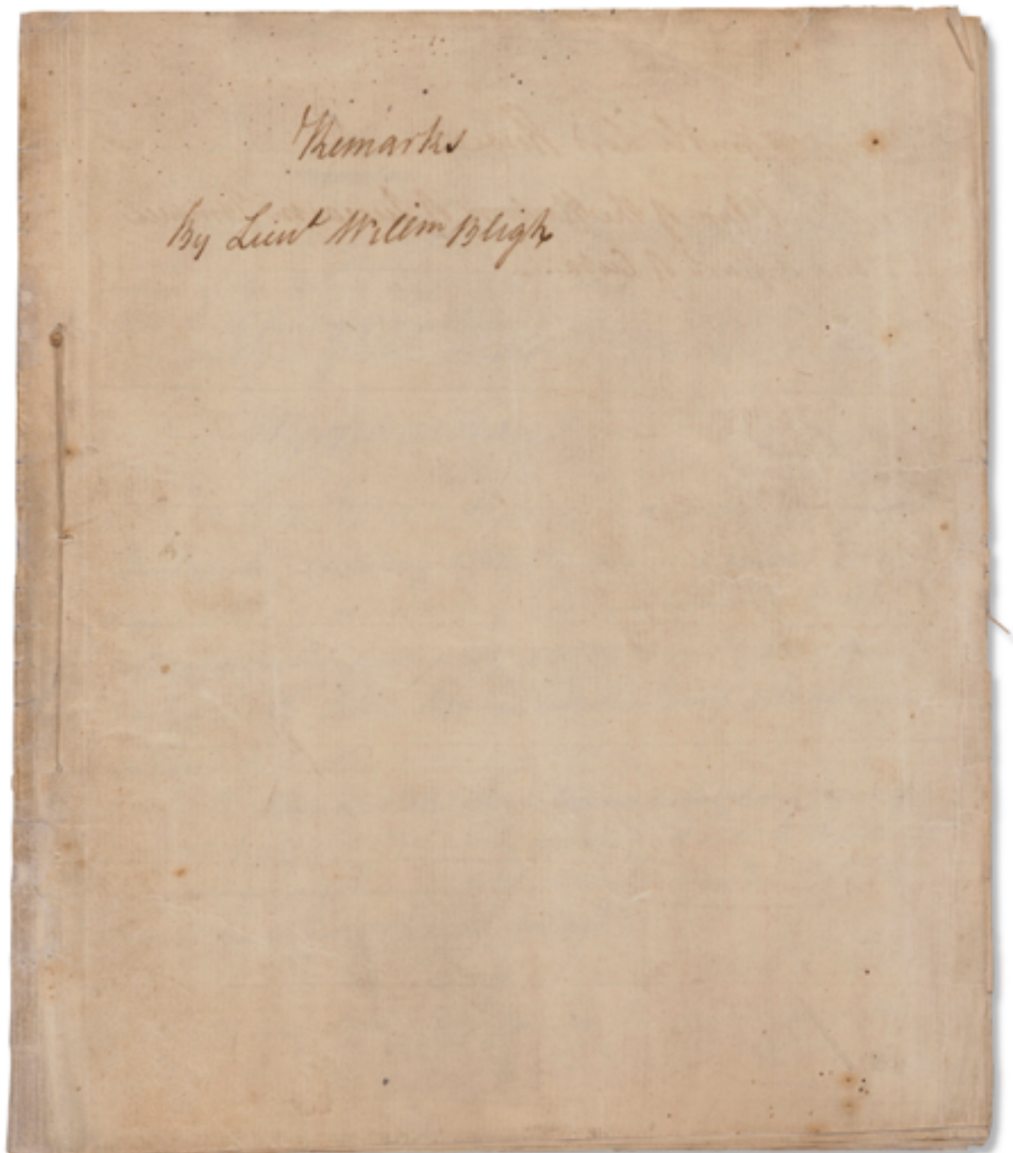
£125,000

Provenance:

Marquess of Sligo, sold at the sale of the Howe papers.

