



HAMPSHIRE RECORD OFFICE
Archive Education Service

The Transatlantic Slave Trade and Abolition

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Introduction

This resource book examines the Transatlantic slave trade and its abolition in 1807 using archival records and objects from Hampshire Museums & Archive Service. The widespread availability of secondary works about the Transatlantic slave trade means that it is unnecessary here to restate the full history of this trade. What the archive and museum material used in this resource book brings is a 'local' focus to our understanding of the Transatlantic slave trade and its abolition.

“The first object which saluted my eyes when I arrived on the coast was the sea, and a slave-ship, which was then riding at anchor, and waiting for its cargo”.
Olaudah Equiano, *Sold as a Slave*, 1789

Early slavery in Europe

Roman Slaves

Roman slaves were people who were generally captured in battle and sent back to Rome to be sold. However, abandoned children could also be brought up as slaves. Roman law also said that fathers could sell their older children if they were in need of money.

A wealthy Roman would buy a slave in a market place. Young male slaves with a trade could fetch a slave master a large sum of money simply because they had a trade and their age meant that they could work for quite a number of years and, therefore, represented good value for money.

Once bought, a slave was a slave for life. They could only get their freedom if it was granted by their owner or if they bought their own freedom. To buy your freedom, however, you had to raise the same sum of money that your master had paid for you – a seemingly impossible task. If a slave married and had children, the children would automatically become slaves.



Medieval England and northern Europe

Slavery had existed in Europe from Classical times and did not disappear with the collapse of the Roman Empire. Slaves remained common in Europe throughout the early medieval period. Forms of unfree labour, such as villeinage and serfdom, persisted in Northern Europe (including England) well into the early modern period.

The Domesday Survey suggests that 'slaves' made up 9% of the population and held no land. *Villeins*, who made up around 45% of the population, were not slaves, and although named as freemen and freewomen in medieval documents, they were not actually free at all. They and their land and possessions belonged to the lord of the manor.

They were not free to leave the manor, and they were subject to a large number of obligations required by the lord, including work on the lord's demesne two or three days a week, additional work at harvest, and the payment of manorial dues.

The rest of medieval Europe

In Southern and Eastern Europe, Classical-style slavery remained a normal part of the society, economy and trade across the Mediterranean and the Atlantic seaboard which meant that African slaves began to appear in Italy, Spain, Southern France, and Portugal well before the discovery of the New World in 1492. From about the 8th century onwards, an Arab-run slave trade also flourished, with much of this activity taking place in East Africa, Arabia, and the Indian Ocean.

British Slaves on the Barbary Coast

Barbary pirates, sometimes called Ottoman Corsairs, were pirates and privateers that operated from north Africa (the "Barbary Coast"). They operated out of Tunis, Tripoli, Algiers and ports in Morocco, preying on shipping in the western Mediterranean Sea from the time of the Crusades as well as on ships on their way to Asia around Africa until the early 19th century. They even preyed on shipping and coastal towns from the Adriatic to Ireland and Iceland.

According to observers of the late 1500s and early 1600s, there were around 35,000 European Christian slaves held throughout this time on the Barbary Coast. The greatest number were sailors, taken with their ships, but a good many were fishermen and coastal villagers. White slaves in Barbary were generally from impoverished families, and had almost as little hope of buying back their freedom as the Africans taken to the Americas: most would end their days as slaves in North Africa, dying of starvation, disease, or maltreatment. Slaves were resold, often repeatedly and the most unlucky ended up stuck and forgotten out in the desert or in the Turkish sultan's galleys, where some slaves rowed for decades without ever setting foot on shore.

Europeans sometimes attempted to buy their people out of slavery. Parish churches across Europe kept locked collection boxes marked 'for the poor slaves'. Clerics constantly reminded their wealthier parishioners to include money in their wills to help pay ransoms. The extract below shows an example of this in a Grandmother's will of 1694.

Compared to Catholic Europe, Protestant states could be slow in freeing their subjects. Thousands of Dutch, German and British slaves remained for years in the chains of Barbary pirates without the aid of organised clergy or state funds for their release. Slaves in Barbary could be black, brown or white, Catholic, Protestant, Orthodox, Jewish or Muslim.

There was no sense of discrimination against colour or religion.

"I give unto my grandson John Smith now a slave in Barbary the one half of all that I have in the world...to be pay[e]d to him... at his return home...or...to supply his necessities in Barbary or for his redemption out of slavery"

Extract from the will of Ann Newland, Isle of Wight, 1694

HRO:1694A/071

The Barbary corsairs preyed in packs whereas Caribbean pirates preferred to hunt alone.

Comparisons are often made between the Barbary corsairs and the Buccaneers (Caribbean pirates of the mid-seventeenth century), but there are more differences than similarities between these two groups.

While both groups attacked targets at sea and on land, the pirates favoured stealth and surprise. The corsairs wanted everyone to see and know what they did. They openly operated out of major seaports like Tunis and Algiers, but pirates sheltered only in safe havens where laws didn't exist or their piracy was ignored. The corsairs sold their treasure in marketplaces, but the pirates had to rely on intermediaries to unload their ill-gotten gain. The Ottoman Empire backed the Barbary corsairs and incorporated them into its navy. The Caribbean pirates received no state support, and were hunted and hanged for their wicked deeds.

The Transatlantic slave trade

An Atlantic trade in African slaves began in 1444, when the Portuguese began to ship slaves from West Africa to Europe. The discovery of the Americas in 1492 led to the creation of new colonies with a demand for cheap labour. From the 1550s European ships carried increased numbers of African slaves to Brazil, the Caribbean and North America. By the 1700s Britain was one of the leading slave-trading powers in Europe alongside the French, Dutch, Portuguese and Spanish.

Many enslaved Africans were destined to work on the sugar plantations of Brazil and the British West Indies. Others found themselves working on tobacco plantations in North America.

A 'triangular trade' developed, whereby ships carried European manufactured goods to Africa and exchanged them for slaves, who were then taken across the Atlantic to the Americas, where they were traded for sugar, cotton, rum and other goods.

