

Slavery: information and resources

This information sheet will point you to resources which can help you find out more about the Gloucestershire dimension of the transatlantic slave trade. Most, but not all, of the resources included are held at, or created by, Gloucestershire Archives.

Please note that many of the specific document references to items in Gloucestershire Archives collections are taken from a larger resource [Sources for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic History in Gloucestershire](#) which may also contain other documents of interest to you.

Background and context:

Slavery was a feature of many ancient and traditional societies. However, the enslavement of Africans by Europeans in the 18th century was carried out on a previously unknown scale. The transatlantic slave trade involved the enforced removal of men, women and children from their African homelands to the Americas. The trade developed because of the need to provide labour to work on plantations of tobacco, coffee, cotton and, above all, sugar. All the major European sea-faring powers were involved in the trade which was based on ancient trading routes. Britain did not start the trade and played little part in its development, but by the 18th century had come to dominate it.

The slave trade of the Atlantic operated as a 'triangular trade' with European ships bringing goods to Africa in exchange for enslaved people, then transporting these people to the Americas before bringing Western hemisphere produce back to Europe. The slave trade brought great prosperity to Britain and other European countries, both to the economy in general and to the personal fortunes of individuals, including people living in Gloucestershire. This private and collective wealth came at an enormous cost - the human suffering of an estimated 12 million Africans. It is estimated that 1.5 million people died on the transportation ships alone.

Resources:

Gloucestershire Archives '[Inhuman traffic](#)' online resource and virtual exhibition was created in 2007 to mark the bicentenary of the abolition of the British slave trade. It covers:

- the background to the transatlantic slave trade;
- the early abolitionist Granville Sharp and his family;
- the Society for the Abolition of the Slave Trade;
- the black contribution to the abolition movement;
- the Gloucestershire dimension;
- modern day slavery

<https://youtu.be/rvJVP91TAs> In this talk for Gloucester Civic Trust, local historian Tony Conder looks at the effect of the transatlantic slave trade on the income of Gloucester and Gloucestershire in the 1700s. He also talks about Gloucestershire's part in the anti-slavery movement.

Significant documents held at Gloucestershire Archives:

Papers of Granville Sharp, abolitionist:

Granville Sharp (1735-1813) was one of the first people in England to question the morality of slavery. Gloucestershire Archives is the main repository of Granville Sharp's papers which are of international importance. They passed down to the Gloucestershire based Lloyd-Baker family through the marriage of his niece Mary Sharp to a local man, Thomas Baker of Hardwicke. Granville Sharp's correspondence about slavery with leading figures of the day is catalogued as section D3549/13 of the Lloyd-Baker family archive.

Black voices:

Song of enslaved people

One of the most important documents in our collections is a song of enslaved people, heard on the sugar plantations of Barbados in the late 1700s and written down by the then Governor. The song represents a part of the Barbadian documentary heritage (song) of which there is no other known examples. It is a unique voice which represents how the enslaved saw their lot and how they commented on their lived experience. It also represents one of the tools that the oppressed used in their resistance and as a strategy for surviving the foul regime of enslavement. In 2017, the document was inscribed on UNESCO's "Memory of the World" register in recognition of its international significance.

You can see an image of the song and read more about it on our website [here](#)

You can hear a modern [recording of the slave song](#), by Barbadian music expert Roger Gibbs on [YouTube](#)

Olaudah Equiano (1745 – 1793):

Granville Sharp's papers include reference to this former slave (also known as Gustavus Vassa) who published his life story and became extremely influential in the anti-slavery movement.
(D3549/13/1/S6)

Other relevant documents held at Gloucestershire Archives include:

- D340a/X16: Papers relating to an insurrection of the negroes at Tobago, with thanks from the Governor and Assembly to Captain Reynolds, Captain of H.M.S. Quebec
- D4500/1/1: Manumission for three female slaves of Mercy Dixwell Scott, written by John Lucomb, Esquire, churchwarden of St. Michael's parish, Barbados
- D3549/13/3/29: Diagram showing lay-out of slave ship

