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JOHN HOLT & CO. (LIVERPOOL) LTD.

**Reference Code: B/JH(A)
Acc. No.: MMM.2006.61**

**Listed by
Karen Millhouse, Assistant Curator of Maritime Archives
6 June 2006**

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JOHN HOLT & CO. (LIVERPOOL) LTD.

Introduction

John Holt was born in 1841, in the Lincolnshire village of Garthorpe. At the age of 15, having previously worked in a coastal schooner belonging to his grandfather Thomas Holt, he began a five year apprenticeship with William Laird, a Liverpool coal dealer, member of the famous shipbuilding family and brother of West African explorer MacGregor Laird.

In June 1862, just days short of completing his five year apprenticeship, John Holt accepted the offer of a post as secretary to James Lynslager, British Consul on the Spanish island of Fernando Po, off the West African coast. The offer was for three years, to act as clerk, storekeeper and overseer for Lynslager's merchant interests. It would include an annual salary of £2,000, board, lodging, passage and medical attendance. After the death of James Lynslager in 1864, John Holt continued to work for his widow until 1867 when, at the age of 25, he purchased the business from her. During that year he was joined by his brothers, Jonathan and Thomas Holt, and they expanded the business from Fernando Po to the mainland of West Africa.

During his twelve years on the African coast from 1862 to 1874, John Holt played a notable part in the pioneering and development of British trade in West Africa, helping develop trade in important new products, including cocoa, cotton lint and groundnuts, alongside the traditional trade in palm oil and rubber. In 1884 the business was made into a partnership of the three brothers, and in 1897 it became a limited company, John Holt & Co. (Liverpool) Ltd.

Along with these commercial interests, in later years he became a champion of African welfare, developing friendships with notable humanitarians of the day, such as E.D. Morel, Mary Kingsley and the author, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle.

By the time of John Holt's death in 1915, the company had developed into a flourishing private concern, with branches in all the main centres of the West African trade.

During both World Wars, ships of the John Holt & Co. (Liverpool) Ltd. fleet were requisitioned by the British Government for the movement of munitions and stores and the evacuation of troops. In June 1940 the SS *John Holt* was involved in the rescue of 1,100 survivors from the Cunarder *Lancastria* which was sunk by German

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bombs off Saint Nazaire. The period following the Second World War saw the company expand its international concerns by extending its interests to other continents.

This important collection is made up of the personal and business correspondence of the company's founder John Holt and his son Robert Longstaff Holt, Chairman of the company from 1917-1947. It provides an insight into the life and trade on the West African coast, and includes documents illustrating the growth and expansion of the company.

The collection, with the exception of item reference B/JH(A)4/12, was deposited at National Museums Liverpool in 2006 by the descendants of John Holt and is accessible to the public at the Maritime Archives & Library, Merseyside Maritime Museum. A portrait of John Holt (B/JH(A)4/12) was donated by the John Holt Group and has been listed with this collection.

Conservation work has been carried out on some of John Holt's personal papers before the collection was donated to National Museums Liverpool. The items were bound in two volumes, labelled "John Holt, Historical Papers". The items in these volumes have been listed individually, and, in some cases, transcribed, but have not been removed from their volumes, which are reference numbers B/JH(A)1/1/1 and 2.

Further business records of John Holt & Co. (Liverpool) Ltd. are held by the Maritime Archives & Library, and are accessible by appointment only; see volume 2 of the *Guide to the Records of Merseyside Maritime Museum* for further details.

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JOHN HOLT & CO. (LIVERPOOL) LTD.

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1/1/1 - 24	<u>John Holt Personal Papers</u>	<u>1857 - 1951</u>
1/1/1/1 - 56	Volume of John Holt Historical Papers Selected documents have been transcribed and are available at the end of the catalogue. Please note that individual documents will be produced within a bound volume.	1853 - 1920
1/1/1/1	Letter from J.W.B. Lynslager, London to John Holt, offering him employment as clerk and book-keeper at Fernando Po.	23 June 1862
1/1/1/2	Calling cards for James Johnson of 197 Cannon Street Road, London; J.W.B. Lynslager of Fernando Po; and Mr. John Holt of Fernando Po. [3 items]	n.d.
1/1/1/3	Letter from Frederick Lugard, Government House, Nigeria to John Holt & Co., Liverpool, applauding their proposal to start a steamer service on the Upper Niger River.	30 Apr 1900
1/1/1/4	Apprentice Indenture of John Holt to William Laird, Coal Merchant, for five years.	1 Jul 1857
1/1/1/5	Letter to Thomas Holt from his brother, John Holt, offering him employment at Fernando Po as salesman, book-keeper, clerk and over-looker.	26 Sept 1867
1/1/1/6	Letter from John Holt to his parents, on his arrival at Fernando Po. [transcription available]	26 Aug 1862
1/1/1/7	Letter from Mary Slessor, missionary, to John Holt, thanking him for his letter re the death of Mary Kingsley, explorer.	17 Jul 1900
1/1/1/8	Letter from John Holt, Fernando Po to his parents, referring to his expenses whilst living and working at Fernando Po. [transcription available]	24 Sept 1862
1/1/1/9	Letter from John Holt, Fernando Po to his parents, telling of the interest taken in his career by his former employer William Laird, and his first experience of fever. [transcription available]	28 Oct 1862
1/1/1/10	Letter from J.W.B. Lynslager, London to John Holt, Fernando Po, instructing him to take over the agency of the African Steamship Co.	23 Jul 1862

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1/1/1 - 24	<u>John Holt Personal Papers</u> (cont)	<u>1857 - 1951</u>
1/1/1/1 - 56	Volume of John Holt Historical Papers (cont)	1853 - 1920
1/1/1/11	Statement of Accounts for the period 30 September 1864 to 31 March 1867 when, following the death of J.W.B. Lynslager, John Holt managed the firm on behalf of his widow, Juliana E. Lynslager.	1867
1/1/1/12	Circular, letter and price list advertising the goods imported to West Africa by John Holt & Co.	10 Nov 1872
1/1/1/13	Letter to John Holt from a Mr. Walker, trading from the hulk <i>Vesuvio</i> on the Brass River in the Niger Delta.	9 Jan 1863
1/1/1/14	List of supplies taken by Richard and John Lauder on their expedition to the source of the River Niger in 1830-1831.	n.d.
1/1/1/15	Contract between Mrs. Juliana E. Lynslager and John Holt re the employment of apprentice Arthur B. Buttrick.	Apr 1867 (dated 31?)
1/1/1/16	Ordinary Apprentice's Indenture for Jonathan Holt, apprenticed to John Holt, his uncle.	14 Dec 1853
1/1/1/17	Letter from William Laird to John Holt re the latter's acceptance of a job at Fernando Po under J.W.B. Lynslager.	17 June 1862
1/1/1/18	Analysis of accounts for John Holt & Co., for the year 1868.	1868
1/1/1/19	Contract of Employment between John Holt & Co. and Edward Ellis Nisbet Hill, to work as the company clerk at Fernando Po for two years.	3 Feb 1870
1/1/1/20	Official document from the Spanish Government allowing John Holt & Co. to trade at Fernando Po [?].	20 May 1872
1/1/1/21	Profit and Loss Account for John Holt & Co., year ending 31 December 1897.	31 Dec 1897
1/1/1/22	Report by a W.A.J. Harris, agent for John Holt & Co. re a raid on Hickory Town, Cameroons, by German warships <i>Fan</i> and <i>Dualla</i> , 22 December 1884. [transcription available]	20 Dec 1884

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1/1/1/1 - 56	Volume of John Holt Historical Papers (cont)	1853 - 1920
1/1/1/23	Proclamation issued by the Imperial German Protectorate of Kamerin, declaring Cameroons a German protectorate and threatening disturbers of the peace with banishment.	31 Dec 1884
1/1/1/24	Copy of letter from John Holt to Bismark, denying a statement published in <i>The Times</i> re the expulsion of their agent from Gaboon.	12 Jan 1885
1/1/1/25	Letter from W. Holland [?] to John Holt, describing the site of Richard Lauder's grave at Fernando Po.	22 May 1891
1/1/1/26	Letter from W.A.J. Harris to John Holt, describing further the German attack on Hickory Town. [continued in No. 29] [transcription available]	25 Dec 1884
1/1/1/27	Letter from John Holt & Co., to the Right Honourable Earl Granville, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs re Bismark's allegations against their agent in Gaboon.	12 Jan 1885
1/1/1/28	Petition to the House of Lords by an independent group of British merchants trading in West Africa, against the monopoly on trade enjoyed by the Royal Niger Company.	Jan 1887
1/1/1/29	Letter from W.A.J. Harris to John Holt, describing the German attack on Hickory Town, Cameroons. [continued from No. 26]	25 Dec 1884
1/1/1/30	Copy letter from W.A.J. Harris, agent to George Watts, to the British Consul for Brights, Benin & Biafra, complaining of damage to his iron store during the German attack on Hickory Town.	29 Dec 1884
1/1/1/31	Letter from Jantzen & Thormahlen, Hamburg to John Holt & Co., Liverpool, re the conduct of John Holt & Co's agent, W.A.J. Harris during the disturbances in Cameroons.	14 Jan 1885
1/1/1/32	Letter from John Holt to the British Prime Minister, Robert Cecil, Marquis of Salisbury re the possibility of Government protection should the firm develop trading links in the Biafran interior.	30 Apr 1891

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1/1/1/1 - 56	Volume of John Holt Historical Papers (cont)	1853 - 1920
1/1/1/33	Letter to John Holt & Co., Liverpool from the Foreign Office re the possibility of developing trade links in the Biafran interior.	12 May 1891
1/1/1/34	Letter from John Holt to the Marquis of Ripon, Principle Secretary of State for the Colonies, making a case for the construction of a railway from Lagos to 70 miles into the interior.	16 Dec 1892
1/1/1/35	Letter to John Holt from the office of the Marquis of Ripon, Secretary of State for the Colonies re the possible construction of a railway from Lagos into the interior.	31 Dec 1892
1/1/1/36	Memorandum from the Chamber of Commerce of Liverpool to the Earl of Rosebery, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs re the Royal Niger Company's monopoly on trade.	28 Jul 1893
1/1/1/37	Letter to John Holt from W. Holland, Missionary, Fernando Po re suggestions for a memorial to Richard Lauder at Fernando Po. [transcription available]	16 Sept 1891
1/1/1/38	Photograph of the memorial to explorer, Richard Lauder at Truro, Cornwall.	c.1890
1/1/1/39	Letter from John Holt to the Secretary of the Royal Geographical Society, London, asking for support in the erection of a memorial to Richard Lauder.	17 Dec 1891
1/1/1/40	Foreign Office memorandum re the memorial to Richard Lauder at Fernando Po.	3 Feb 1909
1/1/1/41	Letter from Douglas Freshfield, Secretary of the Royal Geographical Society to John Holt, expressing their support for the Richard Lauder memorial project.	23 Feb 1892
1/1/1/42	Letter to the Royal Geographical Society from T.V. Lister, Secretary to the Marquis of Salisbury re Spanish support for the Richard Lauder memorial project.	26 Mar 1892
1/1/1/43	Photograph of W. Holland, Missionary worker, at the grave of explorer Richard Lauder, Fernando Po.	n.d.