'When a trader wants slaves, he applies to a chief for them, and tempts him with his wares.' Olaudah Equiano, *Sold as a Slave*, 1789

Over 12 million Africans were taken across the Atlantic to work on the plantations in the West Indies and America. Ships were 'fitted out' in ports such as Liverpool and Bristol. Merchants would invest money in preparing a ship for a long voyage. They would also buy large quantities of goods such as salt, knives, blankets, woollen cloth, brass pots, beads and beer to trade for slaves.

The ships sailed to slave collection points on the coast. Traders would buy the slaves from other traders or agents. These often had slave forts to keep the slaves under control and to defend against raids from people trying to seize the slaves. Africans brought slaves they had captured to the coast to sell to Europeans. At this time African societies were usually tight knit communities who were willing to capture Africans from other tribes and sell them to Europeans. They also brought ivory, gold and hides to trade. These were usually bartered for the goods the Africans wanted, like salt and manufactured goods like cloth and guns.

An account of Sir Thomas Champneys'

Nutt River plantation, Jamaica

The following pages include the records of one slave owner, Sir Thomas Champneys, who had a sugar estate on Jamaica. The records are held at Hampshire Record Office, HRO: 44M73.

Sir Thomas Champneys was born 9th October 1745. His parents were Richard Chaundler Champneys, a wealthy merchant from Fareham, Hampshire, and Jane Swymmer (Richard's second wife). Jane's father lived in Jamaica and she inherited the Nutts River Estate upon her brother Anthony's death. The family's home was Orchardleigh Park, near Frome, Somerset.

Sir Thomas Champneys was married early in life to Caroline Ann Cox in 1768. Her father, Richard Cox, owned Quarley House in Hampshire. Sir Thomas held the office of High Sheriff of Somerset in 1775 and he moved to live on the Nutts River Estate, Jamaica, which he had inherited from his father a year later. In 1775 there were 775 sugar estates on the island of Jamaica. At least 180 of these were held by absentee proprietors or by minors or incompetents.¹

Sir Thomas Champneys inherited several estates from his father, but from mismanagement lost all but the Orchardleigh and Nutts River estates. He died at Exton, Hampshire, aged 76 in July 1821. His son and heir, Thomas Swymmer Champneys, squandered what was left of the family's fortune and ended up in the insolvent debtors court in the 1820s which declared his the largest amount of debt ever filed in the court since its establishment in 1813, with debts and liabilities upwards of £429,000.

The following details of enslaved Africans on the Nutt River estate along with examples of sales of sugar and rum from the estate and goods imported to Jamaica by Sir Thomas Champneys are taken from his account book for the estate.

¹ Professor Richard B Sheridan, Simon Taylor, Sugar Tycoon of Jamaica, 1740-1813, published in Agricultural History, Volume XLV, No: 4, October 1971, pp285-296

Increase and decrease of **purchased slaves** on Nutts River Plantation 1808

increase	men	women	boys	girls	Male children	Female children	Total
The number 1 January 1808	46	27	6	3	8	4	94
Barbara born of Topley Neighbour 29 Dec 1808						1	1
	46	27	6	3	8	5	95
decrease	men	women	boys	girls	Male children	Female children	Total
Pomfrie died of consumption	1						1
Edward Swymmer of consumption	1						1
Morris of old age	1						1
Delia of rheumatic pains		1					1
	3	1					4

Total number of enslaved Africans on Nutts River Plantation, Jamaica in 1808
= 248

Task

Three of Champney's slaves died of consumption. Find out what was this was and what the main causes were.

One slave, Duncan, died of 'dirt eating'. Find out what this meant and why he did it.

How did Champney balance the number of slaves he owned?

Sold and re-named:

Enslaved Africans were considered to be property, not people. By stripping them of their own names and forcing them to adopt new ones, sometimes those of their owners or their trading links (Bristol and Liverpool are names given to slaves found on some documents) enslaved Africans were dehumanised and the renaming underlined their status as chattels belonging to their owner.

The document below is called a mortgage agreement which is dated 5th January 1769 and shows lists of enslaved Africans who were included as part of a transfer of Providence Plantation in St David's parish of Grenada, lying between the rivers called Petit Marquis and Grand Marquis, for the sum of £4000. The enslaved are named within the document.

On some plantations, enslaved Africans resisted their enslavement in a number of ways. Sometimes they deliberately damaged property - including livestock, others ate dirt to make themselves ill and unable to work. Women even found ways of killing their unborn children to prevent them from being born into slavery.



The document is a historical mortgage agreement dated 5th January 1769. It contains two main sections: 'The First Schedule' and 'The Second Schedule'. Each section lists the names of enslaved individuals in multiple columns. The names are written in a cursive script. The document is aged and has some red wax seals visible at the bottom.

HRO: 5M50/2702/1

Task

In groups examine and discuss the significance of how enslaved Africans were given new names by their owners who considered them their property. Talk about the importance of names. Do you have a familiar name or nickname which your family or friends use? Imagine being given another name, perhaps a made up name which you are forced to use, how would you feel about this?.

The triangular trade

The fortunes of Africa and Britain became so intertwined through the Transatlantic slave trade that ports such as London, Bristol and Liverpool were destined to become not only the main slave trading centres in Britain but in the whole of Europe. These ports not only sent ships to trade with Africa but also received those coming from the Americas laden with goods and raw materials produced by slavery.

Sir Thomas Champneys' accounts show how he sent his sugar and rum to Britain and received manufactured goods in return, some for his own personal use, some to maintain his plantations, and some for the enslaved Africans he owned and bought.