- D3549/13/3/27: Song of Black slaves at Barbados (three copies of same song)
- D3549/13/5/11: Pamphlets by Granville Sharp and others: 'An argument in the case of James Somersett, a Negro' by Mr Hargrave, London, 1772; 'An essay on the treatment and conversion of African slaves in the colonies' by Rev James Ramsay, London, 1784; 'Letters on slavery' by William Dickson, former secretary to the governor of Barbados, London, 1789; 'An essay in the African slave trade' by Granville Sharp, 1790
- D3549/13/3/47: Engraving advertising H Repton, landscape gardener, Hare Street, near Romford, Essex; printed pamphlet on annual parliaments, written by Granville Sharp, 1780; 'The Monthly review', Jan 1774 (containing article by Granville Sharp on duelling); printed resolutions made by committee of the Society for abolition of the slave trade, April 1791; newspapers containing articles relating to slave-trade, 1783-1794
- D3549/17/5/3: Bound volume of books belonging to Catherine Sharp comprising: pamphlet entitled 'A Summary View of the Slave Trade', 1787 and printed information about the society for the abolition of the slave trade, 1787 including list of society members, 1788
- D3549/14/1/8: 'An account of the slave-trade on the coast of Africa', by Alexander Falconbridge, late surgeon in the African trade, London 1788; 'The Constitution of the Pennsylvania Society for promoting the abolition of slavery', Philadelphia 1788
- D4292/1/2/Entry Number 1343A: Entry in register of ships for the Isabella, built in 1826
- D1889/2/4: Papers in Chancery suit relating to business dealings with Jamaica (Whitemarsh v. James Graham Clarke)
- D1889/2/5: Correspondence and papers relating to trustees of James Graham Clarke and West Indian estate of Moulton Barrett family
- D1889/2/6: Deeds, correspondence and legal papers relating to property in Jamaica
- D1889/4/1: Agreement concerning Jamaican estates and shipment of produce (Leonard Parkinson)
- D1610: Codrington family of Dodington including:
 - D1610/E16b: Case for legal opinion on the grant [lease for 15 years in 1746] of Barbuda
 - D1610/E22a: Power of attorney from Christopher Codrington to his brother William in Antigua to appoint attorneys to manage his estates in Antigua and Barbuda
 - D1610/E28a: Legal opinion concerning the cutting of wood on Barbuda by people from Antigua
- D1292/2/63: Wills and administration for Alexander Jopp, Eleanor Jopp and Eleanor Stewart Jopp, of Cheltenham and Jamaica
- D4582/6/1: Letter from Samuel Bowly in Jamaica to his uncle Daniel Bowly, Cirencester, concerning the progress of his recently established business in Jamaica

Slave owners and the economy:

Across the globe, companies and individuals became incredibly wealthy because of the crops and goods produced by enslaved people in the Caribbean and Americas. Those who held assets in slavery varied from individuals with investment in a small number of enslaved people, to those who owned substantial plantations with hundreds of slave labourers.

The Slavery Compensation Act of 1837 gives a good indication of who in the United Kingdom had a large stake in the slave trade. In Gloucestershire, at least 45 individuals claimed compensation totalling £219,412 (£219.5 million in today's currency) in compensation for the loss of 13,329 slaves. You can access this information and find out more via University College London's legacy database <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/maps/britain>. Links to some of the research which has used this database are included at the end of the sheet

Relevant documents at Gloucestershire Archives:

The following documents may support research into the wealth of local individuals who were directly involved in the slave trade. The list is not exhaustive and researchers are likely to discover further material, and individuals, of interest.