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1/1/1/1 - 56	Volume of John Holt Historical Papers (cont)	1853 - 1920
1/1/1/44	Accounts of the Royal Niger Co., prepared for Parliament. [2 pages]	8 Aug 1900
1/1/1/45	Letter to John Holt from Mary Slessor, thanking him for the gift of a portrait of Mary Kingsley.	28 Jul 1900
1/1/1/46	Letter from the British High Commission, Old Calabar to John Holt & Co., Liverpool re the possibility of Britain acquiring Fernando Po and the establishment of a coastal shipping service.	31 May 1901
1/1/1/47	Letter from Jon Lucas, Dutch Merchant to John Holt & Co., informing them that their premises in Ambriz are being used by slave traders.	26 Mar 1902
1/1/1/48	Letter from the Foreign Office to John Holt & Co. re John Holt's property in Ambriz being used by slave traders.	6 May 1902
1/1/1/49	Letter from John Holt & Co. to the Marquis of Lansdowne re John Holt & Co.'s property in Ambriz being used by slave traders.	25 Apr 1902
1/1/1/50	Letter to John Holt, signed by employees of John Holt & Co., expressing their thanks for an act of generosity and wishing him a speedy recovery from a recent illness.	26 Sept 1910
1/1/1/51	Circular from the African and Eastern Trade Corporation Ltd. to its shareholders, recommending a merger with Lever Brothers Ltd.; includes a printed excerpt from <i>The Times</i> of 18 October 1920.	24 Sept 1920
1/1/1/52	Letter from John Holt to Bismarck re their agent's co-operation with the German authorities in the Cameroons.	1885
1/1/1/53	Annual Report submitted by the Directors of John Holt & Co., at the first ordinary general meeting of shareholders for 1898.	5 Aug 1898
1/1/1/54	Typed Proclamation from the High Commissioner to the Protectorate of Southern Nigeria. [incomplete]	c.1900

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1/1/1/1 - 56	Volume of John Holt Historical Papers (cont)	1853 - 1920
1/1/1/55	Statement of Accounts for John Holt & Co., Ltd.	31 Dec 1897
1/1/1/56	Letter from John Holt & Co. to the German Foreign Secretary re the complaints made against their agent in Camerouns.	1885
1/1/2/1 - 49	Volume of John Holt Historical Papers	1861 - 1928
	Selected documents have been transcribed and are available at the end of the catalogue. Please note that individual documents will be produced within a bound volume.	
1/1/2/1	Letter from John Laughland on behalf of J.W.B. Lynslager to John Holt, acknowledging Holt's acceptance of a position at Fernando Po.	14 June 1862
1/1/2/2	Letter to John Holt from J.B. Bayne, in the office of W. Laird, to whom Holt was apprenticed, giving advice on the clothes he will need on the West Coast of Africa. [transcription available]	18 June 1862
1/1/2/3	Letter from John Holt to his parents, during his voyage to Fernando Po. [transcription available]	13 Jul 1862
1/1/2/4	Letter to John Holt from J.B. Bayne, in the office of W. Laird, to whom Holt was apprenticed re a formal contract of employment from J.W.B. Lynslager. [transcription available]	16 June 1862
1/1/2/5	Letter from John Holt to his father, stating his determination to start a career in West Africa. [transcription available]	1862
1/1/2/6	Letter from John Holt to his parents, informing them of an offer of employment from J.W.B. Lynslager. [transcription available]	12 June 1862
1/1/2/7	Letter from John Holt to business associates of J.W.B. Lynslager, informing them of Lynslager's death and his own appointment as manager of the firm; includes an acknowledgement by Frank Wilson, Acting British Consul at Fernando Po.	28 Sept 1864

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1/1/2/1 - 49	Volume of John Holt Historical Papers (cont)	1861 - 1928
1/1/2/8	Letter from John Holt to W. Laird, requesting an early release from his apprenticeship. [wet copy, transcription available]	12 June 1862
1/1/2/9	Letter from W. Laird to his partner J.T. Fletcher, enquiring whether he knows of another merchant house on the West African coast which could offer John Holt a better opportunity. [transcription available]	13 June 1862
1/1/2/10	Letter from W. Laird to John Holt, offering him notes on the Niger written by his brother, explorer McGregor Laird. [transcription available]	13 June 1862
1/1/2/11	Letter from John Holt to his parents, written on board the SS <i>Cleopatra</i> en route to Fernando Po. [transcription available]	30 June 1862
1/1/2/12	Letter from William Couper & Co., offering John Holt office premises at Fernando Po; includes John Holt's note of acceptance, dated 20 September 1867.	19 Sept 1867
1/1/2/13	Letter from Charles Livingstone, British Consul at Fernando Po and brother of explorer David Livingstone to John Holt, asking him not to sell his furniture as he is expecting to return to the island following leave in Scotland.	6 Jul 1868
1/1/2/14	Letter to John Holt from his brother Jonathan, serving on board the <i>Athenian</i> , moored off Madeira. [transcription available]	29 Apr 1861
1/1/2/15	Letter to John Holt from his brother Jonathan, written on board the <i>Beckworth</i> at Bombay. [transcription available]	18 Feb 1862
1/1/2/16	Certificate of Discharge belonging to Jonathan Holt from the <i>Athenian</i> .	12 Jul 1861
1/1/2/17	Letter of Recommendation for Jonathan Holt from Captain Gibbs, master of the barque <i>Victoria</i> . Jonathan served as able seaman on a voyage to Bombay during 1862 and 1863.	17 June 1863

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1/1/2/1 - 49	Volume of John Holt Historical Papers (cont)	1861 - 1928
1/1/2/18	Certificate of Discharge from the <i>Edmund</i> , belonging to Jonathan Holt, master and a letter of recommendation from the owners of the vessel, dated 31 December 1867.	30 June 1868
1/1/2/19	Letter from Ronald Ross to John Holt, thanking him for an act of generosity.	14 June 1901
1/1/2/20	Typed letter from Alice S. Green to John Holt, congratulating him on his jubilee as a trader in Africa.	24 June 1912
1/1/2/21	Envelopes addressed to Thomas White of the British Museum from Prime Minister Lord Palmerston and a note written by Palmerston summoning a cabinet meeting to be held on the 14 March 1863 at 10 Downing Street. [3 items]	13 Mar 1863
1/1/2/22	Typed letter from King Denis II, King of Mpongue (Gaboon) to Queen Victoria, requesting money in lieu of a crown and medal presented to his father for an act of bravery with a covering note possibly written by John Holt.	5 May 1900
1/1/2/23	Letter from John Holt, Fernando Po to his brother Jonathan, on the possibility of Jonathan joining him on the West Coast of Africa. [transcription available]	10 Apr 1867
1/1/2/24	Typed letter announcing the partnership of John Holt and brother Jonathan Holt in the firm John Holt & Co. Signed by both, along with Harry Cotterell, John Holt's partner in the firm Holt & Cotterell, and Thomas Holt, Cash Department Manager.	29 Feb 1884
1/1/2/25	Typed announcement on the death of Jonathan C. Holt; business will continue under the name of John Holt & Company (Liverpool) Limited.	6 Apr 1897
1/1/2/26	Letter from Alfred Jones to John Holt re the question of Jones receiving a knighthood and the West African trade. [Alfred Jones received a knighthood in 1901]	3 June 1899
1/1/2/27	Letters from Sir Alfred Jones to John Holt re the removal of transit dues at Porto Noro, Lagos. [2 items]	4 Feb 1902 - 10 Feb 1902

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1/1/2/1 - 49	Volume of John Holt Historical Papers (cont)	1861 - 1928
1/1/2/28	Letter from Sir William McGregor, Governor of Lagos to John Holt re a proposed railway line to Ibadan.	9 Sept 1902
1/1/2/29	Letter from Alfred Jones to John Holt re their disagreement with the French Government over differential duties and John Holt & Co.'s acquisition of the French Agency at Lagos. [2 items]	6 Jan 1898
1/1/2/30	Letter from Alfred Jones to John Holt re tenders for the building of a light railway.	10 Dec 1897
1/1/2/31	Letter from Alfred Jones to John Holt, mustering support for British opposition to French Differential duties on the Ivory Coast.	13 Dec 1897
1/1/2/32	Letter from Alfred Jones to John Holt re a possible amalgamation of traders in Lagos.	14 Feb 1898
1/1/2/33	Letter from Alfred Jones to John Holt re the 'Spirit Resolution'.	16 Feb 1898
1/1/2/34	Letter from Alfred Jones to John Holt re the 'Spirit Movement'.	14 Feb 1898
1/1/2/35	Letter from Sir Edward Russell, Editor of the <i>Daily Post</i> to John Holt, requesting information on trade in Africa.	16 Mar 1898
1/1/2/36	Letter from Sir Edward Russell, Editor of the <i>Daily Post</i> to John Holt, expressing thanks for information supplied to a Mr. Grier.	22 Oct 1900
1/1/2/37	Letter from Sir George Goldie to John Holt, following Goldie's appointment as Privy Counsellor.	23 May 1898
1/1/2/38	Letter from Sir George Goldie, of the Royal Niger Company to John Holt re Anglo-German agreements on the division of West African territory.	24 June 1890
1/1/2/39	Letter from Roger Casement, British Consul to John Holt re the Report of King Leopold's Commission and two meetings re the Congo due to be held in London.	19 Sept 1905

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1/1/2/1 - 49	Volume of John Holt Historical Papers (cont)	1861 - 1928
1/1/2/40	Letter from W.A. Cadbury to John Holt re E.D. Morel's (Secretary of the Congo Reform Association) journey to Nigeria, his passage being provided by John Holt & Co.	Aug 1910
1/1/2/41	Newspaper cutting from <i>The Times</i> re a presentation and luncheon held in honour of E.D. Morel, Secretary of the Congo Reform Association.	30 May 1911
1/1/2/42	Programme of the presentation and luncheon held in honour of E.D. Morel, Secretary of the Congo Reform Association.	29 May 1911
1/1/2/43	Letter from Sir Arthur Conan Doyle to John Holt, thanking him for his gift [believed to be 1,000 guineas to the Congo Reform Association].	n.d. [1911]
1/1/2/44	Telegram of thanks addressed to John Holt, signed Mary and E.D. Morel.	29 May 1911
1/1/2/45	Letter from Roger Casement to John Holt re the success of the Congo Reform meeting.	30 May 1911
1/1/2/46	Letter from Ronald Ross to Mrs. Holt, expressing condolences at the death of John Holt.	21 June 1915
1/1/2/47	Letter of condolence from Chief Egbe of Warri, S. Nigeria, probably sent to Robert Holt on the death of his father.	n.d.
1/1/2/48	Letter of condolence from Lord Leverhulme to Mrs. Holt, on the death of John Holt.	24 June 1915
1/1/2/49	Copy of telegram from Robert Holt to Sir Frederick Lugard, congratulating him on his peerage and Lugard's reply, dated 2 January 1927 [the year was in fact 1928].	1928

