

CWL in Brazil: Further Evidence

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Bahia Railway Contractor's Offices, Salvador, 1860:

<http://vfco.brazilia.jor.br/ferrovias/Bahia/Ferrez/70theQuays.shtml>

Charles Leadbeater senior was born in Manchester, Lancashire, in 1826, and according the UK Census for 1861, the year before he died, his professional activity was of a 'clerk to a Railway Contractor'. He married Emma Morgan in 1853 and they had a son, Charles Webster Leadbeater, who was born in 1854. Charles Leadbeater's death certificate registers his death as having taken place on 17th June 1862 at the age of 37. The same certificate declares that his occupation was that of a 'Book Keeper to a Railway Contractor'.

C. Jinarajadasa, in a note belonging to the collection in the Archives of the Theosophical Society at Adyar, Chennai, India, stated that Charles Leadbeater went to Brazil in 1858 as part of his work for the company owning concession of the Bahia and San Francisco Railway. Mr Jinarajadasa also states, incorrectly, that Mr Leadbeater was the chairman of the said company. Another statement of Mr Jinarajadasa, that Mr and Mrs Leadbeater had a younger son called Gerald is not supported by research done in Brazil and in England.

In early 2007, Mr Ricardo Lindemann, then National President of the Theosophical Society in Brazil, with the help of TS members in Salvador, Bahia, northeast of Brazil, discovered in the Bahia Public Archives in that city a ship manifest that registered the arrival in Salvador, on 30th May 1858, of Charles Leadbeater, his wife and one son. Mr Lindemann kindly obtained an official certificate about this finding

from the official concerned in Bahia Public Archives. This was announced on the website site CWL World - <http://www.cwlworld.info/html/bio.html> - which is dedicated to present aspects of the life and work of Charles Webster Leadbeater. The announcement attracted attention of interested people in different continents. On the above mentioned website it was stated that 'research continues in Brazil in order to establish the nature of his father's activities there'. The presence of C. W. Leadbeater in Brazil has been treated with both scepticism and derision by many, particularly among scholars in the field of Theosophical history.

A number of academic works in Brazil in the recent past has demonstrably established the presence of British engineers and workers in railway projects in Brazil from the middle of nineteenth century onwards.

In his Ph. D. thesis "Se Eles São Livres ou Escravos": Escravidão e Trabalho Livre nos Canteiros da Estrada de Ferro de São Francisco a Bahia, 1858-1863 ("Are They Free or Slaves": Slavery and Free Work on the Work Sites of the Bahia and San Francisco Railway), Robério Santos Souza states (translated from the original Portuguese text):

In 1855, Joaquim Muniz Barreto, after obtaining the exclusive contract and the guarantees of imperial and provincial incentives, organized as a public limited company, the regulations of the *Bahia and San Francisco Railway Company*, with headquarters in London, where its directors and main shareholders resided. However, the businessman from Bahia gave up his privileges and transferred his rights as a concession holder to the British businessmen gathered in this company organized in England.¹

Robério Santos Souza, in his paper *A Railway from Bahia to San Francisco: Political Control, Integration and Regional Autonomy*, stated that 'the works for the construction of the railway that would take from Salvador to the outback and to the San Francisco river started, in fact, in 1858. From technical studies funded by British engineers it was established that the railway would start from a sector called Jequitiaia which is close to the area near the sea in the Bay of All Saints in Salvador'.²

In her essay *History – a tradition of dependency*, published in the Brazilian website http://svn.br.inter.net/5star/CIB/CadernoCultural_ERF.html, and based on her M.A. dissertation 'From the Sea of Bahia to the River in the Outback: Bahia and San Francisco Railway' (2005), Etelvina Reboucas Fernandes elaborates on the British presence in Brazilian railways (translated from the original Portuguese text):

Between 1858 and 1880, twenty-nine engineers arrived in Bahia – among them, four worked on the railway and two were telegraphers, among other professions. The increase in the number of engineers was due to the demand for these professionals for the construction of railways that had begun in Bahia from 1858 onwards. Like Charles Blacker Vignoles, a much respected railway engineer in England, who took part in the construction of the railway from Manchester to Liverpool, in 1826. He arrived in Bahia to supervise the construction of the railway, whose project had been prepared by him, the Bahia and São Francisco Railway in 1858, and worked as the chief engineer of this railway from 1865 to 1875.