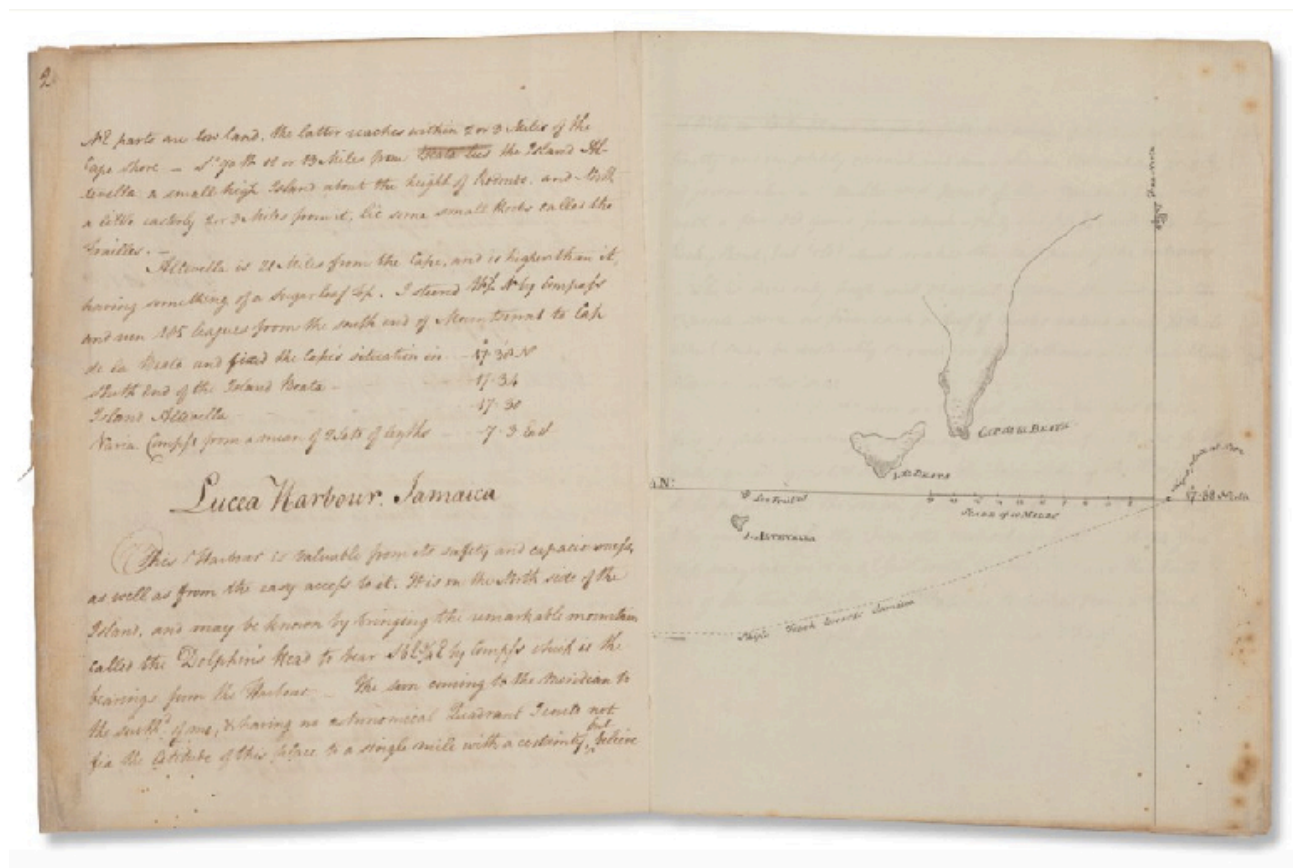
Spiro Family Collection.

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"I MAY BE PARTICULAR IN RECOMMENDING SO STRENUOUSLY THE LEAD IN GOING THROUGH THE GULPH, BUT I HAVE EXPERIENCED SUCH VAST ASSISTANCE FROM IT IN CAPTAIN COOK'S LAST HAZARDOUS VOYAGE THAT I WOULD RECOMMEND TO EVERY NAVIGATOR NEVER TO NEGLECT IT"

A VERY FINE RUTTER BY WILLIAM BLIGH, DESCRIBING THE PARTICULARITIES OF NAVIGATION IN THE WEST INDIES.