Goods shipped from Bristol to Sir Thomas Champneys Nutts River Estate, Jamaica in 1807

2 boxes white soap	2 dozen mould candles
3 kegs tallow	2 hogsheads best strong beer
15 tugs oatmeal	15 tugs split peas
3 tugs pearl barley	4 lbs black pepper
1 box best double Gloucester cheese	1 York ham
6 barrels best beef	6 barrels best pork
2 hogsheads salt	4 firkins butter
36 boys hats	72 youths hats
156 men's hats	12 men's fine hats
8 duffell greatcoats lined	144 kilmarnock caps
276 negro Malabar handkerchiefs	1 box (200) negro pipes
240 negro knives	120 crown hoes
2000 needles	96 bright bills (like a machete for cutting)
24 felling axes	6 copper sugar skimmers
4 copper ladles	Mosquito netting
100 hogsheads of coal	30 barrels of pilchards
1 small box garden seeds	1 jug sheepwash
1 cask glaubers salts	

The items listed above were just some of the goods Sir Thomas regularly imported to Jamaica from Bristol – including the same supplies of hats and coats and foodstuff. Other goods were bought for the upkeep of the sugar mill and plantation buildings.

Task

From the list above which items do you think Sir Thomas would have used himself, which might have been used for bartering for new slaves and which might be used by those enslaved by Sir Thomas? Can we tell anything about Sir Thomas's diet from the above?

Goods shipped from Sir Thomas Champneys' Nutts River Estate, Jamaica to Bristol April 1807 – April 1808

20 hogsheads sugar on the ship Charlotte	£294	1s	0d
40 hogsheads sugar on the ship Margaret	£609	6s	2d
70 hogsheads sugar on the ship Ives	£1020	7s 4d	
30 tierces sugar on the ship Bristol	£276	8s	9d
53 hogsheads sugar on the ship Kingston	£853	6s	10d
138 hogsheads sugar on the ship Bristol	£2353	6s	5d
	£5406	16	6
Balance of existing sales account	£1083	7	9
Total receipts from sale of sugar	£6490	4	3

Total of payments (various) from account **£6490** **4** **3**

Year	Goods OUT (sold)	Goods IN (bought)
1808-09	£8,720 19s 4d	£8,720 19s 4d
1809-10	£8,135 4s 8d	£8,135 4s 8d
1810-11	£6,519 0s 7d	£6,519 0s 7d
1811-12	£5,856 2s 5d	£5,856 2s 5d
1812-13	£5,633 8s 4d	£5,633 8s 4d
1813-14	£8,354 13s 2d	£8,354 13s 2d
1814-15	£10,467 8s 0d	£10,467 8s 0d
1815-16	£3,126 1s 5d	£3,126 1s 5d
1816-17	£4,855 11s 6d	£4,855 11s 6d
1817-18	£8,955 3s 10d	£8,955 3s 10d
1819-20	£4,429 5s 1d	£4,429 5s 1d

Task

Use the calculator on the following website to calculate how much the shipments of sugar would be in modern-day values. Use the year e.g. 1807 as the initial year; type in the amount; use 2006 as the desired year.

<http://measuringworth.com/calculators/ppoweruk/index.php>

From the evidence above, do you think Sir Thomas Champneys would have been a wealthy man by today's standards selling sugar and rum from his plantation in Jamaica?²

² Each year Sir Thomas's accounts broke even, so he seemingly made no profit.

Case studies in trade

Sugar

In the fifteenth century Arabs took sugar cane to the European countries of Spain and Portugal. Because it was a highly profitable crop, both countries became very active in finding new places to grow sugarcane. In 1493, the explorer Christopher Columbus took sugar cane to the Caribbean Island of Santa Domingo for trial plantings. The crop flourished and Columbus reported to his patron, Queen Isabella of Spain, that it grew faster in the West Indies than anywhere else in the world.

Farmers from elsewhere in Europe including Britain, France and Holland made the most of Columbus's discovery and sailed to the New World to grow sugar on plantations in Brazil, Cuba, Mexico and the West Indies. This sugar was grown for export, and early on the local population was employed to look after the sugar-cane crops. As the industry grew, large numbers of workers were needed, and slaves were brought from Africa to farm the plantations. Sugar farming became so profitable that people soon referred to sugar as 'white gold', because owning a sugar plantation was said to be like owning a gold mine.

Islands such as Barbados, Jamaica and Demerara were amongst those in the West Indies colonised by the British.

Sugar has been an ideal crop for Barbados. White gold as it was called, produced great wealth, fame and stature for the island and the original plantation owners, and was in many ways suited to the island.
Barbados Tourism Encyclopedia

The island of Barbados was claimed for King James I of England in May 1625 by Captain John Powell. On 17 February 1627, a party of 80 English settlers and 10 slaves founded a colony at Holetown (formerly known as Jamestown). The colonists established a House of Assembly in 1639. Land was allocated to speculators and within a few years, much of the island had been deforested to make way for tobacco and cotton plantations. During the 1630s, sugar cane was introduced. Sugar became the island's principal industry and Barbados dominated sugar production in the Caribbean until the 18th Century.

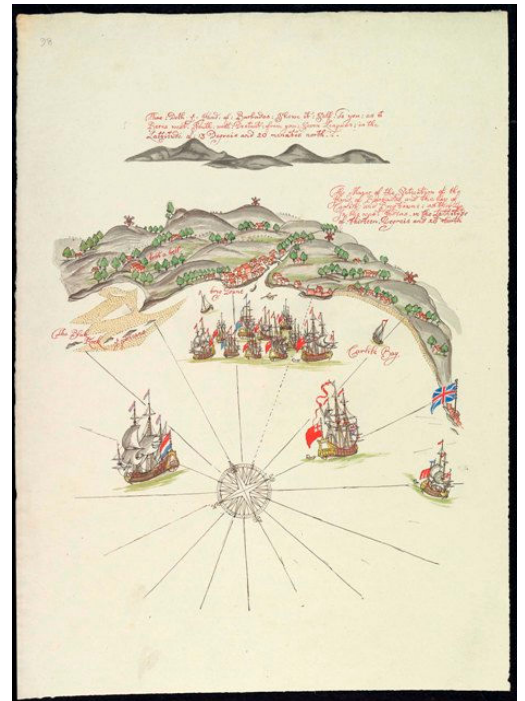
Indian peasants replaced slave labour in many parts of the Empire, including the West Indies, from 1845. Some 2.5 million peasant labourers migrated to other parts of the Empire as indentured workers between 1845 and 1917.