William Hinds Prescod:

D2232/12: Mortgage of capital messuage and land (freehold and copyhold) at Alstone, 1824

CE/63G942.416CLHS Journal 16 2000: Barbadian legacy, the unacknowledged earlier life of William Hinds Prescod, Phillips; Glenn O., 2000

D1292/2/76 (part): Inland Revenue Form No.19 For payment of succession duty in advance, 28 July 1893

Thomas Phillpots & Samuel Baker:

D4292/1/2/Entry Number 1343B: Entry in register of ships for the Isabella, built in 1826

D4292/1/2/Entry Number 1343A: Entry in register of ships for the Isabella, built in 1826

GAL/G5/35555GS* IP/35555GS: Samuel Baker and Gloucester

Clarke family (James Graham-Clarke, John Graham-Clarke & John Altham Graham-Clarke):

D1889/2/4: Papers in Chancery suit relating to business dealings with Jamaica (Whitemarsh v. James Graham Clarke)

D1889/2/5: Correspondence and papers relating to trustees of James Graham Clarke and West Indian estate of Moulton Barrett family

D1889/2/6: Deeds, correspondence and legal papers relating to property in Jamaica

D1889/4/1: Agreement concerning Jamaican estates and shipment of produce (Leonard Parkinson)

D1889/4/2: Letter book of John Graham Clarke, concerning business with Jamaica

D9036 Graham-Clarke family of Frocester; Beddoes, Burford and related families (please note this collection is not catalogued)

Codrington family of Dodington:

D1610/e1a-e2a: Deed of revocation by Sir William Codrington of the settlement on William and John Williamson of estate in Antigua; Bond relating to conveyance of plantations on Antigua to S Redhead [as attorney to Sir William Codrington] (Samuel Redhead, Rowland Frye Esquire of Wallington (Surrey))

D1610/e4a [Contemporary] copy of apprenticeship indenture for William Fletcher of Berkeley Square (Middlesex)

D1610/E16a: [Contemporary] copy of articles of agreement for the services of Nathaniel MacKnish as overseer of Barbuda

D1610/E16b: Case for legal opinion on the grant [lease for 15 years in 1746] of Barbuda

D1610/E22a: Power of attorney from Christopher Codrington to his brother William in Antigua to appoint attorneys to manage his estates in Antigua and Barbuda

D1610/E28a: Legal opinion concerning the cutting of wood on Barbuda by people from Antigua

D1610/E38a: Remarks upon the object of His Royal Highness Prince Albert's prize treatises, in connection with the cause of distress in the West India Colonies and of their impending ruin, under unfair and unequal competition with slave trade

D1610/F7a: Memorial to the Treasury by Christopher Bethell, executor to Edward Codrington late contractor for victualling the forces in West Florida, objecting to surcharges

D1610/A8a: Weekly Account of sugar and rum made on the Cotton Estate and the Cotton New Work

D1610/A8b: Receipted bill of exchange relating to the 'Maria' and cargo

D1610/A17a: Receipted bills of exchange from Antigua

D1610/A63a: Balance sheet for West Indies Account (one entry reads 'Nugent's bills on Liggins')

D1610/L1a: Deposition by Richard Bate of London, merchant, before the Lord Mayor's Court

D1610/L2a: Additional papers relating to Codrington's title to Barbuda

D1610/L5a: Papers relating to the estate of Sir Peter Parker called Skerrett's, Antigua

D1610/C1a- C56b

D1610/Q4a: Barbados: Extract from Sir R H Schomburgh's 'History of Barbados' referring to the foundation of Codrington College and its history to 1846

Other people associated with Gloucestershire:

D1292/2/63: Wills and administration for Alexander Jopp, Eleanor Jopp and Eleanor Stewart Jopp, of Cheltenham and Jamaica

D3524/1: Probate will of Solomon Mendes da Silva of Cheltenham concerning property called Rio Hoe or da Silva's Hope, Jamaica

D3524/2: Probate will of Solomon de Silva Lindo of St. Anne's parish, Middlesex, concerning property in Middlesex and Jamaica (as above)

D4365/T2: Covenant to produce title deeds; attested copy deeds relating to rest of Evans estate