The rutter starts with,

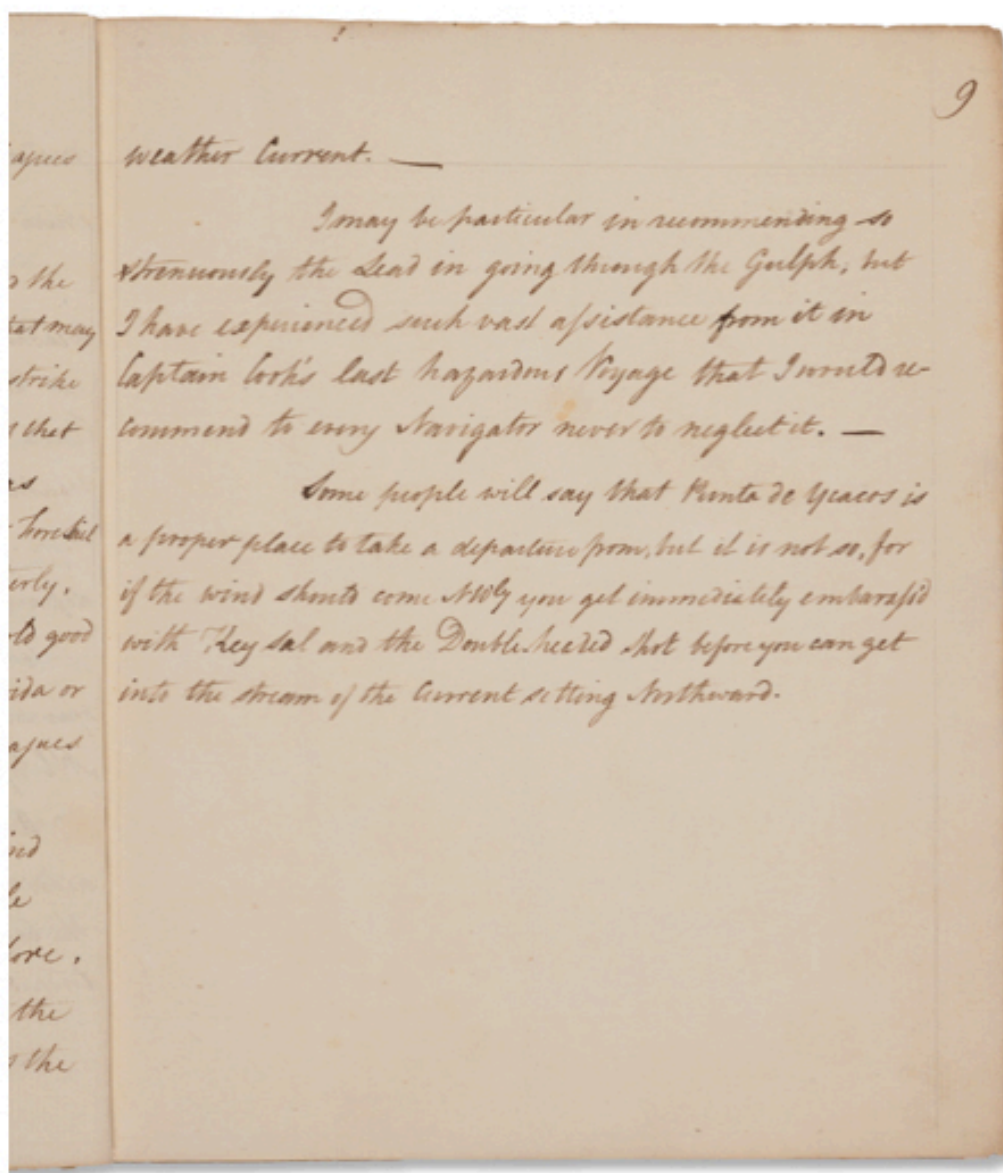
“Remarks.

Passing the Carribee Islands, I found the situation of the island Defseada (Desirade Island, West of Guadeloupe) to be in 16°.16N.

The North Part of Grand Terre, (Eastern Guadeloupe) 16°. 27 N.

The Southend of Montserrrat, 16.44 N-62°.13.W. “

Bligh's manuscript is divided into 5 sections: "Hyspaniola," "Lucca Harbour, Jamaica," "Grand Camana," "Isle of Pines" and "Gulph of Florida." Bligh describes the topography, bearings and trade of the islands, and makes particular note of the navigational factors involved, including rocks, current and water depth. Regarding Lucca Harbor in Jamaica, he notes that it is "valuable from its safety and capaciousness, as well as from the easy access to it." Facing his description of Lucca Harbor is a full-page manuscript map, showing details around 17° 34' N. Drawn are the Cap de la Beata, Isle de Beata, Les Frailles and Isle Aletevella, as well as the ship's track toward Jamaica. Bligh notes that Grand Cayman is "so low that it cannot be seen above 20 leagues from the deck of a small ship."



To
The Right Honble Lord Howe
with a Plan of the Harbour of Lucca in Jamaica
& view of part of Cuba.