"Even in Barbadoes...a place where slaves meet with the best treatment, and need fewest recruits of any in the West Indies, yet this island requires 1000 negroes annually to keep up the original stock which is only 80,000. So that the whole term of a negro life may be said to be there but sixteen years!"
Olaudah Equiano, *Sold as a Slave*, 1789.

Right is 'A prospect of Barbados', probably a 19th century copy from the late 17th century journal of Edward Barlow, shows a distant prospect of the island of Barbados, and a detailed depiction of 'Brig towne' and Carlisle Bay. The windmills of the sugar plantations can clearly be seen on the tops of hills.

HRO: 175M86/P6

Guyana is situated in northern South America, bounded by the Atlantic Ocean, Suriname, Venezuela and Brazil. It was settled by the Dutch in 1616. The three separate Dutch colonies of Essequibo, Demarara and Berbice were surrendered to the British in 1814 and in 1831, the three colonies were united under the name of British Guiana.



Records show those who had been enslaved occupied a variety of different tasks from house servant to field labourer. Whilst the minority who performed household duties on some plantations had working conditions which were better than their counterparts in the fields or barrack-like factories, they lived in constant fear of being demoted to field labourer at the whim of the plantation owner.

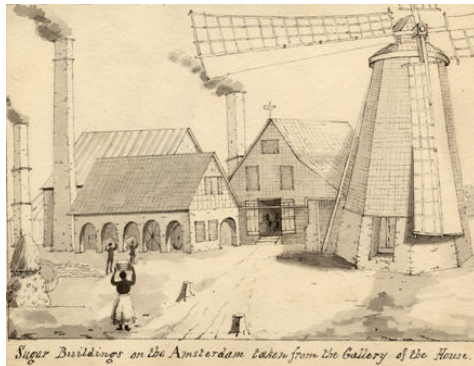
As plantation slavery developed a complicated system of social status emerged. The lowest ranking slaves, the backbone of a plantation's economy, were the field slaves. These were divided into 'gangs' based upon their physical strength and ability, with the strongest and fittest males and females in the first gang. The highest ranking slaves were the domestic servants who worked in the owner's house. Differences in status between field and domestic slaves often caused divisions between the enslaved on most plantations.

Field work on the sugar plantations was relentless and exhausting, particularly at planting and cutting time. The incentive used to encourage hard work, was lashes of the whip, which were freely administered by the drivers, who were 'privileged' slaves under the overseer's supervision. During crop time, work in the factories was equally intense and the hours were long. The cruel pace at which slaves were driven effectively shortened their lives, and this continued to be the case despite legislation, which claimed to restrict how severely enslaved Africans were treated.

In Barbados women did most of the field labour, while men did more skilled work. Enslaved Africans suffered some of the harshest conditions in Barbados during the sugar boom where enslaved families were not allowed to live together.

"It was very common in several of the islands, particularly in the St Kitts, for the slaves to be branded with the initial letters of their master's name, and a load of heavy iron hooks hung around their necks...I have seen a negro beaten till some of his bones were broken, for only letting a pot boil over".
Olaudah Equiano, *Sold as a Slave*, 1789.

Within the Hampshire County Council Museums Service collections is a sketchbook of pencil drawings marked Demerara. It contains 13 sketches made during a short visit to Demerara in March 1825. This visit included a tour of the local landmarks; the lighthouse, the fort, and George Town. The visit also included a trip to the Amsterdam plantation and sugar factory some distance down the Demerara River near the mouth of the Arabaia Creek. There are a number of illustrations of the plantation and factory. Two of these can be seen below. This tour was made two years after a slave uprising had taken place on the East Coast of Demerara and 30 years on from the large slave uprising of 1795 in West Demerara. The later uprisings attracted attention in Britain and gave fuel to the abolitionist movement in Britain.



Sugar processing buildings on the Amsterdam estate, Demerara.

"You are out in the open country, standing on a little natural platform, round which cane-fields switchback over an undulating plain to the coast on the one hand, and billow over low hills on the other. The platform is occupied by a windmill and an unpretentious shed, situated within a stone's throw of one another, the limited stretch of ground between these buildings affording generous accommodation for little heaps of sugar-cane, and for a few odd-job workfolk. Such a peaceful, dreamy atmosphere hovers about the whole scene..."

Edith A Browne, Peeps at Industries – Sugar, 1911

Task

Read the description of conditions for enslaved Africans on plantations by Olaudah Equiano and Edith A Browne above. Which do you think gives a realistic view and which a romantic view of plantation life?



Look at the object above, what do you think it was used for? (answer on following page)

The raw cane sugar which had been crushed and part processed on the plantations was sent back to Britain for further processing for different types of domestic and trade use. In the home those who could afford sugar bought it either as a cone, from which they chipped pieces using nippers for their tea or coffee, or in lump form.



A bowl of sugar lumps with a pair of sugar nippers.

Tobacco

The city of Glasgow was ideally placed on the west coast of Scotland to engage in the newly developing Atlantic trade in tobacco. Following the Treaty of Union in 1707, trade with the colonial New World flourished, and large quantities were being shipped in from the American tobacco states, especially Virginia. Glasgow's merchants in turn had contracts to supply Europe.

By 1730 this trade with America was fully established, and Glasgow's tobacco lords had cornered the market, becoming in the process Glasgow's – and Scotland's – first millionaires. The Glasgow tobacco lords made their money from re-exporting tobacco through Scottish ports as well as by handling the domestic demand for tobacco. They invested their money in industry and land and many built townhouses in the centre of Glasgow

The American Revolution had a major effect on trade and tobacco investors suffered. However, many shrewd Glaswegians had diversified into trade with the West Indies, importing sugar and making rum, and by the end of the 18th century Glasgow had become Britain's biggest importer of sugar. Glasgow emerged as the second city of the British Empire during the 19th century, generating wealth from heavy engineering, shipbuilding and manufacturing industries. This period saw rapid growth in the City's population and physical size and it was during this era that Victorian Glasgow was built.



Task

In Britain, a well-known brand of hand-rolled tobacco is 'Golden Virginia'. Why do you think it is called this?