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1/1/1 - 24	<u>John Holt Personal Papers</u> (cont)	<u>1857 - 1951</u>
1/1/3	Cash book of John Holt listing all personal accounts during his 5 year apprenticeship with W.H. Laurel & Co.	1857 - 1861
1/1/4	Boxed journal and ledger of John Holt, listing personal expenditure and accounts while in Fernando Po.	1882 - 1901
1/1/5	File of transcripts of letters to Professor E.B. Tylor from Mary Kingsley.	1886 - 1899
1/1/6	Bound transcripts of letters from Mary Kingsley.	1897 - 1900
1/1/7	Financial documents of John Holt; includes share certificates, dividend statements for mariner companies, business and personal accounts.	1899
1/1/8	Letters from John Holt to a Mr. De Ville. [copies]	1899 - 1900
1/1/9	Letters from John Holt to a Mr. De Ville. [copies]	1901
1/1/10	Correspondence between John Holt and E.D. Morel re West African affairs. [copies]	1902
1/1/11	Correspondence between John Holt and E.D. Morel re West African affairs. [copies]	1903
1/1/12	Correspondence between John Holt and E.D. Morel re West African affairs. [copies]	1904
1/1/13	Correspondence between John Holt and E.D. Morel re West African affairs. [copies]	1905
1/1/14	Correspondence between John Holt and E.D. Morel re West African affairs. [copies]	1906
1/1/15	Correspondence between John Holt and E.D. Morel re West African affairs. [copies]	1907
1/1/16	Correspondence between John Holt and E.D. Morel re West African affairs. [copies]	1908
1/1/17	Correspondence between John Holt and E.D. Morel re West African affairs. [copies]	1909

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MARITIME ARCHIVES & LIBRARY**

Title of Deposit: JOHN HOLT & CO. (LIVERPOOL) LTD.

Item No.	Description	Date(s)
B/JH(A)/1	<u>JOHN HOLT</u> (cont)	<u>1853 - 1951</u>
1/1/1 - 24	<u>John Holt Personal Papers</u> (cont)	<u>1857 - 1951</u>
1/1/18	Correspondence between John Holt and E.D. Morel re West African affairs. [copies]	1910
1/1/19	Correspondence between John Holt and E.D. Morel re West African affairs. [copies]	1911
1/1/20	Correspondence between John Holt and E.D. Morel re West African affairs. [copies]	1912 - 1915
1/1/21	Bound, typed transcripts of letters to John Holt from Mary Kingsley. [2 volumes, 1 with corrections]	1897 - 1900
1/1/22	File of typed transcripts of letters from Mary Kingsley to John Holt; includes typed transcripts of letters to Professor and Mrs. Taylor.	1896 - 1900
1/1/23	Boxed presentation copy of <i>The Diary of John Holt</i> .	1948
1/1/24	<i>La Guinea Espanola</i> , diary of John Holt, published in a Spanish newspaper.	1951

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Title of Deposit: JOHN HOLT & CO. (LIVERPOOL) LTD.

Item No.	Description	Date(s)
B/JH(A)/1	<u>JOHN HOLT</u> (cont)	<u>1853 - 1951</u>
1/2/1 - 16	<u>John Holt Business Papers</u>	<u>1867 - 1938</u>
1/2/1	Journal of John Holt, listing profit and loss accounts, yearly expenditure at Fernando Po.	1867 - 1883
1/2/2	Bound volume of monthly accounts for Goole Saw Mill.	1875 - 1879
1/2/3	Bound volume of accounts, expenditure, outstanding debts, etc., for Goole Saw Mill.	1875 - 1879
1/2/4	Journal of John Holt showing profit and loss, Liverpool.	1883 - 1896
1/2/5	Profit and loss ledger of John Holt.	1883 - 1896
1/2/6	Reprinted extracts from the <i>Liverpool Courier</i> , the <i>Manchester Examiner</i> and the <i>Glasgow North British Daily Mail</i> re the Congo Treaty.	1884
1/2/7	Printed statements from the African Association to Earl Granville, K.G. re the German presence in the Bight of Biafra.	1884
1/2/8	Private ledger for John Holt & Co. (Liverpool) Ltd., listing company accounts.	1897 - 1919
1/2/9	Private journal of company accounts for John Holt & Co. (Liverpool) Ltd.	1897 - 1919
1/2/10	File of documents re the formation of John Holt & Co. (Liverpool) Ltd.	1897
1/2/11	Pamphlet entitled, <i>Health & Sanitation, West Africa</i> , produced by the African Trade Sector of the Incorporated Chamber of Commerce of Liverpool.	1901
1/2/12	The <i>African Mail</i> newspaper, 14 August 1908, features a John Holt & Co. (Liverpool) Ltd. advertisement.	14 Aug 1908
1/2/13	File of correspondence re the Jubilee celebrations, marking the 50 th Anniversary of John Holt's arrival at Fernando Po.	1912
1/2/14	The <i>African Mail</i> newspaper, 2 July 1915, features a special article on John Holt by E.D. Morel.	2 Jul 1915

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Item No.	Description	Date(s)
B/JH(A)/1	<u>JOHN HOLT</u> (cont)	<u>1853 - 1951</u>
1/2/1 - 16	<u>John Holt Business Papers</u> (cont)	<u>1867 - 1938</u>
1/2/15	File of miscellaneous brochures and articles labelled, "Spares" re trade and shipping.	1915 - 1938
1/2/16	Typed minutes of the conference between Sir Hugh Clifford, KCMG, Governor of Nigeria and members of the Association of West African Merchants, Adelphi Hotel, Liverpool, 21 April 1921.	21 Apr 1921

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Title of Deposit: JOHN HOLT & CO. (LIVERPOOL) LTD.

Item No.	Description	Date(s)
B/JH(A)/2	<u>ROBERT HOLT</u>	<u>1899 - 1956</u>
2/1/1 - 3	<u>Robert Holt Personal Papers</u>	<u>1899 - 1947</u>
2/1/1	Photograph album recording a visit to West Africa, showing the trading post, John Holt & Co. (Liverpool) Ltd.'s business premises.	1899 - 1900
2/1/2	Ledger of Robert Holt, listing yearly business and personal accounts.	1899 - 1916
2/1/3	File of miscellaneous correspondence between Robert Holt and various individuals.	1915 - 1947

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Title of Deposit: JOHN HOLT & CO. (LIVERPOOL) LTD.

Item No.	Description	Date(s)
B/JH(A)/2	<u>ROBERT HOLT</u> (cont)	<u>1899 - 1956</u>
2/2/1 - 19	<u>Robert Holt Business Papers</u>	<u>1899 - 1956</u>
2/2/1	Ledger of Robert Holt, listing various business concerns.	1899 - 1915
2/2/2	Minute book "Morning Meetings", John Holt & Co. (Liverpool) Ltd.	1922 - 1923
2/2/3	Minute Book "Morning Meetings", John Holt & Co. (Liverpool) Ltd.	1922 - 1924
2/2/4	File of personal and business correspondence between Robert Holt and Sir S.M. Grier.	1923 - 1936
2/2/5	File of business correspondence between Robert Holt and Sir Robert Waley Cohen of the United Africa Co., Ltd.	1929 - 1931
2/2/6	File of business correspondence between Robert Holt and Sir Donald Cameron, British Colonial Office.	1931 - 1935
2/2/7	File of business and personal correspondence between Robert Holt and E.C.F. Bird, Comptroller of Customs, Lagos, Nigeria.	1933 - 1941
2/2/8	File of business and personal correspondence between Robert Holt and Sir S.M. Gruer, KCMG.	1937 - 1946
2/2/9	File of miscellaneous correspondence to Robert Holt from various individuals, arranged alphabetically.	1930s - 1940s
2/2/10	File of maritime correspondence from various individuals to Robert Holt re the requisition of John Holt & Co. (Liverpool) Ltd. vessels for troopship duty; the majority from Harry Fuller, Captain of the SS <i>Jonathan Holt</i> re wartime activities.	1940 - 1945
2/2/11	File of correspondence re the Royal African Society's "Mary Kingsley Appeal".	1941
2/2/12	File of wartime correspondence from various individuals to Robert Holt re John Holt & Co. (Liverpool) Ltd. vessels requisitioned for wartime service.	1941 - 1944
2/2/13	File of correspondence and documents re honours awarded to Merchant Seafarers in John Holt & Co. (Liverpool) Ltd. employ.	1940 - 1944

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Item No.	Description	Date(s)
B/JH(A)/2	<u>ROBERT HOLT</u> (cont)	<u>1899 - 1956</u>
2/2/1 - 19	<u>Robert Holt Business Papers</u> (cont)	<u>1899 - 1956</u>
2/2/14	File of maritime correspondence from various individuals to Robert Holt re John Holt & Co. (Liverpool) Ltd. vessels requisitioned for wartime service; includes letters from Captain Harry Fuller re post-war sailings aboard the SS <i>Jonathan Holt</i> .	1944 - 1945
2/2/15	File of correspondence relating to Captain Harry Fuller, John Holt & Co. (Liverpool) Ltd.; includes letters from Captain Fuller to Robert Holt re sailings on the SS <i>Jonathan Holt</i> .	1945 - 1947
2/2/16	File of correspondence and newspaper cuttings re the production of the publication <i>Merchant Adventure</i> , a history of John Holt & Co. (Liverpool) Ltd. A copy of this publication is available in the Maritime Archives & Library .	1950 - 1951
2/2/17	File of correspondence relating to Jack Samuel Esq., Chairman of the United Africa Co., mainly concerning a commissioned portrait of the subject presented at a dinner held in his honour, organised by John and Cecil Holt; includes transcripts of speeches, menu and seating plan.	1953 - 1954
2/2/18	Printed statement from John Holt Line Ltd. re name change to the Guinea Gulf Line Ltd. [name changed in 1954]	n.d.
2/2/19	Correspondence proposing Dr. Gladys Rutherford for the John Holt Medal, awarded for meritorious work in the Tropics by the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine.	1956

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Title of Deposit: JOHN HOLT & CO. (LIVERPOOL) LTD.