Remarks

Passing the Carribee Islands. From the situa-
tion of the Island appears to be in N. 16. N.
The South part of Grand Tort. 16. 37. N.
The South end of Annettoe. 16. 33. N. 82. 15. W.

Hispaniola

Cape de la Beata (or Bejae Cape) is the southernmost part of
Hispaniola. - Making it from the eastward it appears like a
small Island of moderate height, and may be mistaken for the
Island of St. Domingo, particularly with the present charts of this
part, where the Island Beata is laid down South of the Cape and
St. Domingo to the S.W. which is very erroneous.

The land next the Cape is low and rather flat and of very
moderate height with little above, and the part next the Cape to
the westward about one mile has several small steep cliffs. The
interior parts are very mountainous.

From the Cape St. Domingo (or St. Domingo) is the south
end of the same land. This Island in this direction appears like
a bridge, the southern end being the thick part of it. - The West end

it to be in 18. 25. N. and longitude from an Eclipse of the which I dis-
tinctly and completely observed, and some Lunar Observations 70. 2. W.
of Greenwich. - On the west point of this Harbour is a fort
with a few old guns, from which St. Domingo is a low
barren point (but low) which makes the East part of the entrance.

Ships need only keep mid channel between the fort and the
opposite shore, as from each a reef of rocks extends about 1/2 mile
which may be distinctly observed, or fine galleons will keep them
clear on either side.

As soon as they get within the fort there is
fine regular soundings, and may anchor from five to six fathoms
water in the greatest safety. - The East side of the Bay is
to be preferred in the season of the North for smooth water, but
to be convenient for the town, the West side is best. - A 7th gun
ship may ride in 5 or 6 fms. with the fort. N.W. and the South
end of the town to the East. - Water is to be had from a pump
about a cables length from the southernmost Wharf.

Grand Camana

The last end of this Island lies in $19^{\circ}25'$ and anchoring my long from Lucas in Jamaica in $20^{\circ}53'$ of Greenwich.

The southernmost extremity is in $19^{\circ}15'$ and not in $19^{\circ}21'$ as described in the Book of directions by Mr. Romans. - The Land is low, so that it cannot be seen above a league from the Deck of a small ship and long from the Head Wind. - I was well informed by the People who came off to me, that there are good waters here to the left, or within a cables length of them all around the Island. - From the South side within 2 Miles of the shore, and had many Cannoes off to one selling Turtle about 10 Miles from the Point of the South end of the Island. - The distance is nearly 50 leagues.

Isle of Pinos

If you want to make this Island from the Grand Camana, you must steer $NW\frac{1}{2}W$ by Compass, taking care not to get to the northward of $21^{\circ}25'$ that being the situation of the South end of the Island. - The distance is nearly 50 leagues.

With this course you may discover whether a Lee or a Weather current is running, as the former will encrease your nothing, and the latter decrease it. that is your course will give you less difference of latitude with a Lee current and more with a weather one than your Observation at Sea. - With these precautions there is no fear of the Land, and if the Isle of Pinos is not seen after running 50 leagues steer $W\frac{1}{2}S$ by Compass for Cape Antonio, which you may double and burn down as you like, or the Wind will allow, attending to the alterations that lie to the NW 13 or 14 leagues of the Cape. -

Gulph of Florida

After doubling Cape Antonio your Sacks may be governed by your latitude, keeping between $24^{\circ}30'$ and $25^{\circ}20'$ as far as the Havana, and as soon as possible make the Cuban Land for if you have sight of it you cannot be led astray by the Current which runs at times 4 or 6 Miles an Hour, and may carry you before you are aware of it among the Keys of Punta de Yucas.

It is therefore absolutely necessary if you fall in with the Cuba shore at night and are uncertain what part of it it is, to haul your wind and stand on till daylight, and not to run the risk of standing on to the eastward (should the wind allow) where you may be embroiled among the Islands off Punta de Yucas as I have mentioned, the Current setting strong between them, down the Channel of Bahama.

The Islands off Punta de Yucas can only be seen 6 leagues from the Head of a small ship. Some of them lie to the northward of the Point the northernmost of which is the smallest. - From these I & $SW\frac{1}{2}W$ not SW as laid down in Romans Chart lie a number of other small Islands about 20 in Number.

Romans Chart has the northernmost of the Islands off the Point laid down in lat $25^{\circ}22'$ & there is it is about 3 leagues farther south for I observed at Sea in $25^{\circ}22'$ when it bore NW distant about 3 or 4 leagues.

