

A Note on the origins of Figure 1 in John van Laun, *Comment to Dr Jenny Bulstrode's paper 'Black metallurgists and the making of the industrial revolution', History and Technology Vol.55 No. 2 (2023). A review of the technology used during the operation of Reeders Pen at Morant Bay Jamaica 1772 to 1783. 'Historical Metallurgy' (Vol. 55 No. 2 (2025))*

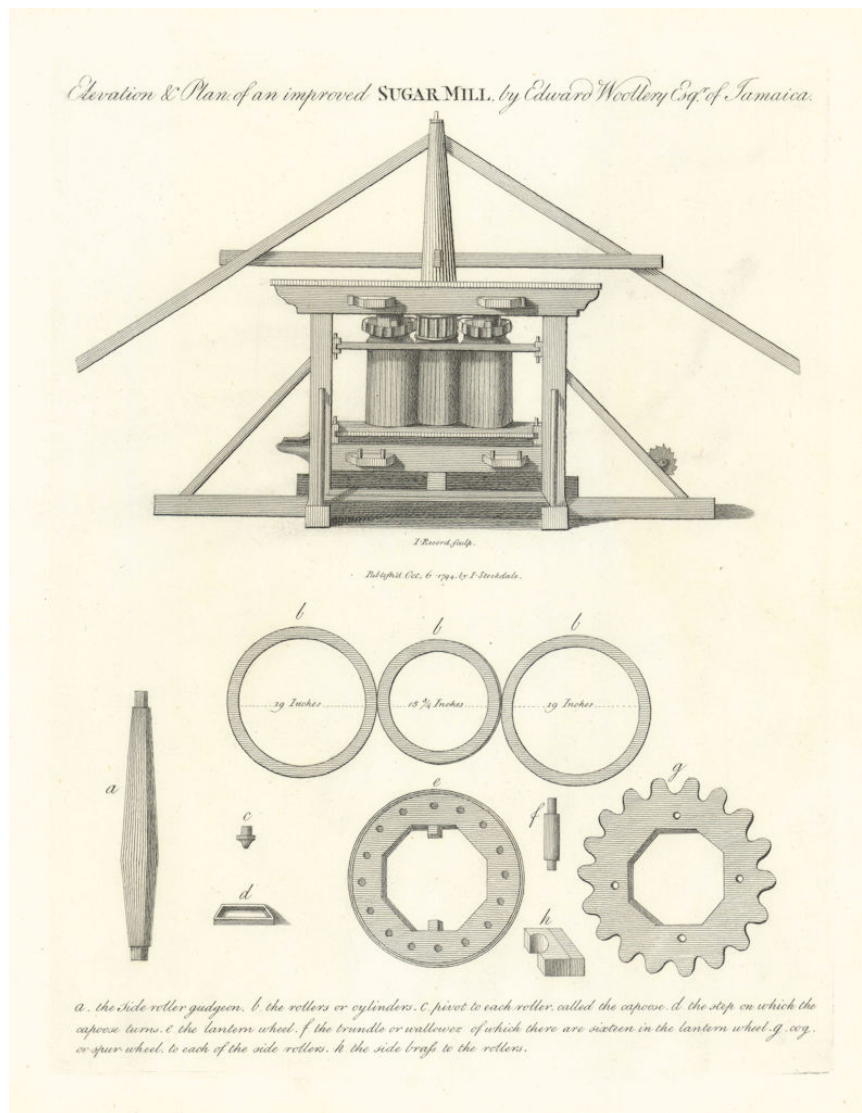


Fig. 1. Elevation & Plan.of an improved SUGAR MILL;. by Edward Woollery Esq. of Jamaica 1794.

A recent paper (John van Laun *Historical Metallurgy* Volume 55 No. 2) used an illustration of a sugarcane mill but without any direct discussion except to state its source (Fig. 1) . Further research suggests it as a possible candidate for the foundry discussed in this paper that was established in the 1770s at Reeders Pen on Morant Bay Jamaica.

Such a sugarcane mill followed a grant received by John Reeder in the 1770s from the Jamaican Assembly ‘to assist him in carrying on his iron foundry’. This conveniently chimes with an award of ‘a piece of plate for his improvements on mills for grinding sugar canes’ to Edward Woollery (1741- 1789) (*Journals of The Assembly of Jamaica* (Volume 6, Nov. 18, 1766 – Dec. 21, 1776) University of New Brunswick HIL-MICL FC LPR .J3A8J6).

By 1773 Woollery had moved to Britain and armed with his award was able to have his Jamaican achievement ratified by a Patent which included ‘all the colonies and plantations abroad’ (2nd day of March, in the year above (1773) (Bennet Woodcroft, *Titles of Patents of Invention...1617 to 1852, vol. I* (London, 1854), p. 187.

The obvious intention was to manufacture his Jamaican sugarcane mill in England several of which appear to have been installed in Jamaica (Bryan Edwards *The History, Civil and Commercial, of the British Colonies in the West Indies 3rd edition* (London 1801). pp.262 - 63) Even so the type illustrated in 1801 dates from 1794 and was especially engraved for the John Stockdale the publisher of Edwards’s *History*. It must therefore have been intended for a previous publication as witnessed by the following footnote - *IV. Plan and Elevation of an improved Sugar Mill, designed by EDWARD WOOLLERY; Esq. of Jamaica; to face p. 223.*

This, of course, begs the question of a manufacturer for Woollery’s sugarcane mill once his patent expired in 1787 and his death two years later. It seems likely that once this occurred manufacture passed to Thomas Goulding, of the Bank Side, Southwark, whom Bryan Edwards praised stated ‘that his work is executed with such truth and accuracy, as reflect the highest credit on his manufactory’. In 1794 Goulding was listed as ‘Sugar mill maker & Iron founder, 45, Bankside, Southwark (Kent’s Directory for the Year 1794’ - the year of the publication of the engraving.

Conclusion: In Edwards’s view ‘the great improvement; the addition to the middle roller of a lantern-wheel, with trundle or wallowers, was purely his own [Woollery’s]’. It is intended that this factor will be explored in a future paper regarding the development of the importance of the ‘wobbler’ coupling which connected the drive shaft to the roll in which there was a variation in the thickness between the supply of iron to the thickness of the product.

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