Item No.	Description	Date(s)
B/JH(A)/3/1 - 22	<u>GOVERNMENT PAPERS AND REPORTS</u>	<u>1884 - 1915</u>
1	Despatch to Her Majesty's Minister at Lisbon, enclosing the Congo Treaty and corrected translation of the Mozambique Tariff of 1877, No. 3.	1884
2	Correspondence re the West African Conference, No. 7.	1884
3	Further correspondence re the West African Conference, No. 8.	1884
4	Correspondence with Her Majesty's Ambassador at Berlin re the West African Conference, No. 2.	1885
5	Arrangement between Great Britain and Germany re their respective spheres of action on portions of Africa, No. 6.	1885
6	Protocol and General Act of the West African Conference, No. 4.	1885
7	Colonial Annual Reports for Sierra Leone. [17 items]	1889 - 1915
8	Papers re arrangements between Great Britain and France re West Africa, No. 7.	1892
9	Correspondence re the disturbances in Benin and the operation against the Chief Nanna, No. 3.	1895
10	Report by Sir John Kirk on the disturbances at Brass, No. 3.	1896
11	Printed statements from the Government of the Republic of Liberia re the shipment of labourers; includes printed statements from Wiechers A. Helin, sole exporters of labourers. [6 items][1898
12	Correspondence re the Benin Territorial Expedition.	1899
13	Bound reports and accounts of the Lagos Government Railway for 1903, 1905 and 1906.	1903 - 1906
14	Correspondence re the Sokoto, Hadeiga and the Munshi Country.	1907
15	Minutes of evidence taken before the Royal Commission on shipping rings. [6 editions]	1907

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Title of Deposit: JOHN HOLT & CO. (LIVERPOOL) LTD.

Item No.	Description	Date(s)
B/JH(A)/3/1 - 22	<u>GOVERNMENT PAPERS AND REPORTS (cont)</u>	<u>1884 - 1915</u>
16	Further correspondence re the railway construction in Nigeria. [2 items]	1909
17	Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the liquor trade in Southern Nigeria, part ii, minutes of evidence, etc.	1909
18	Final report of the Royal Commission on whisky and other potable spirits.	1909
19	Reports from the Southern Nigerian Trade Committee, presented to Parliament. [7 items]	1909
20	Annual Colonial Report, No. 346, Northern Nigeria, for the period 1900-1901.	1902
21	Annual Colonial Report, No. 437, Northern Nigeria, for the period 1903.	1905
22	Miscellaneous Colonial Reports, No. 401, Northern Nigeria; includes memorandum on the taxation of natives in Northern Nigeria.	1907

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Title of Deposit: JOHN HOLT & CO. (LIVERPOOL) LTD.

Item No.	Description	Date(s)
B/JH(A)/4/1 - 12	<u>MISCELLANEOUS PAPERS</u>	<u>1876 - 1933</u>
1	Scrapbook containing newspaper cuttings re the incorporation of Birkenhead into a Municipal Borough.	1876
2	Article, "The Future Black India Company", by Georges Rolland, translated from the <i>Figaro Supplement</i> .	1892
3	Pamphlet, <i>The Sierra Leone Hut-Tax Disturbances</i> , by E.D. Morel. [3 items]	1899
4	<i>The Aborigines Friend</i> , journal of the Aborigines' Protection Society, special edition re the Congo question.	1903
5	File of miscellaneous correspondence to Jonathan Holt.	1915 - 1927
6	Handwritten journal of a voyage to West Africa, author unknown.	1922 - 1923
7	Letter to Mr. Mather[?] from V.R. Osbourne re notes made on his voyage to Louisville, U.S.A.; includes notes.	1924 - 1925
8	Handwritten journal of a voyage to West Africa on board the SS <i>Jonathan Holt</i> , author unknown; includes notes on a visit to Lagos and surrounding towns.	1926
9	Typed notes on the spread of Yellow Fever, taken from a paper written by John Still, addressed to the Ceylon Association, London.	1933
10	Photograph of Captain Preston.	n.d.
11	Hand-drawn map of Cape Coast Town.	n.d.
12	Portrait of John Holt, a gift from the John Holt Group, plc.	n.d.

B/JH(A) 1/1/1/6Fernando Po
26th August 1862

My Dear Parents,

I am afraid you will be anxiously awaiting the arrival of this - as from the tone of my last letter you would naturally have some apprehensions for my safety here but by God's blessing I am still alive and in good health indeed I think I am better now than I was during my passage in the steamer There has been a great deal of sickness lately in the Spanish soldiers and convicts who were in the hulks but on shore all has been well. An English vessel which arrived with me has had almost all hands sick but none have died. I have not yet had a taste of the fever on my arrival I was unwell for a few days consequent upon the change of diet but ever since I have enjoyed pretty good health I have however been careful. I take quinine daily I wash myself all over every morning I keep out of the sun and night air as much as possible and take other precautions recommended by people who have written books on the subject.

This is a beautiful & fruitful island but the people are so lazy here that they take no advantage on their situation. All they seem to care about is to get as much as will do for today and that in as easy a manner as possible. The consequence is that they care nothing about cultivating the country but are satisfied with a little palm oil trade instead. The Spaniards have therefore imported a lot of slaves from Cuba who after being employed in making roads &c for the Govt. will after a servitude of almost seven years be liberated and have grants of land given to each man for cultivation. They are now busy making a road up the mountain where the governor intends to build a house above the fever level where it is expected to be more healthier than his present residence at this place. What lots of things I might write you about but I must not do it all at once or I shall have nothing to say in future letters. this I write before the mail as if I wait until its arrival I should have no time to do so as it only remains here 24 hours. The business of the place is not great but if the Spaniards go on emigrating slaves from Cuba to F. Po it may become very different. Mr Lynslager has a good business the management of which is in the hands of his sable wife - although a black woman is is very kind & intelligent but she is I am told an exception to her neighbours being a woman of passion & energy, who understands the people about well and is consequently a good trader. she is married to her old man as she calls him. This is far from the practice with many white men who come to this coast who are not content with one married wife but must have several women to live with them & keep a Turkish establishment on a small scale Mrs L has about 10 girls who are liberated slaves that is slaves who have been bought as such by her and who after serving her for about 7 years will be married and presented with a dowry of about £20 to commence life. They are comparatively useless but I suppose it looks large to have a great many attendants just the same as in England it is fashionable to have men in livery. Their usual employment is waiting on "mammy" and "daddy" when he is at home but they take very little notice of any order he may give all mastership is exercised by "mammy" which she enforces at times with the use of a nice cane. they have also to do the washing which for one woman is extraordinary large I fairly believe that mammy changes her

clothes for cleaner ones every day - but such washing a getting up of shirts & collars - they are a dirty lot and would look much dirtier but for their black skin I find plenty of work (the books are in an awful state) and when my periodicals come out by this month's mail, I shall have no spare time on my hands. In England you imagine it is very hot out in Africa - it is hot but not so hot but that I can bear drawers & singlet with woollen shirt - and also trousers & coat. you also have a great objection to black people this would soon wear off if you were in continual contact with them as I am indeed it does not appear to me extraordinary of a white man to marry a black woman it looks natural enough - and some blacks both man & woman have splendid forms - finely made limbs a muscles with well formed heads, of course not having the same ideas as we have in England they are not so delicate either in their dress manner or speech but what of that delicacy is only a sentiment an imagination consequent upon a very high state of civilisation. My only complaint here is [?] & slight nervous headache. I am in hope the latter will wear off, physic will cure the former at night I feel the atmosphere most oppressive it is cool but a cold sweat troubles me

Our business consists of a 2 shops, Palm Oil trading and issuing coals for the British & U States Govts. and a little farming. I have been to the farm which is reached by sea distant about five miles and very different from an English farm indeed there is not the least resemblance. On our farm is grown coffee, cocoa, plantains, bananas, pine apples, mangoes, oranges, lemons, citron sour, sap yams, arrow-root cassada & plantains cocoa nut trees, guava, pepper-trees &c grow wild. I cannot speak of my prospects here I as yet know so little of this trade. I have seen sufficient to convince me that a trade once established would be very remunerative.

I am treated well, I live well, but about my living, this consists generally of two good meals and two lunches - in the morning soon after 6 I have a cup of coffee, at nine o'clock a breakfast of fowls roasted stewed or curried, or ham & eggs or fish with yams roasted or boiled - boiled rice, plantains roasted with tea - at 12 I can have bread & butter or roasted plantain or some boiled rice & sugar. at 4 dinner - the same as at breakfast with spirits or wine if I want them & at 7 or 8 tea bread & butter. Mrs L has lots of goats, hens ducks some geese & guinea fowls she has also a cow - we get our milk from the goats which after being boiled is good and better than cow's milk in tea or coffee. I cannot well tell you of my duties yet as I am not in charge of everything belonging to my employer's business but I shall have enough to do when all my work is before me. At present the superintendence of affairs are almost entirely in the hands of Mrs L but I hope after a time to be able to relieve her of some part of it. I feel very much the want of a companion and also of my Sunday worship these are with the loss of home and friends the great drawback to a foreign life - This being a spanish settlement none but the Roman Catholic religion is allowed publicly although I believe the greater part of those who constitute the inhabitants of this town are protestants - 28th August. The mail has arrived and I am in receipt of comb & brush unaccompanied by any letter from you - I am very sorry for this but I will not complain - If you do not consider me worth the trouble of a few lines I will only endeavour all the the more earnestly to convince you that I am by fulfilling my duty towards you as thy parents and striving to gain a larger share of your affections. Still it is hard to believe this from the people who were almost & altogether unknown to me five years ago I have had a letter from each while I have not received a token of remembrance from any relative - not even my parents

I remain my ever dear Parents your affectionate Son

John Holt

B/JH(A) 1/1/1/8Fernando Po
24th Sept 1862

My Dear Parents,

Not having any letter of yours to which I can reply I am almost at a loss what to write about, fortunately I have made you a statement of my expenses during the last five years which may require a little explanation and perhaps this will partially assist me out of my difficulties. You will first please to observe that I have given you the expenditure of each year separate and also the cost per week for each year. I have also added the five together have given you the average of same per year and per week. I have divided my expenses under six heads - Personal Expenses include living (Board & Lodging & dinners) Clothing, Washing, & Sundries (Hair Oil, Cutting Hair, Medicine, rep[ai]r to watch, &c) Travelling Expenses (explain themselves - for conveying myself home, Ferryage &c) Stationery & Stamps Stock (Books Music Desk etc) Gratuities & Rifle Expenses. In this statement is included everything. In the amounts for clothes & Boots I have included those paid for by you the total of which is £14.4.7 In the amount for washing I have made an allowance to mother of £3 per annum Total £15 By this you will see that the statement is founded upon the whole of my expenditure and anticipated liabilities during the whole period. This is a statement which would delight Mr Laird. I will now make a few comments on the different a/cts Board & Lodging varies very little - the difference may be accounted for by the price I was paying for lodgings and perhaps when I found myself spending too much I tried to economise a little. This is most apparent in the 4th & 5th years where the amount for living are £24 and £25 while to total for the years are 51£ and 49£ respectively while in previous years when the total expenditure is lower the board and lodging is higher. The amount for dinners is rather nominal than otherwise, although the average per week for the whole term is only about 1/7 the real amount actually paid for them does not I should think amount to more than 1/- per week. The remainder I generally made use of to balance my cash as I often spent a penny or twopence which I did not think worthwhile putting down. This became a habit greater during the last few years. The cost of clothing seems large and apparently since the second year (which was low on account of what I brought with me from home not being worn out) I have gone on increasing. I am afraid it has been a case of empty stomach in order to dress respectably. I say respectably but this can only be applied when the circumstances in which I was placed are taken into account. I did not dress over well neither was I shabby. I dressed I think as a person in my situation in the office should have done. The washing presents few variations, the difference between £3 (the amount put down as [owing] to mother) and each item consists principally of the carriage of my box. The amounts for sundries are largest in the first & second years. The difference consists of medicine etc in the second for repairs to watch &c. The total of the above accounts which I call Personal Expenses is almost the same every year in some of the items for Travelling Expenses is included the cost of going home twice in one year which happened in the 1st and 4th years. Stationery and Stamps need no explanation. Stock - consists of Book Music, Writing desk and other things which I have in property. In some of the years previous to the 4th & 5th I used to defray the expenses of Books & Music out of dinner-money and in the 4th year is included the cost of my desk £1.3.0. Rifle Expenses only commence in the 4th year and the amounts consist of the annual subscription £1.1.0 and other expenses such as Buss fare &c. Gratuities I also defrayed out of dinner money but they were very small until the 4th & 5th year - In which I presented some pictures to a friend of mine. The above will explain the cause of differences in the annual totals we see by this statement the average annual cost is £48.0.2 and the weekly one 18.4/5 equal to 18.5½ including everything I have

