Preliminary Guide to the Slavery Era Insurance Documents

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Collection number: Wyles Mss 97

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Date Completed:
Aug. 15, 2008

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Descriptive Summary
Title: Slavery Era Insurance Documents
Dates: ca. 1846-1860, 2001-2002
Collection number: Wyles Mss 97
Collection Size: 0.9 linear feet (3 oversize boxes).
Repository: University of California, Santa Barbara. Library. Dept. of Special Collections
Santa Barbara, CA 93106

Abstract: Photocopies of documents collected by the State of California Insurance Department in pursuance of California Code Regulations, Title 10, Sections 2293-2398, which required insurance companies to provide documentation about insurance polices from the slavery era which coverage for slaveholders for damage to or death of their slaves.

Physical location: Del Sur Oversize.

Languages: English

Access Restrictions
None.

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Preferred Citation
Slavery Era Insurance Documents. Wyles Mss 97. Department of Special Collections, Davidson Library, University of California, Santa Barbara.

Acquisition Information
Donation from California Department of Insurance, May 2002.

History
In August 2000 the California legislature found that "Insurance polices from the slavery era had been discovered in the archives of several insurance companies, documenting insurance coverage for slaveholders for damage to or death of their slaves, issued by a predecessor insurance firm. These documents provide the first evidence of ill-gotten profits from slavery, which profits in part capitalized insurers whose successors remain in existence today." SB2199 Sec. 1 (a). Governor Davis signed the bill (SB2199) into law, September 2000. This legislation had been introduced by then Senator Tom Hayden in May 2000. The statute took effect January 1, 2001. California Code Regulations, Title 10, Sections 2293-2398 implement the statute.

The regulation required carriers to submit the requested data by October 13, 2001, the effective date of the regulation. Reports were to be provided on paper with names of slaves and slaveholders to be provided to the Department in an electronic format as well. A vast majority of responses indicated, in some fashion, that as the insurer it had been
incorporated sometime after the end of the defined slavery era and since there was no predecessor company that existed during the applicable period, that the insurer had nothing to report.

The Department also received a few responses indicating that the company or its predecessor was doing business during the applicable period, and conducted a thorough search of its archives and records, but was unable to find responsive information or documents. A variation of this response was that the insurer had nothing to report.

The insurers listed in the report and register, were able to locate and provide the California Department of Insurance, information and/or records responsive to the regulation. To date, the compliance response rate is approximately 92%. The department is continuously in contact with insurers that have either not responded or that have not responded completely.


Scope and Content of Collection

The Slavery Era Documents are photocopies donated by the California Department of Insurance. The documents are arranged in the following two series:

Arrangement

Series I: Slavery Era Insurance Registry. This series contains one folder, which includes the official report (important when interpreting insurer correspondence) and the Slavery Era Insurance Registry. The registry was created by the California Department of Insurance, from data reported by insurance companies in compliance with SB 2199. The Slavery Era Insurance Registry contains the slave registry and legislation passed by the California Legislature. This legislation establishes guidelines for reporting any records of slave insurance policies issued by any insurance company and its predecessor during the slavery era (defined as prior to 1865). The series also contains a donation letter listing other California institutions and state depositories that received the Slavery Era documents.

Series II: Insurance Companies. This series includes the insurers responses to California Code of Regulations, Title 10, Section 2394, requiring all insurance companies doing business in California on or after January 1, 2001 to submit reports documenting their activity during the slavery era. This series is arranged alphabetically by insurance company names. The container list for this series includes dates (ca. 1800s) of original document copies from insurers and their most current correspondence (2000-2001) with the California Department of Insurance. These documents include correspondence, insurance ledgers, slave premiums, slave policies, minutes from board meetings and some copies of book texts that provide details of insurer policies during the slavery era. Some insurance companies did not write slave policies and had no data to report, while other companies like ACE USA, AIG, AETNA, Manhattan Life, New York Life, Penn Mutual, and Royal Sun Alliance include more detailed accounts of their companies past participation or non participation of insuring slaves. AETNA submitted copies of seven slave policies that had been written during the late 1840s to 1860. New York Life submitted archival records from its predecessor Nautilus Insurance Company, which includes copies from three separate ledgers, copies from Index of Applicants, and copies from its Death Claim Book, and the following exhibits: Exhibits A-1, Exhibit A-3, Exhibit B, and Exhibit C.