Within the Islands the land of Cuba is low and

increases gradually in height towards the Matanzas & Havana where it is very Mountainous. -

The first time I ever went through the Gulph it being thick Weather, I passed the Havana & Port of Matanzas land with out knowing of it (the Wind $SW\frac{1}{2}W$) until I got close in with Punta de Yucas, when I found it the greatest difficulty to weather the Islands the Current setting so strong in among them. - I therefore recommend the old Plan of taking a departure from the Port of Matanzas, or land near it, bringing it to bear SW by Compass & steer $NW\frac{1}{2}W$ by Compass until you are as far north as the Carryford Leaf or $25^{\circ}00'$ then NW by Compass will carry you through. -

A NW course may appear too far to the Left, but it will never be found so, for I have experienced, that after passing the latitude of the Double headed shot the Current throws you towards the Shalops.

The Double headed shot are low and make in a current

Bligh reserves his most extensive remarks for the Gulf of Florida, traveling there by way of Cuba: "keeping as far as the Havanna, and as soon as possible make the Cuba Land for if you have sight of it you cannot be led astray by the Current which runs at times to 16 miles an hour, and may carry you before you are aware of it among the Keys off Punta de Yeacos. It is therefore absolutely necessary if you fall in with the Cuba shore at night and are uncertain what part of it it is, to haul your wind and stand on off till daylight and not to run the risk of standing on to the eastward (should the wind allow) where you may be embarrassed among the Islands off Punta de Yeacos as I have mentioned, the Current setting strong between them, down the old Channel of Bahama." Bligh details his troubles the first time he went through the Gulf (in "thick weather") and provides an alternate plan to avoid his experience. His warning is summarised with a reference to his last great ship-master: **"I may be particular in recommending so strenuously the Lead in going through the Gulph, but I have experienced such vast assistance from it in Captain Cook's last hazardous Voyage that I would recommend to every Navigator never to neglect it."** Some five years after the composition of this manuscript, Bligh was given his own command aboard the *Bounty*.

Bligh's manuscript most likely dates to circa 1782, as this was the year that Sir Richard Howe was created a peer and the period in which Bligh sailed under him. Bligh's reputation as a navigator was made during Captain James Cook's third voyage of circumnavigation aboard the *Resolution* in 1776-80.

Bligh entered the service of Sir Duncan Campbell a Jamaican Plantation owner in the West Indian trade of Sugar, Rum and Slavery. He sailed on many of his merchant ships in the Caribbean and remained in the Jamaica trade for four years. Bligh's base when he was not on his ship, was at Green Island Harbour less than 20 miles from Lucea, the attractive old 18th-century town.

During the year of 1785, Bligh took command of one of Campbell's Ships the 'Britannia'. With a full complement of crew and ready to sail he received a letter from Captain Tauberman, recommending Mid-Shipman Fletcher, Christian as a crew member, Bligh replied back informing Tauberman that with regret that there was no place for him.

Fletcher Christian on hearing this news now wrote directly to Bligh, asking him to change his mind 'wages are no object; I only wish to learn my profession ...' with your-self. To Bligh this seemed to be in the right spirit and Christian's persistence paid off. Bligh replied to him that he would on these terms, be working as a Rating. THIS WAS THE FIRST ENCOUNTER BLIGH AND CHRISTIAN SAILED TOGETHER BEFORE THE VOYAGE ON THE 'BOUNTY'.

Details of Bligh's voyages undertaken for Duncan Campbell were reported in Lloyds Shipping Register and in the press.

Campbell was also deeply involved with Joseph Banks, in transporting British convicts to the colonies of Australia. In fact Banks original plan was for the breadfruit voyage to drop off convicts in Botany Bay and then proceed to Tahiti for the breadfruit. Campbell owned a series of politically untenable prison hulks on the Thames which he emptied by shipping his human chattel to the Pacific. Banks helped co-ordinate these early settlements, including the trade of women and plants to encourage white Australian domestication.

Campbell and his staff were responsible for the check listing and despatching of prisoners to ship's captains for transportation to eastern Australia and the First Fleet left Portsmouth for Botany Bay on 13 May 1787. Campbell was also responsible for delivering convicts for the Second and Third Fleets in 1789 and 1791. He was an important link in this penal system.

There are also noteworthy family links between Duncan Campbell and Captain William Bligh, who married Campbell's niece, Elizabeth Betham, in 1781.