endeavoured to set before you as true and conscientious a state of my accounts as possible and I have only to add in conclusion that I have no reason or desire to hide anything from relative to my past expenditure and I assure you that I have never spent a half penny on anything which I should not wish you to know of or that I should desire to keep secret from you on the other side of the Statement sheet you will see that my earnings during the last five years have been £180.9.10. I had Cash belonging to me on going to L'pool amounting to £1.17.0 and received a present of 10/- which with the cash sent direct to me by you £43.19.0 and other disbursements which you made on my account and may be considered as Cash £29.17.7 (Total received from and owing you £73.16.7) makes a total of £256.13.5 while the total disbursements paid and unpaid are as per statement £240.0.11 this showing a balance of £16.12.6 on the 30th June This latter sum I may tell you is by the cost of my present outfit and sundry expenses concerned in coming out here reduced to £3.1.6. Since I wrote you last I have had a weeks illness of fever. This commenced on the 1st of this month and at the end of the week I was able to get out of bed but it made me very weak and has given me a considerable shaking but I think I have almost got over its effects now although my nerves are somewhat unsteady. The first attack of fever is generally the most severe, it may occur again any time but it probably would not be so bad as the first. The doctor considered mine a slight one but if compared with others it was so I have got a slight idea of what they would have to suffer. It commenced with a drowsy listless feeling and headache with cold. I tried to fight against it at first but I had gradually to give in and at length to go to bed after being there some time I felt my feet growing colder and my head and skin hotter and dry with a violent throbbing of the pulse this continued for one or two hours or more when as I had a very little to eat I thought I would try a little arrowroot and brandy for a time although I had taken but little of the above I felt more heat than ever but not long afterwards I felt a change I thought to myself that's perspiration & I at once began to kick and thrust to help my body to sweat I cried out for some hot tea but this was so long in being brought that my own physical exertions had made it almost unnecessary. This all occurred before the doctor came near. After this he came and said "only a little fever" when I suppose he was about right, for I had been struggling with it for several hours before he came and the fever was then going off. He aprised [?] me for a week gave me quinine & Although at first so weak that I was astonished I have gradually been gaining flesh ever since that I think I am almost as stout as before. But I need hardly be astonished for to go without bread little or nothing to eat and to undergo fever and a tremendous perspiration is enough to pull down any constitution It is extraordinary how at such times as these the mind turns to where the affections point when laid down on this bed of sickness I could not help contrasting with pain the attentions and evident sympathies which I then received to what would have been the case had I at the time and under the same circumstances been in a red-slated house on the banks of the Trent[?] distant 5000 from my present situation instead of being as I was in a wooden-bamboo roofed house in Clarence Cove, Fernando Po amongst strangers of a sable colour who if they have any sympathy for another's sufferings make very little show of them and if I might judge from the attention received by me I think no white man would be safe in their hands if he relied upon their exertions in his behalf for his recovery.

I don't like this situation so well as I did as first. I cannot at present have my own way as I could wish everything is upside down and all my attempts at reform are rendered abortive through not being assisted and encouraged by Mrs L. I intend putting up with matters until Mr L comes back when I shall endeavour to make matters different. I was sent out here my agreement says to take charge - charge of what? everything is taken charge of by Mrs L and I find myself more like being taken charge of than taking charge of anything. The yarn of Ditchfield about my being able to make £300 a year is all humbug I can do no such thing unless I commence business of my own account and it is not easy to do that on £20 perhaps I might make money if I liked to cheat my master but I did not come out here to thieve. The sickness amongst the people here has disappeared but there is always some.

Today an English man of war came in with a great many sick on board she only stays here to coal and she is off to Ascension for the sake of the crew's health I suppose it is the regular coast fever and not the deadly fellow fever which has lately raged to such an extent along the coast

We have lately had hot weather which seems to be gradually increasing. The thermometer ranged the other day from 70° to 82°. You feel uncomfortable in England when the thermometer rises above 65° I feel cold on rising in a morning with it at 72° This shows that where a person is exposed to heat who has been used to a colder climate he soon grows accustomed to it and is much less susceptible than when the change from one extremity to another takes place. I should suppose if I were to return to England in Midsummer I should feel chilly but that would only be for a time. I hope the prospect for a bad harvest and the confirmation of the American war continuing which is expected to cause great distress in England the winter may be averted. Your letter of August is to hand for which I sincerely thank you. I don't know of anything you could send me unless it should be Plum Pudding or Bun Loaf. But I am afraid that they would not keep so long a time, you might however send me a small bag of preserves if ever you have the opportunity. The last few lines I am writing on Sunday 28th the mail came in this m[ornin]g and as she goes away again at 12 we are obliged to work. I am grieved to hear of my poor dear Grandfather's illness. Give my love to him and also to my Grandmothers, to Jane Tom & Louis.

I am, My Dear Parents

Your affectionate Son

John Holt Who although so far from you in body is near you in spirit. I often think of you and consider whether it would not be better to be near you and pine than to have plenty at a distance

B/JH(A) 1/1/1/9Fernando Po
28th Oct 1862

My Dear Father,

I write you with an unsteady hand but at the moment of my commencing this on the 21st (although I have dated it 28th) it is very hot at least I feel it so in spite of the thermometer which stands at 82° but there is scarcely a breath of wind and as it is between the hour of 12 and 1 the time when the workmen go to dinner everything is hushed and still as if even nature herself felt the effects of our burning sun but I must say something in reply to your letter of 11th Aug the receipt of which I acknowledged by last mail. I am gratified to hear of Mr Laird's having written you and that my humble self was the subject of that communication it shews he takes an interest in me of which I may perhaps stand in need at some future time but regardless of this it is pleasant to think that I have so conducted myself during the five years I was with him as to call forth tokens of his approbation. When I think of the change which has so suddenly taken place I am at times puzzled and confused to believe that my apprenticeship has ended and that I am now 5000 miles away from the associations of that period I had become so used to the regularity and sameness of my business for so long a time that when the change came and I found my mind engaged in a very different pursuit of life. I found things very strange and sometimes am half inclined for the moment I may be thinking of it that it is not real, but my senses are soon recalled for the fact of my whereabouts cannot easily be mistaken. I am indeed much obliged to Mr Laird for his kind wishes but his remark as to having no fear of my health if I keep from drinking & smoking but I can hardly place faith in for if I may judge from my own experience, since my last I have been worse than ever. The doctor says this was caused by the paint of our house (which at the time was being painted) perhaps this may have been the cause anyhow I was very bad with vomiting of blood and at last a kind of black fluid. I was removed to the house of a native where I met with kind treatment and attention and although brought very low by it I am getting much stronger now and as our house is painted and dry I have returned for the day time but sleep out at night. In the day time the place is well ventilated therefore the smell is not so strong but at night when all is closed it would scarcely be safe for me to remain. I don't know what to think of these sicknesses I wish Mr Lynslager was here that I might talk with him on the subject and if I find I cannot remain I must then return, but what am I to do if I return I shall have no situation and although at times during my sickness I have wished to be at home and spend my life amidst the scenes of my childhood I know it is all folly and that I have to make my own way in the world however unhappy I may be however unpleasant I may find it to do so. When I think of the difficulties I picture to myself I shall have to contend with in my up-hill march through life I at times feel inclined to become faint-hearted and to think this is a hard life. But why should I murmur, It is more fancy than anything else. It must be that I have an uneasy mind and because I can't have everything to my hand as I would wish it. I become impatient. I must have patience and wait. If I cannot live here I trust I shall be able to live somewhere else, & if I cannot succeed here I must try to do so somewhere else even if I have to return to Old England to do it. I will hope for the best. I am glad to find you have got news of Jonathan he has had a long absence poor lad but I hope he will be all the better for his experience. I could have wished to have been in England that I might have been of service to him. You arranged with Bayne to get his wages very well Bayne wrote me about the transaction. It is useful you see to have someone with whom you can correspond in strange place or I should rather say a place at some distance from you. I am sorry to hear of poor G'father's illness. I hope it may be found not to be so serious as you suspect & trust I may again meet him at that dearest of all places home. I am sorry to

find more family rows it is always so, and it seems strange too that it should be, that there should be tittle tattle going on between relatives and neighbours pulling each other's character in pieces, this is more frequently the case in the country where people gossip so much. It seems to me that very little things are the cause of a great deal of unhappiness in our family, things which I think I should despise are the cause of a continual coldness and bitterness of feeling where all should be peace unity and love. With regard to my situation - I can hardly tell what it is likely to be until our "old man" comes out I have not much to do, but the state in which I find things gives me anything but ease. The sleepy natives, who go about as if they where pieces of wood and three of whom would do about as much work as an Englishman at home annoy me as it takes so long to do jobs that to my eyes ought to be done in less than no time. There are a many things which at first annoyed me but I fairly believe I am losing my primitive energy and partaking of the sleepy apathetic nature of the negro. I can't see any prospect of my ever doing much here & I am constantly puzzling my brain how I could do so and so and whether such and such a scheme would not answer. My master's trade is not so extensive as I had expected, he has had a good business at one time and with certain reforms might have again but I question whether he will adopt anything new. He has been so used to charge as he thought fit when he had no one to compete with that now there is plenty of competition in the island it seems hard to pull down prices and to have more systematical arrangements than before. A shop with Negro girls half naked behind the counter who do not know a letter from a figure would be attractive objects in an English establishment. How is it likely that with such things[?] as these we can compete with shops who have whites to superintend their interior arrangements. As to the Island of Fernando Po I think I gave you an account of it in my last or the one before. It is a beautiful Island covered with rank vegetation and trees of many kinds particularly the palm. The natives are satisfied with the money they can so easily make in the palm Oil trade that they care nothing about taking advantages of the offerings of nature In a few days I shall arrive at that age when the law declares me free of my parents power and responsible for my own actions. I cannot congratulate myself on having such rights conceded me. I feel more like one about to lose something. My parents can then say we are not responsible for your actions & this makes me feel as if I were losing something of the strong tie which has hitherto made no as one. I know that between us there will be nothing different, but the very thought of any change is a source of grief. Who would have thought when my Granny used to nurse me and thump me that I your firstborn would come of age on a foreign shore thousands of miles away where no one there should know that the 31st of October 1862 was his birthday and that he had attained the age of 21. No dance or song no gathering of friends and innumerable congratulations, not even spice cake and tea, which when I was at home invariably accompanied the anniversary of my birthday, will attend me now. My birthday and my coming of age will pass by unnoticed - that day which seems to most of us a strange and peculiar day one of the events of our life will be the same as any other day to me and the change from a "boy" to a "man" will be imperceptible. As I know some of the photographs which George Cherry took for you appear cracked on account of the cracking of the enamel at the back - as a bit of useful information on the subject which I picked up out of a paper and which you may not have seen. I extract the following - By soaking the photographs in (benzole) benzole) carefully the old varnish may be removed and a new one substituted. If done carefully there is no fear of destroying the picture - You might give this a trial as the above can be had of any chemist. With love to Mother and all my relatives at Garthorpe (I should like to hear from Aunt Nancy)

I remain My Dear Father
Your Affectionate Son
John Holt

The purser of the branch steamer having forgotten to forward my last month's letter you will receive both together - no letter of yours by the Sept mail

B/JH(A) 1/1/1/22Cameroons
Dec 25th 1884

P[e]r "Tormoso"

Messrs John Holt & Co
Liverpool
Gentlemen,

Your esteemed for ours of Nov 7th duly to hand on 20th but on a/c of their being on pilot to be had the Capt would not bring the "Benquela" up the river.