Task

What do you think this object was for and its connection with the tobacco trade?³

(answer on the next page)



³ A clue can be found in the first picture on the following page.

The trade in tobacco, the product of slave labour, supported a number of home industries in Britain. In Hampshire this was the clay tobacco pipe industry, particularly prominent in and around Portchester. The photograph on the previous page is of a pipe mould used to make the clay pipes.

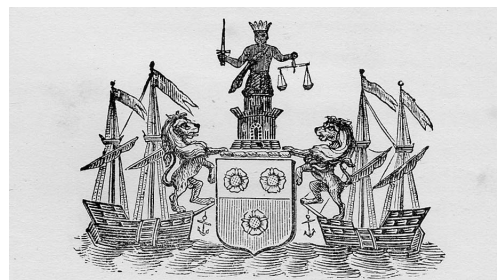


Task

What are the objects above and how can we tell that they have slavery connections? (answers on the following page)



Official coat of arms of Southampton



Coat of arms as shown on a book of 1886

Task

Look at the two coats of arms of Southampton above. The coloured version was the official one determined by the College of Heraldry. It shows a castle on the crest with a woman, crowned as a queen, rising out of the top. The black and white version appears in many publications during the late nineteenth century and beyond. It shows a Black chieftan rising from the castle. Discuss why the City of Southampton may have changed the detail in the crest. Has a similar Black figure appeared elsewhere in this book?

On the previous page top right is a Black Boy figurine, a tobacconist's sign, used in the shop window or on the counter. In the early years of the tobacco trade this would have been the figure of a Native American, the peoples who had introduced the Europeans to tobacco. Over the years this changed in Britain into the caricatured figure of an African, but still wearing the feathered headdress and skirt of the earlier form.

The caricatured figure of the African was also used on clay tobacco pipes and tobacco jars. The tobacco jar seen top left on the previous page is a common example.

The Royal Mail Steam Packet Company was one of many shipping companies to operate in and out of Southampton. Founded in 1840 it had a fleet of 26 ships by the 1880s.

'The trade of Southampton is carried on largely outside the docks on the long line of wharves and quays adjoining the River Itchen, and at the town quays and piers'.
Thomas Shore's, Guide to Southampton, 1883

The West India Line sailed from Southampton with mail to the following places:

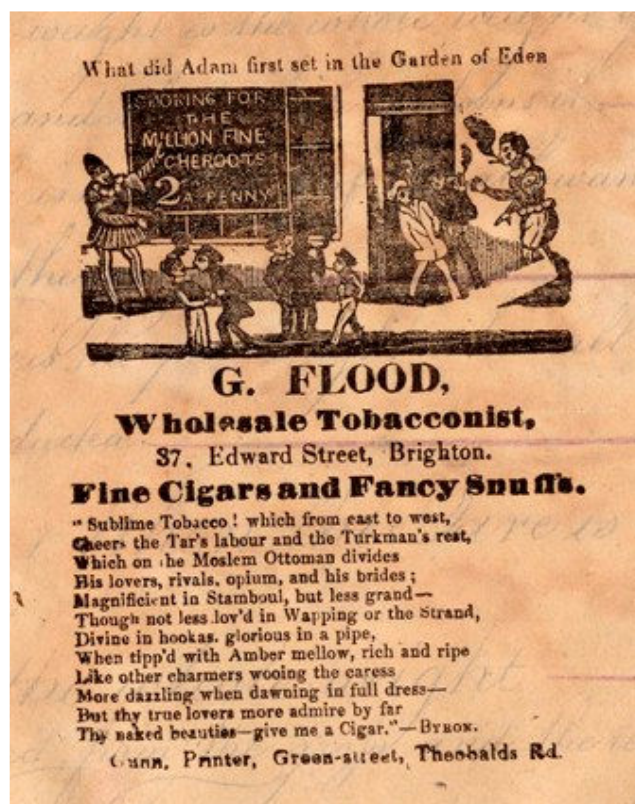
West Indies, Mexico, Central America, North and South Pacific ports.

Brazil and River Plate Line sailed from Southampton to:

Vigo, Lisbon, Cape Verde, Pernambuco, Rio de Janeiro, Monte Video and Buenos Ayres and Santos.

Does the information about The Royal Mail Steam Packet Company help your understanding of Southampton's trade links and the design of the City crest?

These days smoking is not as visible and acceptable in society as it used to be. Smoking is now banned in public places on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean in parts of the USA, Britain and Ireland, and from 2007 France.



HRO: 30M73/F17

Task

Look at this advertisement for a tobacconist. Are the messages in favour or against smoking? What are the young boys doing in the cartoon? Discuss whether such an advert like this would be allowed today?

Towards abolition

European and American Anti-Slavery Movements

European opposition to the Transatlantic Slave Trade developed slowly, and for a long time it was not effective because of the economic interests involved. There had always been individuals in Europe, and among the European settlers in the Americas, who had voiced their opposition to the trade and to the institution of slavery. But it was not until the late 1700's that anything resembling a serious political movement against slavery began in Europe. A bill for the abolition of the slave trade was passed in England in 1807 and implemented in 1808. The British parliament had now been persuaded that economic benefits of transatlantic slaving could no longer be used to justify the trade. However, the anti-slavery movement, including prominent members of the Society of Friends or Quakers, kept up pressure to abolish slavery itself, not just the trading in slaves.

In 1788 over 100 petitions from all over Britain demanding the abolition of the slave trade had been handed into Parliament. It is hard to find evidence of the process by which signatures were collected for petitions against the slave trade, because in most cases the papers of the leading participants have not survived.

Thomas Clarkson, a prominent abolitionist, destroyed most of his correspondence in his own lifetime, and other family papers later perished, which may explain why he is so little known today, in contrast with William Wilberforce. Clarkson visited slaving ports such as Bristol and Liverpool where he gathered evidence against the slave traders. One of Clarkson's arguments was that Britain should be trading with Africa for goods, not people. The abolitionists realised the importance of having a co-ordinated, branded campaign and created a type of marketing logo represented by an image of a kneeling African in chains, with the words "Am I not a man and a brother?".

