Hackney, Sugar and Slavery
A Local History Unit of Work

Key Stage 3 & 4
Teachers’ Resources
Contents

How to use this resource 3
Introduction 3
Curriculum links 3
Approaches to teaching young people about enslavement and abolition 5
Section 1  
Africa, slavery and history 7
Section 2  
Hackney in the eighteenth and nineteenth century 10
Section 3  
Britain, sugar and slavery 13
Section 4  
Hackney and the slavery business 16
Section 5  
Resistance to slavery - Baptists, Boycotts, Burchell and Sharpe 21
Section 6  
Compensation and reparations 26
Section 7  
From slavery to emancipation: people of African descent in Hackney 30
Section 8  
Carnival, Jonkannu and Belisario of Clapton 35
Acknowledgements 39
How to use this resource

If you are new to teaching about the history of transatlantic enslavement please read the comprehensive background notes for teachers provided alongside these resources. These have been developed by experts in the subject as part of this project.

The eight sections of this resource can be used as an entire scheme of work or as stand-alone components of a wider study of transatlantic slavery and its abolition. Links to Hackney in each section make this resource an opportunity to combine local and global history. Suggested starters, lesson activities and plenaries are included in each section of the resource for you to use or adapt. Further links and resources are listed at the end of each section. A separate bibliography is available to download. The glossary is comprehensive and if you are giving students sections of the text to read the glossary will help them understand the key terms. Key words are in bold in the body text.

The film Local Roots / Global Routes links to this resource and will help bring the subject to life in the classroom. Specific chapters of the film are referred to in the suggested activities and link directly to the resource contents.

Introduction

This pack is the result of a partnership between University College London’s Legacies of British Slave-ownership project and Hackney Museum and Archives. It has been funded through the Share Academy by the Arts Council England. The starting point was the Legacies of British Slave-ownership database: www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs. The research for this resource has uncovered Hackney’s links to the slavery business, abolition, resistance in the colonies and the historic black presence in eighteenth and nineteenth century Hackney.

Local history has sometimes been thought of as inward-looking and small scale history. But local areas do not operate in isolation, they were and are places that reach out and connect to different geographic locations. People, goods and ideas constantly circulate leaving traces of themselves behind. Transatlantic slavery was a global system that connected Britain, Africa and the Americas. Given the scale of this history, the human stories of those who were involved are sometimes in danger of being lost among the facts and figures. Viewing slavery through a local lens allows us to individualise the narrative giving us a deeper understanding of how the system operated as well as what it meant for those who were involved. It allows us to close the distance in space and time and bring students closer to the subject. The entanglement of local, national and global histories complicates our sense of place, forcing us to ask questions about what it meant and means to be British.

This pack is not intended to address the whole complex topic of enslavement and abolition, but to provide Hackney schools with locally relevant material on the subject which is not available in general textbooks or other resources. It can be used in a variety of ways in the classroom to enrich teaching and learning of the subject, and for students to gain greater understanding of how the slavery business connected to different areas of life in Hackney at the time.

In this resource are contextual notes, case studies of key individuals, quotes from original documents, secondary sources and images. The images are in eight separate downloadable PowerPoint presentations to accompany the relevant section of the pack. These sources have been used to generate ideas for how to use this material in the classroom.

Curriculum Links

Whilst some of you might want to teach the subject of transatlantic slavery and abolition as a stand-alone topic, it is possible to include links to slavery when teaching about other parts of history. The following section offers some ideas for interweaving the history of slavery into your teaching of the suggested non-statutory requirements for Key Stage 3.
KS3 Units

1. The development of Church, state and society in Britain 1509–1745
   - The first colony in America.
     Example: The history of Virginia, tobacco and slavery.
   - The interregnum.
     Example: Oliver Cromwell and the development of a western empire in the Caribbean. Royalist and roundhead politics on a Caribbean stage.

2. Ideas, political power, industry and empire 1745–1901
   - Britain's transatlantic slave trade: its effects and abolition.
   - Enlightenment.
     Example: enlightenment thinking on race. How did the developments in science and philosophy impact ideas about empire and racial difference?
   - The Seven Years War.
     Example: how did the sugar colonies in the Caribbean feature in the Seven Years War? What territories were ceded by the French as a result and why did the British want them?
   - American Independence.
     Example: how did the issues of slavery and freedom feature in the rhetoric of American Independence? Why did Britain chose to protect its Caribbean possessions over those in the thirteen colonies?
   - French Revolutionary Wars.
     Example: the Haitian Revolution as the Caribbean counterpart of revolutionary France.
   - Britain as the first industrial nation.
     Example: to what extent did slavery contribute towards the development of Britain as an industrial nation? How did the structure and discipline of the plantation complex influence the development of the factory?
   - Development of the British Empire.
     Example: why did the emphasis shift away from the West Indies and towards the East Indies in the opening stages of the nineteenth century?