Two German Man of War "Bismarck" & "Adeler" arrived off Cameroons on the 18th. Messrs Jantzen & Thormahlens small steamer "Fan" had left for Calabar on the 14th with Capt Voss (who I believe intends establishing there for his firm) and Dr Büchuer the German representative here. Messrs Noermanns small Steamer "Dualla" was also at the bar in attendance on the Men of War. Much to every English mans surprise on the Morning of the 20th we saw both the "Fan" and "Dualla" towing up some 17 Boats & steamer launches filled with naval officer & men to the amount of 250 to 300. they passed the shipping between 9 & 10 AM in the midst of our trading time and at once opened fire on Hickory Town people chopped up Canoes landed their men & burnt the town without giving a moments notice either to Europeans or Natives, directly the men landed on Hickory Point & set fire to an house. the Joss Town people (who were also at war with King Bell) rushed to Messrs Noermanns Beach at Bell Town & seized their Sub. agent Mr Pontanies and carried him away into the town declaring that the first native in Joss town that was shot, they would retaliate & shoot Pontanies, after looting Hickory Town & shooting 3 or 4 men and 5 or 6 Women, the German's sent one Steam launch of men I suppose to try & obtain "Pontanies" but immediately the Germans came within range the Joss town people fired into the launch & Kept it up till such times as the launch had to retreat with a good deal of damage. and I believe several men Killed, They then left Hickory Town & came down with the whole of their boats & men while the launches was firing into the town they landed their men & tried to charge up Bells Hill and eventually did but not without losing several men, the native loss I believe was very small, one of the Joss Town Chiefs was Killed [viz.] Calabar Joss & immediately he died the brought out Noermanns Agent and Killed him also & I believe buried him with their chief. Joss Town people retreated to the bush and after setting fire to the town the Germans retired for the day. In firing Joss Town with Explosive bullets, they completely riddled Hamiltons dwelling House and very slightly wounded Mr Holder who is now in charge.

They also have fired 25 explosive shots into my large Iron Store one of which passed right through a barrel of Strong rum Anderton was on the beach paying book's & how he got to the ship through the Cross fire without being hurt is a great wonder. on Saturday Evening every ship was Searched for L K. Presso & Green [?] Joss the two Hickory Town Chiefs but without success & have not up to the present been found on Sunday 21st they brought up the "Adeler" and on Monday 22nd shelled Hickory town which is now a perfect wreck. as also is Bell & Joss towns. I believe they have Threatened Dido & [A]cqua town to bombard them also if they do not find the people they want.

NATIONAL MUSEUMS **LIVERPOOL**

The British Consul is expected here today 25th and I suppose then we shall have our instructions about damage done to British property.

This Steamer arrived at 6PM on 24th and leaves at 10am 25th will not stay to receive produce.

Produce on Hand 17 Casks Palm Oil about 91/2 Tons Palm Kernels.

I have drawn @ 10 d/s 2 Bills in favour of Mr E.C. Bennett for £4 & Emma May Good for £5 which I would & thank you to honor & place to debit Cameroons Establishment Enclosed please find D/e receipts for Kernels Ex. "Carl Noermann" also Indent & etc.

I am Gentlemen
Yours Obediently
W A J Harris

B/JH(A) 1/1/1/26Cameroons
25.12.84

Private

John Holt Esq
Liverpool
Sir,

On Dec 20th when the German Steam launches were towing up the river Locke Presso was on board my ship trading (he is one of my principle Traders). and after the launches began firing on Hickory town & chopping up their canoes I would not allow him to leave, but kept him on board, as being without arms & only in a small canoe & 4 paddles he could not possibly get to beach without a good deal of danger (little thinking that without any notice whatever the Germans would demand to search the British Ships. about 5.P.M I went in my Gig to Hickory Point, and stayed at Ashinalls vessel till about 8PM. it appears they came searched the ship as much as possible twice before I arrived and when I came on board at 8.30P.M I found 6 men in charge of the vessel directly afterwards a Lieutenant & one of Voss's Clerks arrived & demanded the Keys of the ship to search the vessel, this I refused to do without and written order from his Commander, the officer left to get one & returned again & recalled all the men that had been left to guard the ship. of course directly they left LK Presso left in a small Canoe & within an half hour the Officer again returned & Said he had orders to force all doors, I told him rather than do that as I know what his orders were, I would deliver up my Keys and I done so. he searched the ship all over & then left. Twenty Four 24 hours after burning the town & endangering European life the Enclosed Proclamation was issued. I have heard nothing from the Germans, also I feel quite certain in my own mind that if I had delivered up Lock Presso I should never have left Cameroons alive. as the Germans want to Kill him I believe & I should also have lost all my trust. I am sending a copy of this letter to Mr Watts and as I want to leave here in May it would I think be advisable to have my relief here in April, I intend to have all my trust over looked & seen to but I fear the Germans aim is to try and drive us out as the towns they punished contained fully half my traders and I know other English men are placed in the same way while the German's have no traders there. Merrs Noermann's Agent the natives blame for all their trouble and the native Threats against him and other white men is far from pleasant. I am on good terms with all the natives myself, but I think it possible that the German's will trouble me if the can get the chance as they are very jealous of our doing what little trade we have.

I am Sir
Yours Obediently
WAJ Harris

B/JH(A) 1/1/1/37

Mission House
Santa Isabel
Fernando Po
Sept 16th 1891

Dear Mr Holt

I have been waiting to write until I could get and send you all obtainable, and reliable information re Richard Lander's Grave and other matters mentioned in your letter, but feel I must not put off writing any longer. This therefore will come as an instalment. The following is a copy of Inscription asked for, taken from monument on mound near Point William "Sacred to the memory of the officers and men, who died while serving in the expedition to the River Niger under the British Government, in the years 1841 and 1842. This monument is erected by their shipmates and relatives". We took a copy at the same time of Beecroft's as far as possible, thinking you may like to have it. "Beneath this monument are deposited the remains of John Beecroft; (Spanish Governor) of the Island of Fernando Po and Her Britanic Majesty's Consul (for the Bight of Biafra) who died June 10th 1884, aged 64 years. This memorial was erected by the inhabitants of the Colony of Clarence, as a testimonial of their gratitude for his many years fatherly attention to their comforts and interests; for his unwearrying exertions to promote the happiness and welfare of the whole African Race"

It is extremely difficult to make out the whole of the above, indeed it took Mrs H. and me some time to decipher, In some cases there being only a few letters of the word at all visible still I think the above is in the main correct.

And now about Lauder. I never heard of there being any graves between the late British Consulate and H[?]fall's Beach. It is all clear now, and partly planted with Yams and Casada.

You remember Goodrich street? At the top of that the Governor has been recently clearing and has brought to light an old street leading down to the river - i.e. on your right hand; of course; as you go up Goodrich, near to were Sally Campbell used to live, and sure enough there is an orange grove, a row of trees being on each side of the newly cleared street leading down towards the river, which is very narrow, almost lost in the bush, and can hardly be said to "*murmur*". At least I did not hear it. Mammy Job tells me there were three buried there, two white men and one African, but is still most confident about Lander's grave; admits it is the presence of the other graves in the immediate vicinity that enables her to be so sure. It is near to a "murmuring" stream. The cotton tree has been cut down and is fast going to decay. Rev [W] Sturgeon's grave is not far away. I was searching for it in the Nicell[?] bush the other day, but failed to find it. I saw it more than once when here before and Mr Griffiths had the bush cleared and the stone washed. I am afraid the stone must have fallen down, intend taking a boy and having bush cleared. Mammy Job most certainly can tell you the exact location of Sturgeon's grave. She declares most positively there never was a stone sent out for Lander, so that if she's right your friend Whitford has been drawing on his imagination I told her what he said about Mrs Matthews having nursed Lander, she opened eyes and mouth in astonishment. "Mrs Matthews nurse him! No. No!! Sot it is on more that one point; Whitford versus Mammy Job as I was saying to Gibney, the other day. He at once said "I vote for Mammy Job, what do these fellows that merely call at the place know". I am certainly of Mr G's opinion. The old lady must have a wonderful memory the way she talks about matters of long tyme [?]. Any one disposed for Book making might get a

lot of useful information from her. Indeed she is a living oracle in nearly everything relating to this town, in days gone by especially Being up at the Government House one day I mentioned to the Govr the fact of Lander being buried there, told him who he was and what he did and asked if there would be any objection to the erection of a monument over his remains. He said the people should have retained that part as a cemetery, and then they could have done what they liked with it they had however abandoned it and chosen another place. He humourously remarked it seemed as if they wanted to bury all along the river side. He said inside the cemetery presently used as such, the people can put up what they like, outside he has not power to grant permission. If an application were made to him he would have to forward it to his Government at Madrid, Especially in such a case as the one under consideration the grave being really in the middle of the street, which might at some future time be built upon. He suggested the removal of the bones to present burial ground.

It seems then the best and most hopeful plan would be for those interested to make an application, say through the Foreign Office to Madrid for permission either to remove the bones, or better still, I think, to erect a monument on the side of the street, stating that near that spot he was buried, or permission may be granted to put the monument right over the grave, as unless there should be quite an unexpected enlargement of the town that part will never be needed and already within a radius of a few yards there are some half doz. memorials - Matthews, Lynslager, Cap. Pollard &c which it would be a pity to remove, especially where land is so plentiful in every other direction. Another plan would be to erect a monument in front of the town somewhere along the cliff. Either on Point William near one of those above referred to, or a capital place - in front of our Church on that wide space. It would be far oftener visited there than either on Pl. William or over the remains, and that would render unnecessary any dispute as to the exact site of his remains.