Although Thomas Clarkson is most often associated with Wisbech, where he grew up, and with Cambridge, where he was first inspired to take up the cause of abolition, he does have one Hampshire



connection: in 1783 he was ordained deacon, the first stage of becoming a Church of England clergyman, and his ordination was undertaken by the Bishop of Winchester.

This letter written by Thomas Clarkson to Lord Calthorpe⁴ which has survived gives an insight into the process of collecting signatures in the anti-slavery cause, and Clarkson's remorseless activity. The letter is undated, but may date from 1824 when there was a further wave of petitioning. He writes:

"After Sunday (tomorrow) I will give up all my time to the forwarding of Signatures. I am waiting for those, which you have obtained. It would be very desirable, however, if you would send me the words of what you intend to be the Requisition – Shall we adopt the words of the Norfolk Requisition, or will you send the words of your own. When I have the Requisition I shall write under it the Names you send me and, making several Copies of these, I shall send them into the Country by Post – Some of those, to whom I purpose sending them, will not only sign their own Names, but hand them to others, and then return them to me – As soon as they are returned to me, they will be sent to you. I trust that in the Course of a week after Monday we shall have obtained sufficient Signatures – but one of my knees is locked up by Rheumatism, and I cannot therefore move about as formerly – By all means send me the Requisition, for I cannot proceed so satisfactorily without it, as with it, nor so expeditiously."

HRO: 26M62/F/C1301

British women were in the forefront of the campaign for full emancipation of enslaved Africans. **Melesina Trench** grew up in Ireland, and travelled widely moving among the political elite in Berlin, Dresden and Paris. Some of her poetry was published in her lifetime, and her journal was published after her death. This draft of a letter to Thomas Clarkson from Melesina Trench survives among the papers of the Austen-Leigh family at Hampshire Record Office.



Portrait of Melesina Trench

"Permit one of the warmest admirers of your zeal in the cause of humanity to offer you a few copies of a letter addressed to the Females of Great Britain, on the subject of the Slave Trade – She was induced to risk this humble attempt from a wish to contribute her mite – to the "Holy Cause" – She has printed for her own distribution, one hundred Copies, but has not published – Should you, Sir honour the address with a perusal, and wish to publish it, she will be very happy to offer it to the Society for promoting the abolition of the Slave Trade, and will think herself flattered by your pointing out any alterations, omissions, or additions your judgement might suggest – or indeed, by your marking any definite line in which she might employ her pen on a subject which from her childhood, has occupied much of her thoughts..."

HRO: 23M93/42/10

⁴ George, Lord Calthorpe, who succeeded to the title in 1807 and held it until his death in 1851, was a notable philanthropist and a friend of Wilberforce. He owned considerable estates at Elvetham in Hampshire.

Quakers, or Friends, had always empathised with those on the margins of society who were often persecuted, as they were themselves, for their beliefs or because they were different. One of the most prominent families in Alton's community of Friends was the Curtis family, whose name lives on in the name of the Curtis Museum. The Curtis Museum was formerly housed the Mechanics Institute, of which **William Curtis** became the first President in 1838. He was the fourth generation of a family of doctors who had practiced from the same house, 4 High Street, Alton, since 1720.

William Curtis wrote a letter to his wife Jane while she was staying with her family in Andover in October 1830 in which he bemoans the lack of a female leader for the anti-slavery movement in Hampshire:



"Is there no one in Andover to be found who will act the part of a Mrs Heath¹ in the slave question? A female antislavery association seems to be wanted there to spread information – the one formed here has flourished amazingly, and distributed pamphlets in all directions. The Alton petition has been numerously signed, and that to the house of lords will be given to the bishop to present. Many of the neighbouring parishes are following our example – the exertion of Quakers & other dissenters has roused the clergy & several parsons are very active, as will be seen by the paragraph one of them inserted in the Hampshire paper respecting the meeting here. A gentlemen's committee is about to be formed to correspond with the antislavery society in London. Emma as secretary to the ladies' association has had occasion to write to one of the London secretaries, a George Stevens I believe – and has also written a very long account of their proceedings to Hannah Messon their founder." HRO: 12M58/8

It should be remembered that African abolitionists played a leading role throughout the campaign to abolish slavery. They included **Ignatius Sancho**, a freed man who became the first African writer to be published in England, and **Olaudah Equiano** who had direct experience of enslavement and published his narrative on the slave trade, 'Sold as a Slave', in 1789.

William Curtis of Alton

The Abolition Act of 1807 was only the beginning of the move towards freeing all those who had been enslaved. The Act prevented the transportation of slaves, but there were hundreds of thousands of slaves across the British colonies, where the practice of slavery persisted. The abolitionists therefore continued their campaign, this time for the freedom of all existing slaves in the colonies.



Banner from The Morning Chronicle, 18 June 1814, with an account of a meeting of the Friends of Abolition at the Freemason's Hall, London, including William Wilberforce.

Finally, in 1833 the Emancipation Act was passed by Parliament, abolishing slavery throughout the British Empire and giving colonies the choice between freeing slaves outright, or placing them into apprenticeship for six years. This, however, was seen by the abolitionists as slavery under another name. On the 1st August 1838, in the face of continued campaigning, the British Government agreed to end apprenticeship, freeing nearly 800,000 men and women two years early.

A letter to John Morant of Brockenhurst, Hampshire, written in June 1838 by his agent on the Bay Estate in Jamaica describes the situation a few months before the end of apprenticeship:

"The state of affairs in this Island has completely changed within the last few weeks and in consequence of the Bill passed by the Parliament of Great Britain and the continued Agitation of the Apprenticeship question by all Class throughout England and our enemies in this Island, the House of Assembly who met on the 5th Ins^t [i.e. the same month] have determined on abolishing the apprenticeship on the first of August of the present year. The Governor in his opening speech has strongly urged this on the House as the only measure for saving the Island from ruin & open Rebellion, he pronounced it perfectly impossible to Carry on any Cultivation after the 1st of August with any other but free labour, & the English Bill which was Made public to all the negroes throughout the Island by proclamation declared all the Trades men free on that day. It would be impossible to Attempt to Continue the field Labourers as apprentices after the Tradesmen & Domestics are made free. Our only hope is now that the people will work for us more Cheerfully when they know they will be paid for their work, but I am afraid they will be demanding higher wages than we can afford to pay them... If any properties will thrive yours will particularly the Bay & the Coffee plantation," HRO: 4M81/PO40/62

The abolition of slavery in the British colonies encouraged some other European countries to do likewise. In the case of France slavery in the West Indies ended in 1848. However, Spain and Portugal could not force their colonies to free their enslaved Africans.