In the book *Charles Blacker Vignoles: romantic engineer* (1982) K. H. Vignoles mentions Charles Vignoles' work on the Bahia and San Francisco Railway:

The concession to build the first 76 miles of the line from Bahia was granted to an English company by the Brazilian Government, which guaranteed the interest on a capital of £1 800 000. It was to be built as a single-track line, with a gauge of 5 ft 3 in. Vignoles confirmed his essential confidence in his son by appointing him resident engineer, and John Watson became the contractor.³

Etelvina Reboucas Fernandes, in her essay above mentioned, includes a reference to another British engineer who also worked on the Bahia and San Francisco Railway – Richard Tiplady (translated from the original in Portuguese):

Richard Tiplady came to Bahia to work in railways at the invitation of Hugh Wilson, who had received from the government the concession to build the railway from Bahia to Cachoeira. Tiplady worked in the Bahia and San Francisco Railway, as chief-engineer, from 1875 to 1880.

Robério Santos Souza, in his doctoral thesis above mentioned, makes reference to another British engineer – James Overend (translated from the original in Portuguese)

In the short time in which he had commercial businesses in Bahia, the contractor Watson always relied on the services of other Englishmen, many of them engineers who had been designated while still in London to deal with his various contracts. His representative in the Company of Dykes was the Englishman James Overend, according to a power of attorney signed in London in 1857. On that occasion, Watson declared to constitute Overend as his official representative, since he [Overend] was about to go to “Bahia of Brazil’s Empire in connection with a certain contract regarding a deed dated 20 April 1856 [...] in the city of London for the construction of a dyke. Travelling in the British commercial ship Tamar, which left the port of Southampton, the civil engineer Overend landed in Bahia on 31 July 1857, to work in the railway.

As we shall see, Overend also returned to Bahia on 30 May 1858.

According to the facsimile of the ship manifest of passengers arriving in Salvador, Bahia, on 30 May 1858, reproduced below, and which is now online, both Richard Tiplady and James Overend, who worked on the Bahia and San Francisco Railway line, are listed.

In the same document are also listed as having arrived in Salvador, Bahia, on the same date, Charles Leadbeater, his wife and their young son. They would stay in Bahia for a year, before returning to England. One wonders what adventures they came across while in Brazil. One year is a pretty long time.

ANO.	MEZ.	DIA.	PORTO DE PROCEDENCIA.	EMBARCAÇÃO.	NOMES DOS PASSAGEIROS.	NATU																			
						Homens.	Mulheres.	Com familia.	Quantas pessoas de familia	Austria.	Alcanha.	Argel.	Baden.	Bavien.	Belgica.	Bolivia.	Bremen.	Chile.	Confederagão Argentina.	China.	Dinamarca.	Estados de Buenos Ayres.	Duas Sicilias.	Estados Unidos d'America.	Francia.
1858	Maio	30	Southampton	Pag. Anglo-Tamara	George Sauer	1																			
"	"	"	"	"	Friedrich Sampson	1																			
"	"	"	"	"	John Southey	1																			
"	"	"	"	"	Thomas Whit	1																			
"	"	"	"	"	James Overend	1																			
"	"	"	"	"	Charles Leadbeater	1	1	2																	
"	"	"	"	"	Wm. Lewis Deansly	1																			
"	"	"	"	"	Richard Tiplady	1																			
"	"	"	"	"	Robert Thompson	1																			
"	"	"	"	"	Jean Tournai	1																			
"	"	"	"	"	Valentin Morio de S. Pica	1																			
"	"	"	"	"	Toga Maria Johnston				1	1	2														
"	Junho	2	Porto	Br. Brasileira	D. Maria Theresa Sec. a	1																			

Facsimile of the ship manifest of the arrival of James Overend, Charles Leadbeater and his family, and Richard Tiplady in Salvador, Bahia, on 30 May 1858:

[https://familysearch.org/wiki/pt/Brasil, Bahia, Porto de Salvador, Listas de Passageiros \(Registros Históricos do FamilySearch\)](https://familysearch.org/wiki/pt/Brasil,_Bahia,_Porto_de_Salvador,_Listas_de_Passageiros_(Registros_Históricos_do_FamilySearch))

¹ “Se Eles São Livres ou Escravos”: Escravidão e Trabalho Livre nos Canteiros da Estrada de Ferro de São Francisco a Bahia, 1858-1863, Doctoral Thesis presented to the Post-Graduation Program in History, Institute of Philosophy and Sciences of Humanity, State University of Campinas, 2013.

² Filho, Alcides Goularti e Cimo, Paulo Roberto, (Organizadores), Transportes e Formação Regional, Contribuições a história dos transportes no Brasil, (Transport and Regional Growth, Contributions to the history of transport in Brazil), UFGD Editora 2011, Universidade Federal da Grande Dourados, MT.

³ Vignoles, K.H., *Charles Blacker Vignoles: romantic engineer*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1982, p. 151.