But in any case application must be made to the (Spanish) Home Government. Need I say I shall be glad to render any assistance I can to perpetuate the memory of a brave and worthy man, who fell on the field of duty and danger. And now I think I have written enough for once, and am a bit feverish. Our united love to you all

faithfully yours
W. Holland

B/JH(A) 1/1/2/2

W & H. Laird
1 Leadenhall Street, London. E.C.
and
23 Castle Street, Liverpool
COAL DEALERS

23, Castle Street
Liverpool 18th June 1862

Dear Holt

J B Bayne

Yours of yesterday to hand this morning

Ditchfield returned from London to day with a message from Lynslager that you are to meet him at the Angel Hotel Dale Street on Sunday morning next. I have not been able to get the written list of outfit for you, Captn De la Motte[?] says you will require a good supply of white shirts, some flannel singlets, 2 or 3 Suits of flannel Clothes (similar to cricket Clothes the flannel being worn as a preventative of cold) 2 or 3 Suits of very light clothes, Some Strong leather Boots & light ones & canvas shoes - during the rainy Season at Fernando Po the roads are very bad & the heavy boots will be indispensable, all these things you ought to be able to purchase here ready made, there will not be time to have them made at home.

Hilton informs me Williams wants to buy your Rifle Clothes and is going to Liver Villa to night to look at them & try them on the result Hilton has promised to send you by tonights post but he will not take them to Ballantines until he again hears from you. Dempster happened to be upstairs when I was telling Hilton about them He thinks it would be a good speculation to take them out with you as they are, you are certain to sell them to the niggers well.

I am glad you not letting the thoughts of your early departure interfere with the short time left you for enjoyment there would be no philosophy in that. Considering the name Africa has acquired for fever &c you could scarcely expect your friends to look on your departure with anything but alarm it remains for you to convince them they magnify the danger and in return for their gloomy forebodings picture to them your return with health unimpaired, a complete knowledge of the Trading Customs & perhaps a £1000 to your credit at your bankers to enable you to have a good spell at home & influence others to secure your services for a second trip to the Coast as their representative. I shall expect to see you on Friday meanwhile I am

Yours Truly

J.B. Bayne

B/JH(A) 1/1/2/3Sierra Leone
13th July 1862

My Dear Parents

Having arrived at this place in good health & spirits I will proceed to give you an account of our Proceedings since our departure from Madeira, on the 1st Inst that being the place from which I last wrote you. Seen from the sea Madeira has a peculiar foreign appearance which looks strange to my English eyes it is situate on the slopes of several hills which converge into where the town is built. The streets are very steep and bullocks are used for the purposes of conveyance instead of horses. The flowers here are most luxuriant they hang over the walls and grow in the greatest profusion at times loading the air with their perfume. Fruit is also very plentiful such as plantains pumpkins, berries plums, apples, figs, pears, bananas cherries, grapes, oranges &c potatoes, peas, cabbage, tomatoes & other vegetables are also abundant and consequently cheap apricots I bought at 15 a penny (a treat I guess in England! wouldn't it!) plums were selling at 12 a penny peaches at ½ each & others in the same proportion. The people are very civil & respectful they invariably touch or take off hats both to each other & to strangers - very different this from what one sees in England. The scenery is also very pretty & the climate warm but there is a something which does not suit my eye. In England we have verdure to the top of the hills - here it appears in patches few and far between. It would however be a beautiful retreat from our winter but how delightful an English spring breeze would feel now. Wouldn't it be glorious. We arrived at Santa Cruz Teneriffe on the 3rd. This island is very steep & rocky bold & rugged but very majestic. Its celebrated peak which rises to a height of more than 12,000 feet is a magnificent sight even when seen in hazy weather as with me. In Madeira we see nothing but Portuguese in Teneriffe we see nothing but Spaniards. I was particularly pleased with the former the latter produced a different impression - idle lazy beggars It was at this place our brave Nelson lost his colours which are preserved by the Spaniards as a great treasure. They are indeed a treasure double valuable as being the only dealing with us of which they can boast as having come off best. I have not space to tell you all particulars, these you will find in my journal which I keep written up. We arrived at Bathurst on the African Coast on the 8th. As you may imagine I first caught sight of this land (my destined home for some time) with mixed feelings of curiosity fear & hope. The land is low but in appearance I can best compare it with my own beloved Isle of Axholme the likeness would be more complete if a few more trees were cut down, but nobody would think who looked upon it for the first time that it was unhealthy. Sights stranger than ever here present themselves Black men & women in the most outrageous dresses, some with hardly anything on at all others with patterns most extravagant & put on too in a style so sloven that their appearance (compared with what one sees in England) is ludicrous, but then it is only a difference of taste & a black man has as much right to please his own tastes as we whites have & who shall say which is the most sensible? It is hardly right to ridicule anything because we happen to think differently from other people. We arrived at Sierra Leone yesterday morning. This place is surrounded with hills & as this is the rainy season its appearance is beautiful. The hills are covered with verdure to their tops. How awful the sudden transition of mind from this scene to one of death. This beauty this loveliness is a hiding place of death's from whence he sends his most fatal shafts. It is a place in which one might delight to live and die if surrounded with friends from home and proof against its deadly malaria. Although in the midst of disease our passengers live a continual feast of course there are many exceptions but many are continually imbibing these horrid liquors. They tell me that unless I drink I am sure to die. I am afraid there drinking will not be a passport for life. It is shocking to heare

the jokes they also make as if to die were nothing & they speak of such a person's death as if it were a thing expected and as if nothing in particular had happened. They certainly are a peculiar class of men These African traders. Like everybody here I am oppressed by heat but I perspire freely which is accepted as a good sign. I am enjoying good health and have every hope of keeping so if I have only the sense to "take care of myself" which I intend to do. I expect to hear from you by the July mail & I hope you will have little apprehension for my safety. We are all in the hands of one who is able to preserve us from all ill. I trust in God. At Bathurst the thermometer stood at 98° under the awning & at 128° in the sun I have had an offer from a gentleman on board to go to Lagos if I don't like Fernando Po but if Mr Lynslager behaves well to me & my health is good I shall not think of leaving him although I am promised more than £100 I linger to say something more but as I want to go to lunch I must conclude with love to all at home from

My dear Parents

Your ever Affectionate Son

John Holt

B/JH(A) 1/1/2/4

W & H. Laird
1 Leadenhall Street, London. E.C.
23 Castle Street, Liverpool.
COAL DEALERS

23 Castle Street
Liverpool 16th June 1862
J. B. Bayne

Dear Holt

The enclosed letter came this morning addressed to you which I have opened and shown to Mr Dempster as you wished, on reading it you will find there is nothing requiring an answer, but should the agreement be sent by mistake to this office I will forward it to you by first post after receipt. Dempster desires me to say that Ditchfield had a telegram on Saturday from Lynslager asking him to engage you so that this matter may now be considered as settled. Dempster has promised to ask Captn De la Motte[?] who was out on the Coast with the "Nitriever"[?] what you will require for your outfit, if I can get this list from him I will send it tomorrow for probably you may be able to get many of the things better at home. Ditchfield had gone to London but Dempster thinks you had better not stop too long for there is little doubt of your sailing on 24th. I had a chat with Tompowell[?] to day re Fernando Po and he says Lynslager is not Consul there but simply a trader & that he also has a farm and breeds to a great extent (not niggers) but I should say this will make your duties lighter having no official formalities to observe. There is a spanish governor who has two white governesses with his family one spanish, the other French so you will not be quite without female society especially as Lynslagers House is next door to the governors. Captn Burton is British Consul out there. I trust you will make yourself as jolly as possible during the short time you have to stay at home & do justice to all your friends hospitality during the Feast Season. Excuse me for reminding you of your watch but I should think it would be invaluable on the Coast & I feared you might forget it

Believe me

Yours Truly

J B Bayne

I would have written you on Saturday re- Ditchfields Telegram only Dempster promised to do so & could not fulfil his promise.

As Lynslager is not Consul it would perhaps be as well to look well after the payment of your £100 before signing agree't don't give too long credit

B/JH(A) 1/1/2/523 Castle Street
Liverpool

My Dear Father,

I enclose you Jonathans letter for perusal, after which please return The Beechworth I saw by our Telegraph a few days ago arrived at Bombay on the 31st January, after a very protracted voyage.

Mr Laird wishes me to stay until I am out of my apprenticeship before I go to sea. Of course it is my duty to do so & I cannot but submit however I am writing to him in a day or two & shall not let the matter rest. I spoke to an old purser on the subject this morning & he advised me not to go he considers it a bad place for a young man, a place I suppose in which virtues are scarce and vices abundant this may be the case, but so far I have been able to avoid many of the rocks on which young men are wrecked & I think by the exercise of a little common sense and fortitude I should be able to make myself proof against such things.

Mankind is like a lot of hungry pigs fighting over a trough of milk everybody seems to be trying to pull the piece of food out of his neighbours mouth The common pursuits of life are full of earnest aspirants for the use of their peculiar craft so full indeed that in England we have a great many people starving on account of being unable to get bread and consequently work. What am I to do? if I stay where I am I have the prospect of a £60 salary which to my ambitious nature is beggary - no it is money I want & money I must have if I go through fire and water for it When I say I want money it is not for the pleasure of simply having a certain sum of gold it is not the gold, but the independence it brings & the cares which it drives away I am not miserly I do not want to hoard money, but I should like to have as much as would enable to satisfy my own peculiar fancies and exonerate me from thoughts of future beggary This is hard to get. It seems to me as if I were just entering the world and commencing a struggle with everybody for a bit of bread, every way I look I find thousands busy eating & it appears as if I must go & struggle with them or pine. This is my idea of life so far as I can at present see it I am much obliged for the bag & its contents which were very nice & I assure you properly appreciated I should have been all the more pleased had I received a note from you but as fate denied me that happiness it strikes me I am having my revenge by giving you plenty of it in return. I am very busy now with a concert to be given by Our Society on the 20th inst so you will please be satisfied with this for a week or two, for what with one thing and another I am kept at work until all hours

I am

Affectionately Yours

John Holt

[note written in coloured pencil]

The island of Tristan d'acunha is about 2000 miles W S W of the Cape of Good Hope - What the Beechworth has been doing there I cannot possibly make out - it is a very long distance out of a direct course