Slavery came to an end in America in 1865 as a result of the American civil war. War was also the primary reason for abolition in Cuba too. Enslaved Africans who fought in the Ten Years War (1868-78) were promised their freedom if they fought alongside Cubans against Spain.

Emancipated slaves at southampton

Lydia Prideaux of Plymouth wrote a description of the journey of a group of emancipated slaves from Havana, Cuba, to Africa, via England, including Southampton, in 1855. Many of the men had worked as porters on the wharves, and many of the women as laundresses. They had in many cases been in Cuba for over twenty years – in one case 48 years – and had mostly bought their own freedom for sums ranging from \$300 to \$1000

They had arrived at Southampton by steam packet, and were sent on to London by steamer, before being taken to Plymouth to await the African packet which would take them to Lagos from which they could travel to their native Lucomi. During their time in Plymouth they were accommodated in the inner court of the old workhouse. Lydia Prideaux was one of a number of

townspeople who took an active interest in their welfare: she arranged games for the children in her garden, while others helped in providing religious services in Spanish or with negotiations for their passage

Their accommodation in Plymouth was spacious but very sparsely furnished, with only mats for beds. One of the boys, named Ricardo, was taken to see inside the Plymouth workhouse, and 'was much struck with the Bedstead and Bedding for each person, saying; "The Queen must very rich, to take such care of the poor people".'

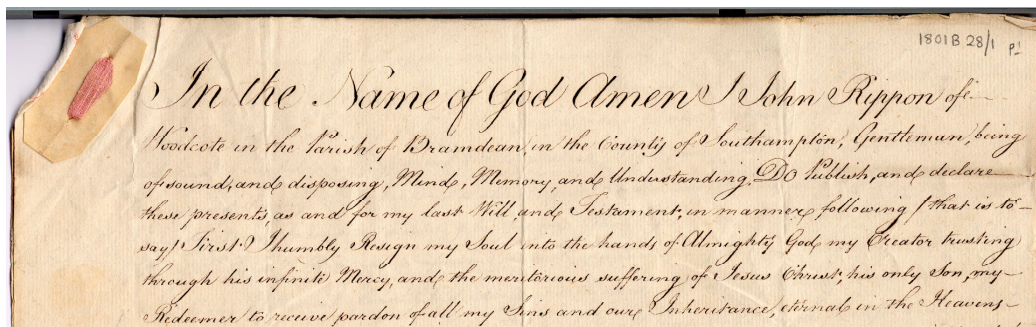


This is one of two engravings bound into her book by Lydia Prideaux.
HRO: 16M97/13/11

There are a number of archive documents which mention former enslaved Africans who came to Hampshire by various means and who have left their mark, quite literally in some cases, on personal wills and in parish records including baptism and burial registers. The following chapter reflects on the legacy of one such enslaved 'Black servant' who apparently served the Earls of Powis for more than 50 years, although there is no mention of how or when he came to this country.

Legacy

The extracts from the two documents below, the will of John Rippon and the burial register for the parish of Bramdean, provide evidence of a series of remarkable gifts by a Black servant. This man gave £63 to his fellow servants and others as well as £71 17s 9d to the poor of his parish. That is the modern day equivalent of **£3,22.85** and **£3,791.61** respectively.⁵



Opening lines of the will of John Rippon of Woodcote, Bramdean, Gentleman. Written in March 1799 and proved in 1801.

HRO: 1801B/28

1800	1800
March 5	William Hykes Gomm, Son of Mathew William Gomm & Elizabeth, his wife, aged 25 years.
April 1	Selina, daughter of William & Elizabeth Gomm aged 17 years.
Aug ^r 30	George Mariner aged 38 years.
Oct ^r 14	Benjamin Peller aged 38 years.
Dec ^r 6	Sarah, wife of Christopher Hodges aged 52 years.
	John Rippon, a Black, who had been more than fifty years, in the service of the Earls of Powis, and who, by Will, after bequeathing certain legacies amounting to £63. to his old fellow servants left the residue of his money amounting to £71-17-9 to the poor inhabitants of the Parish of Bramdean.

Bramdean parish register contains the above entry recording the burial in 1800 of John Rippon, "a Black who had been more than fifty years in the service of the Earls of Powis" and who by will after bequeathing certain legacies amounting to £63 to his old fellow servants left the residue of his money amounting to £71 17s 9d to the poor inhabitants of the parish of Bramdean".

HRO: 1M77/PR2

⁵ John Rippon's bequest came to a total of £7,114.46

It is estimated that there were between 14,000 and 15,000 Black people in Britain in the eighteenth century. It had been fashionable for wealthy merchants to own Black servants and even to give them as gifts. Despite being referred to as servants, many were in fact slaves. The conditions under which Black servants lived varied enormously.

John Rippon's gifts to his fellow servants and others was generous beyond belief and amounted to a huge sum of money (How much was this in total?). It is not surprising that such a large bequest is mentioned in Church records. However, it is noticeable that the Vicar who wrote the entry into the burial register refers to John Rippon as a "Black" and not as a Gentleman as John himself does in his will.