D2659/2: Miscellaneous personal and official papers of William Blathwayt

D1799/X7: Correspondence, draft letters, etc., relating to office as Secretary for Jamaica. Includes copy petition for appointment to office, undated.; letter from William Harbin referring to shipments of sugar from Montserrat, 1700; correspondence with Colonel Peter Heyward, Chief Justice for Jamaica, 1712, contains reference to hurricane damage, and death of James, 4th Duke of Hamilton (see Dictionary of National Biography)

D4582/6/1: Letter from Samuel Bowly in Jamaica to his uncle Daniel Bowly, Cirencester, concerning the progress of his recently established business in Jamaica

D2025/Box115/Bundle1 (part): Release, sale concerning an estate, a sugar plantation called Spring, Hanover, Jamaica 22 March 1775 listing the investors in the enterprise [each investment noted] and with life interest

D2455/B1/3: Account book of James Harding of Mere (Wiltshire)

D23a/8: Affidavit in Bowen v. Berwick, about plantation in Barbados, John Howell, solicitor (undated); Acceptance of invitation from John Howell to dinner by Mr. & Mrs. Mills (1771)

D421/X12: Letters and accounts about Barbadoes sugar

Additional resources :

- Professor Catherine Hall's work at University College London: <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2020/jun/23/british-business-slave-trade-university-college-london-slave-owners>.
- Blogs on Legacies of British Slavery discussing research processes & research outcomes using the UCL legacies database: <https://lbsatuc.wordpress.com/category/uncategorized/>

- Newly published research is shared on home page of UCL Legacies of British Slavery database and UCL website pages, such as: <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/news/2020/jun/opinion-slavery-business-contributed-building-modern-britain-can-we-make-amends>
- The *Local Roots/Global Routes* project resource unpacks how you can practically use for example, Council archives to identify legacy issues and how to make local to global links using primary sources (commonly held in most UK archives) and which reveal links to enslavement <https://lgr14.wordpress.com/2014/04/25/primary-evidence-glimpses-into-stories-of-hackney-and-british-slave-ownership/>

Other websites and links with local/regional relevance:

- Student thesis on the felt hat industry of Bristol and South Gloucestershire (used in the slave trade) <https://research-information.bris.ac.uk/en/studentTheses/the-felt-hat-industry-of-bristol-and-south-gloucestershire-1530-1>
- Article on slavery and West County houses by Madge Dresser in <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/slavery-and-british-country-house/>
- Archaeological survey of about Bettie's Hope estate, owned by the Codrington family of Dodington <https://scholarworks.wm.edu/etd/1539626392/>
- <https://www.bristolmuseums.org.uk/stories/bristol-transatlantic-slave-trade/>

General links:

- <https://www.npg.org.uk/learning/digital/history/abolition-of-slavery/elizabeth-barrett-browning#:~:text=It%20is%20possible%20that%20Barrett,cursed%20by%20profiting%20from%20slavery.&text=She%20later%20supported%20the%20anti,The%20Liberty%20Bell%20in%201856.>
- <https://lbsatuc1.wordpress.com/category/uncategorized/>
- <https://lgr14.wordpress.com/2014/04/25/primary-evidence-glimpses-into-stories-of-hackney-and-british-slave-ownership/>
- <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/commercial/>
- <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/guides/zc92xnb/revision/8>
- <https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/help-with-your-research/research-guides/british-transatlantic-slave-trade-records/>
- <https://www.bbc.com/culture/article/20200205-how-britain-is-facing-up-to-its-secret-slavery-history>
- <https://historicengland.org.uk/research/inclusive-heritage/the-slave-trade-and-abolition/sites-of-memory/slave-traders-and-plantation-wealth/>
- <https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/did-britain-s-wealth-really-come-from-the-slave-trade->

- <https://www.newstatesman.com/economics/2014/04/much-britains-wealth-built-slavery-so-why-shouldnt-it-pay-reparations>
- <https://www.newstatesman.com/economics/2014/04/much-britains-wealth-built-slavery-so-why-shouldnt-it-pay-reparations>
- <https://www.rcn.org.uk/news-and-events/events/lib-black-nurses-enslaved-labour-250321-1>
- <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jul/12/british-history-slavery-buried-scale-revealed>