B/JH(A) 1/1/2/6Liver Villa
Tranmere
12th June 1862

My Dear Parents,

It is very uncertain whether I shall be able to go home on Saturday I have this day had an offer from a gentleman in Liverpool to go out to Fernando Po on the 24th of the month. I have written to Mr Laird for permission to do so as you are aware he is my master until the 30th Inst & I am waiting his reply which will arrive I expect on Saturday. If his reply is favourable I can come on Saturday if not I shall have to write to Glasgow explaining how I am situated & begging them to wait until the sailing of the July steamer when I shall be my own master & shall have to wait their answer, but you can tell the carrier to wait in any case as I suppose it will only be a matter of 1/6. I have agreed to accept this offer on condition that I can get off of course. The principle features are, I shall go for 3 years for which I receive at the rate of £100 p[er] an. I shall have board and lodging found me, my only expenses will be for clothes, my duties will be those of a clerk combined with those of overseer & store keeper my employer is the British Consul there & I shall be his only white assistant. The climate is more healthy than that of any other part of the coast. The purser through whom I received the offer says the situation is worth £300 a year. But whether it be so or not I think as I have long had a great desire to go to Africa, as this is the most healthy part of it & as I may not early have the like opportunity & hope you will agree with me that I have been prudent in accepting it or rather in doing so conditionally as it is not settled yet. I have written only yesterday (for a situation as under-purser) to the P & O Co. where I should perhaps have been sent to the China Seas at £40 or 50£ p[er] an for 5 years before being promoted to the office of purser or I have no doubt I could have gone in the African Service for a voyage or two in that capacity which I had offered to do for nothing if they would only give me a trial & might then have been made a purser when a vacancy was open. But at all times under such circumstances as I find myself placed in. I think it better to accept a certainty in preference to an uncertainty. If I do not like the situation I can return, if I am too ill to stay I can return also by paying ½ my passage money supposing it is within the first 12 mns. If any illness occurs after that time I shall be sent home at his expense. If I go out it will also be at his expense & as 1st Cabin passenger the passage money alone amounts to £40 I am My Dear Parents

Your Affectionate Son

John Holt

B/JH(A) 1/1/2/8

23 Castle Street
Liverpool
12th June 1862

Mr Laird Esq

Dear Sir,

Since writing you yesterday I have had an offer to go out to Fernando Po as Secretary to the British Consul there J. B. B Lynslager Esq who is now in London, which having duly considered I have agreed conditionally to accept. These conditions are that I shall first write you on the subject begging your permission to leave on the 24th of this month, before giving a final answer The climate, I am told, is the most healthy on this island than on any other part of the coast & M. Laird Esq in his narrative of the Niger Expedition also gives the same testimony the salary (£100 p[er] an) will also be much more than I could hope to obtain by going out as under-purser and as I have made full enquiries respecting my duties &c there; with which I am perfectly satisfied & as I have also long desired to go to Africa I think I have now an opportunity offered me which should not be missed

I have, therefore, once more to trespass on your kindness and to beg your permission to end the term of my apprenticeship on the 24th instead of the 30th Inst I have explained the circumstances in which I am situated to Mr. Loughland[?] who has the appointing of this situation and he has consented to wait until Saturday for my reply before taking any further steps in the affair.

May I be allowed to beg an answer p[er] return which I shall anxiously wait and which judging from your many past indulgences will I have every hope be favourable?

I remain

Dear Sirs

Your Faithful Servt

John Holt

B/JH(A) 1/1/2/9

Laird, Fletcher & Co.
Ship Brokers
1, Leadenhall Street,
London,
& 23, Castle Street, Liverpool
Agents for
The African Steam Ship Compy.

1 Leadenhall Street

London 13 June 1862

My dear Sir,

John Holt is thinking of accepting a situation as Clerk to Mr Lynslager at £100 a year at Fernando Po.

As he had made up his mind to take the risk of the African climate I think that Horsfalls, Harrisons, or some of the parties whose Agents have lately died may be willing to give him a berth & that he would be in a better position for future advancement by going out as a Clerk for one of their houses than to Lynslager.

Holt has been a good apprentice & understands Book-keeping & a/cs well.

Will you kindly therefore oblige me by introducing him to Horsfalls, or any other parties you think likely to want a Clerk.

If he cannot get employment with them he would accept Lynslager's offer.

Very truly yours,

Wm. Laird

B/JH(A) 1/1/2/10

Mr John Holt.
Liverpool

Conservative Club,
London. S.W.
13 June 1862

Dear Sir,

I am in receipt of your note of 12th Inst, & have written to Mr Higginson on the subject of your leaving on 24th Inst.

Fernando Po is one of the best places to go on the Coast, & I sincerely trust that you will keep your health.

I forward by this post some remarks on the Niger drawn up by my late brother, & call your attention to Appendix No1 in which you will find some observations as to the best means of keeping your health, which may be of use.

Before finally accepting the offer from Mr Lynslager, I think you had better enquire whether Messrs Horsfall or Harrison have any opening in their establishments on the Coast, as with them you would be likely to succeed better than with Mr L.

I write Mr Fletcher to ask him to be good enough to introduce you to some of these parties. Going to them you would learn the mode of trading on the Coast which might lead to your obtaining a good position eventually.

I shall be glad to hear from you from time to time how you get on, & wishing you health & success am,

Very truly yours,

Wm. Laird

B/JH(A) 1/1/2/11

At Sea
S.S. Cleopatra
30th June 1862

My Dear Parents,

I expect we shall find ourselves at Madeira early tomorrow morning our passage hitherto has been very fine except however the last few days which I call rather stormy but I suppose the Capt. would say it had been a fine passage & I suppose he knows best The sea is running higher than ever I saw it before whether fine or stormy the wind is right aft & what with rolling and pitching and both combined I find no little difficulty in writing. I have however much of this work to do I am getting the purser to let me help him & from what I have hitherto seen of his duties they are just nothing or the next thing to it. This life on board ship is awfully disagreeable a queer life, all sorts of goings on more like something in you line if you were to have gambling & could make your house pitch & toss as we are doing Here is nothing but eating drinking talking playing & laziness with their usual accompaniments.

I might have stayed until next mail had I wished to do so but I dreaded the idea of a second good-bye & so bought all I thought of & as you no doubt already know came out by this steamer besides I shall be a month nearer the end of my term. In writing to me address your letters to care of Mr. J.B. Bayne, Mess W & H Laird Liverpool he will forward these by steamer I forgot my brush & comb be kind enough to send them to Bayne as I shall want them. I have and do still sometimes feel awfully downhearted at leaving England but I hope this will soon wear off as I get accustomed to my new circumstances. Home my friends & comforts never feel so dear as when they are absent it is only then we give them their true value. Do not let my absence give you any unpleasantness - grieve only when my name shall cause you dishonour - accept our separation as God's will and pray for me if I am unwell or desire to visit England I am at liberty to do so

For the present farewell though separated in body our minds are still united it defies space and is ever enjoying communion with those in whom it delights.

Dear Parents

Believe me

Affectionately Yours

John Holt

Before leaving Liverpool I made further enquiries about the Beechworth the crew are all right but of what they were doing the owners knew nothing.

B/JH(A) 1/2/14

Madiera
29th April 1861

Dear Brother

After I left you at Liverpool I was rather down hearted when I got on board the "Athenian" in the morning to see all the sailors coming tippling along fighting and swearing like Turks we went out into the river and rode there till Wednesday morning about 9 when we got under weigh and came out to sea we past Holy head about 4pm we never saw land till we made Madiera about 8am to day we are riding at anchor off a little town I don't know its name but the Inhabitants are Portuguese as soon as we got here there was scores of Canoes off to us to trade with us buy Monkey Jackets or anything they take a fancy to Our Officers appear to be very nice men. I think the crew altogether amounts to about 40[?] besides passengers just allow me to thank you for giving me this paper but I think you might have given me better for bad pen; paper & writer don't go very well but you will perhaps make it out please remember me to my bed mate Mr Lowmas let me remain your's

Affectionately

Jon Holt

PS just gone 5 bells ½ pas 10pm

B/JH(A) 1/1/2/15Ship Beckwith
Bombay 18th Feb /62
Jonathan

My Dear Brother

I received your letter of the 24th Decr. and was very glad to hear "Good News from Home" again for it appears to be almost a century since I had the pleasure of so doing though it is but 5 months. 5 months on the salt water always seeing the same faces over and over eating the same salt food beef and biscuit one day biscuit and beef the next and in that time only seeing land once, the Island of Tristan Da Cunha in Lat and long with about 80 Inhabitants, Produces a sensation which you land Sharks cannot imagine but you say you wish you had experienced this sensation, why did you not stop at sea when you were there. it is all very well for you to talk and say you wish you had done so but you know you do not mean so, think about leaving Old England perhaps for ever to come on board ship to be kicked about by sailors the scrapings of the World to be broiled away by the sun and to be slung on a stage cleaning the gross[?] off the ships bottom with a shark along side ready to catch you if you fall overboard and many more things which I know you would not like but as for me I am fit for nothing else though I do not get knocked about here I am very well satisfied with the crew Officers and particularly the Captain who I think is a regular gentleman I think you must have spoke to him as he appears to know my Brother In Lairds Office. I am very sorry to hear you did not enjoy your xmas I fear you did not enjoy it as well as I did I like your self was in mind on Xmas eve eating the Cake and drinking the Ale with the yule log on the fire and happy faces around me but on Xmas day I was not in mind but in reality eating the pudding though not with the "Old folks at Home". It was the warmest Christmas I ever experienced for we crossed the Equator day before a little warmer than you would have it although you did not say any thing about the weather. I and another OS have got a berth to our selves clear of the forecastle men which makes it far more comfortable our neighbours are two midshipmen who are very familiar with me. Please be so good as to write back again when you receive this and accompany the letter with a Newspaper and tell them at Home for I expect the'll think very long of some news from me but I could not write before we arrived Please give my kind regards to everybody who requires it and I think It is too late to wish you a Merry Xmas I will wish you a Happy new year

and remain

Your Affectonly

Jon Holt

PS I will try and get the things you spoke about but money is scarce here I shall write home before we leave

B/JH(A) 1/1/2/23Fernando Po
April 10th 1867

My Dear Jon,

I again avail myself of an opportunity of writing you by the bi monthly line of steamers an Interline having lately put on. Affording us the extra communication with England previously enjoyed. We have now the Mail Fortnightly instead of Monthly it give us the double amount of Letter writing but affords us a much better opportunity of trading I think John is just upon the point of Visiting you it is very probable he may want you to come back with him What say you if as such he proposes are you inclined to venture your valuable self upon the African Coast let me tell you if you keep in health and keep your wits about you you will do much better than staying at Home yet it is rather a risk at First you no doubt would soon get over it the Climate affects me but very little now I am about the same as when in England A first I was very sick yet it has all worn off. Again if you come here you must not expect to have everything the same as at Home there [are] a many inconveniences [to] be put up with which [all] have to be overlooked although you have been some time from Home. it would not be the same as just leaving it. you in your present situation have no doubt found the difference. I have found it is not a good plan to bring from Home any one to the African Coast, everyone coming here ought to have been at Sea a couple of Years and then they would be content with the mode of proceedings.

On the other hand don't suppose you there are nothing better than mud hut and savages and all these kind of thing. In our present place we have a fine House tho built of wood and accomadation equal to the Governor of the Island. the late Mr Lynslager was Governor some [four years] back. Further you will hear Bye and Bye

You will please to remember me to all enquirers

With Kind love

Believe Me
Yours Affection Brother
John Holt

Remember to Mr Little if you see him

JH