Additions to the collection are anticipated.

Indexing Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the library's online public access catalog.

Shepard, Isaac F. (Isaac Fitzgerald), 1816-1889
United States--History--Civil War, 1861-1865--African Americans.

Legislation

Official California Legislative Information website: http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/, maintained by Legislative Counsel. Search this website for more details on SB 2199 and SB 1737 (mandates that the University of California sponsor research colloquia to explore and identify the issues related to the economic legacy of slavery). This legislative database provides bill history, text, votes, and analyses. When searching for SB 2199 and SB 1737 select sessions held during 1999 to 2000.

Slavery Era Registry

http://www.insurance.ca.gov/docs/FS-SEIR.htm
Includes official report, Slavery Era Insurance Registry, and locations of public viewing rooms in Los Angeles and San Francisco.

Slavery Era Document Locations
Copies of the Slavery Era Insurance documents from the California Department of Insurance also are available at: UC-Berkeley, UC-Davis, UC-Los Angeles, UC- San Diego and UC- Santa Cruz, Alameda Public Library, Los Angeles Public Library, San Francisco Public Library, Santa Clara, San Diego and the California State Library in Sacramento.

Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database

*The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade.* CD-ROM. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1999. A comprehensive database that provides information about the 27,233 slave voyages to the New World between 1527 and 1866. This resource is available in UCSB’s Davidson Library with the following call number: HT 1322.T656 1999.

**Series 1: Slavery Era Insurance Registry**

**Scope and Content Note**
The official report offers definitions, statutes, and descriptions of data received from various insurance companies that are important when interpreting the insurers' correspondence between the California Department of Insurance.

**Box 1: 1**

Slavery Era Insurance Registry, 2002

**Series 2: Insurance Companies**

**Scope and Content Note**
The dates include original document copies from insurers and their correspondence with the California Department of Insurance.

Box 1: 2

ACE USA, 1855, 2002
Box 1: 2

AETNA, 1854-1858, 1860, 2001-2002
Box 1: 2

AIG, 1852, 2001
Box 1: 2

American General Assurance, 2002
Box 1: 2

Atlantic Mutual Companies, 2001
Box 1: 3

CNA, 2001
Box 1: 3

Crum & Foster, 2001
Box 1: 3

CSA Fraternal Life, 2001
Box 1: 3

Equitable, 2001-2002
Box 1: 3

Factory Mutual Insurance Company (FM Global), 2001
Box 1: 3

Fireman’s Fund, 2001
Box 1: 3

General Reinsurance Corporation, 2001
Box 1: 3

Guardian Life Insurance, 2002
Box 1: 3

Hartford Fire Insurance Company, 2001
Box 1: 3

Manhattan Life Insurance Company, 1854, 2001
Box 1: 3

Mass Mutual Financial Group, 2001-2002
Box 1: 3

MetLife, INC, 2001
Box 1: 3

MONY Life Insurance Company, 2001
Box 1: 3

National Life of Vermont, 2001
Box 1: 4

Nautilus Insurance Company, n.d. (see also New York Life, Box 3 Folder 6)
Box 1: 5

Nautilus Insurance Company, Index of Applicants, n.d.
Box 1: 6

Nautilus Insurance Company, Ledger 1, n.d.
Box 2: 1-5

Nautilus Insurance Company, Ledger 1, n.d.
Box 2: 6-7

Nautilus Insurance Company, Ledger 2, n.d.
Box 3: 1-2

Nautilus Insurance Company, Ledger 2, n.d.
Box 3: 3-5

Box 3: 6

New York Life, 1847-1848, 2001
Box 3: 7

Northwestern, 2001
Box 3: 7

Penn Mutual, 2001
Box 3: 7

Phoenix Life Mutual Insurance Company, 2001
Box 3: 7

Providence Washington, 2001
Box 3: 7

Provident Mutual, 2001
Box 3: 7

Royal & Sun Alliance, 2001
Box 3: 7

Traveler’s Casualty & Surety Company, 2001
Box 3: 8

New York Life Insurance Company - possible slave policies [addition to collection, Aug. 2002], 1846-1848, 2002