Below is a transcript of the gifts in John's will. He cancelled a debt owed to him for £5 5s by Anthony Brillard who had already paid him half the original debt of £10 10s. He then gave the following sums of money and objects:

- to John Way of Brompton, Middlesex, paperhanger, 21 guineas, all my clothes, books, three trunks and boxes
- to Joseph Saltridge, servant to Earl of Powis, £6 6s;
Mrs De Roy, ditto, £5 5s;
Mr Anthony Brillard, Mr Samuel Warburton, Mr Samuel Dakin, Mrs Dakin his wife, Mr James Kinsey, Mr Richard Proctor, Peggy Steadman housemaid and Mrs Patty Watkins the sum of £2 2s each;
Mr John Heling, Mr John Robin, Betty kitchen-maid £1 1s each;
Mr John Martin the sum of £2 2s;
(all in the service of the Earl of Powis)
- to Mrs Howell and her son Joel Howell, a poor blind and dumb boy supposed to be in or near Oxford Street in the City of London the sum of £1 1s each;
- to The Earl of Powis my Common Prayer Book with a green cover and gold watch now in my possession being his lordships own property;
- to Mr Jeffery Bridge my executor and now steward to the Earl of Powis one Gold mourning ring of two guineas value and the sum of £5 5s;

The remainder of my personal estate and effects to the Poor of the Parish of Bramdean

Task

Considering the culture of the day why is it not surprising that John Rippon's colour was highlighted in the church burial register?

Why do you think his age was not given?

Why is it that we can only estimate the number of Black people living in Britain in the eighteenth century?

Why do you think we know so little about their lives?

What else might you want to know about the lives of these people?

Writing Frames

Writing Frame 1

My life on the slave ship

Use these sentence starters to help you write an imaginary account of your capture and life on board a slave ship:

When I was taken from my village I felt.....because.....

The journey to the coast was.....because.....

When I arrived on board the ship I felt.....because.....

The journey at sea was.....because.....

In the holds where we were kept it was.....

The food we were given was.....

I found it difficult to eat because.....

I felt very.....because.....

Adjectives (describing words) which you can use to help you:

horrible	disgusting	terrible	smelly	dark
awful	nasty	crowded	stuffy	evil
painful	scared	worried	sad	noisy

WritingFrame2

My life on the plantation

Use these sentence starters to help you write an imaginary account of your life on a plantation:

When I arrived at the plantation I felt.....because.....

The work on the plantation was.....because.....

The days were.....because.....

The master of the plantation was.....

The other slaves were.....because.....

The food we were given was.....

The place we slept in was.....because.....

I felt very.....because.....

Adjectives (describing words) which you can use to help you:

horrible	disgusting	terrible	smelly	dark
awful	nasty	crowded	stuffy	evil
painful	scared	worried	sad	noisy
long	hard	fierce	angry	unwell
tiring	cruel	hot	dirty	upset

Writing Frame 3

My freedom from the plantation

Use these sentence starters to help you write an imaginary account of your freedom from a plantation:

When I rebelled against enslavement I felt.....because.....

The master of the plantation was.....because.....

The other slaves were.....because.....

When we heard about abolition we were.....because.....

When we got paid for working we were.....because.....

I felt very.....because.....

Adjectives (describing words) which you can use to help you:

happy	angry	scared	terrible	worried
awful	nasty	sad	noisy	upset
overjoyed	singing	dancing	surprised	delighted

Writing Frame 4

My life in Britain

Use these sentence starters to help you write an imaginary account of your arrival and life in Britain:

When I arrived I felt.....because.....

The people treated me.....because.....

I felt very.....because.....

My duties as a page were.....

The other servants were.....because.....

I am sent to Church and school.....to.....

Adjectives (describing words) which you can use to help you:

happy	scared	worried	amazed	upset	sad
different	badly	nastily	well	carefully	good
hard	fair	strange	easy	delighted	jealous
rotten	kind	helpful	charming	learn	believe
conform	sing	write	parade	display	show

Writing Frame 5: Abolition (KS3)

Writing frame for the reasons slavery was abolished in Britain 1833 (see the next page for examples of reasons)

In my opinion, the most important reason why slavery was abolished was:

.....
.....
.....

This was an important reason because:

.....
.....
.....

Another reason was:

.....
.....
.....

This was also very important because:

.....
.....
.....

There were several other reasons why slavery was abolished, such as:

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

The Society for the Abolition of the Slave Trade was set up in England in 1787.

Many slave owners in the West Indies found it cheaper to free their own slaves and pay them wages to work in the fields.

Christian groups in Britain, such as the Quakers, thought that slavery was a sin against God and religion.

William Wilberforce was an MP and member of The Society for the Abolition of the Slave Trade.

Thomas Clarkson collected evidence on the slave trade and interviewed thousands of slave ship sailors.

Petitions were collected against slavery. In Manchester 10,000 people signed in 1788 and 20,000 signed in 1792.

Large public meetings were held all over Britain against the slave trade. Men such as Wilberforce spoke to the crowds.

1,500,000 people signed a petition demanding the abolition of slavery that was organised in 1814.

There were 10,000 black people living in Britain in 1800. Many of these were educated ex-slaves.

One ex-slave, Olaudah Equiano, wrote a book of the story of his life. Lots of British people read the book and started to oppose slavery.

Olaudah Equiano worked closely with men like Granville Sharp. He spoke at many of the public meetings held to demand an end to slavery

Between 1655 and 1813 there were 16 serious slave rebellions on the British controlled island of Jamaica.

Sugar from the West Indies was more expensive than from Brazil or Cuba by 1800.

Lots of plantations in the West Indies closed down as British buyers started to buy their sugar from Brazil and Cuba.

Selected bibliography

Staying Power: the history of Black people in Britain, Peter Fryer, 1984

Abolition: the struggle to abolish slavery in the British colonies, Richard S Reddie, 2007

Sold as a Slave, Olaudah Equiano, Penguin 2007

Selected websites

NB (due to the fact that websites evolve, move and disappear without notice these are recommended at the time of writing, August 2007)

<http://www3.hants.gov.uk/record-office/abolition-of-slavery.htm>

<http://www.setallfree.net/>

<http://www.casbah.ac.uk/>

<http://www.antislavery.org/breakingthesilence/>

<http://www.understandingslavery.com/>

<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/pathways/blackhistory/>

http://www.open2.net/slavery/sugar_dynasty.html

<http://www.100greatblackbritons.com/home.html>

<http://www.brycchancarey.com/slavery/index.htm>