3. Local history study
   Example: what evidence can be found of links to slavery, abolition and the historic black presence in your local area?

4. Social history and the impact of migration to, from and within the British Isles
   Example: how does the history of slavery and colonialism figure in debates over immigration?
Approaches to teaching young people about enslavement and abolition

Slavery involves human exploitation, indignity, suffering and cruelty, and the transatlantic slave trade provides many of the worst examples. However, its history also illustrates the power of the human spirit to retain dignity, to resist injustice and regain the right to liberty, irrespective of race or culture.

Freedom Pack, National Maritime Museum

Learning about transatlantic slavery today is crucial for everyone. Whatever our roots or ‘race’ as citizens living and learning in Britain today, this is part of our shared history. Young people need to own this history.

Parents, community activists and teachers have worked hard to disseminate knowledge of this history however the public representation of slavery has tended to obscure British involvement in and benefit from the system. This has been compounded by units of work that place the focus on abolition - the comfortable story of Britain as the emancipator. Whilst it is important to consider the historical processes of abolition it cannot be done without first tackling the prior history of extensive engagement in all aspects of the slavery business.

The stories of enslaved men and women, including those who helped to end slavery, have also been under-represented. It is important that we all remember those African men, women and children who lost their lives, who resisted and survived what has now been officially recognised by the United Nations as a ‘crime against humanity.’

The act to abolish the slave trade in 1807 and the act to abolish slavery in 1833 were historic moments, but they were not without their limitations. New forms of unfree labour replaced the transatlantic system and slavery still continues around the world in various guises today. The legacies of transatlantic slavery also remain in other ways, such as in the persistence of racism.

Handling traumatic histories

Transatlantic slavery requires an engagement with some of the most disturbing parts of our history. Part of the reason that the story of abolition is often focused on is that it provides positive role models and reaffirms a sense of British identity related to ideas of freedom and liberalism. Whilst abolition is part of the story, on its own it is not an accurate account of what happened. In order to do justice to the history, and to the people who suffered, we have to tell the full story. This might be uncomfortable, but it is necessary in order to be able to understand the importance of slavery, both how it operated and the legacies it left behind.

In a diverse classroom context you will potentially be teaching students whose backgrounds include geographic areas associated with transatlantic slavery. Each student will come with their own ideas and identities and this will influence the ways in which they perceive the history and their own relationship to it. It is vitally important that the teaching of slavery recognises these multiple subjectivities.

When preparing this resource we spoke to students at Hackney B-Six College and asked them to identify areas that they considered to be problematic when it came to learning about slavery. They picked two key issues that affected them as learners:

1. Students only encounter African and Caribbean history in the context of slavery.

This affects students’ self-esteem and ability to engage with what they are being taught because they do not have access to different histories that allow them to see a broad range of African roles and societies. The history which they are taught focuses on the victimhood and oppression of African people without providing access to histories that balance these stories. Transatlantic slavery is a short period of history within a much longer history of African civilisations.

It is essential to use the teaching of slavery as an opportunity to discuss Africa before European contact. Starting with this as a topic will enable you to present the students with alternative models of African life. As well as maintaining the dignity of the students this will also allow you to show change over time and introduce the students to the history of parts of West Africa. A model that begins with life before the trauma of slavery has been used successfully in museum exhibitions. This technique has also been widely employed in the representation and teaching of the Holocaust.
2. Africans were rescued from slavery by William Wilberforce and the British abolitionists.

The abolitionist image by Josiah Wedgwood of an enslaved man on his knees in chains asking ‘Am I not a man and a brother?’ is one that has come to dominate the visual culture of abolition. The image is a good way of thinking about how Africans have been presented in traditional histories of abolition. Being portrayed as passive victims is not accurate when we examine the history. This portrayal can be problematic for students who have often only encountered images of Africans in the past within the context of the brutality of enslavement or colonisation. This historical representation is compounded by modern depictions of Africa as a place of famine, disease, violence and poverty.

Africans resisted slavery from the point of capture and all the way throughout the process. Indeed in 1791 it was a formerly enslaved man who engineered the abolition of slavery in the former French colony of Saint Domingue (modern day Haiti) – Toussaint L’Overture. The history of abolition should include the stories of African leaders of uprisings and opposition in the Caribbean as well as the stories of freed Africans in Britain who took part in the fight for abolition.

Teaching and the language of ‘race’ and slavery

One of the most sensitive aspects of teaching about slavery is the use of the language of ‘race’. It can be difficult to know how to engage with the language. This is because the language was and is still very controversial and its meaning is not agreed on. The terms ‘black’, ‘white’, ‘African’ and ‘European’ are totalising phrases that can erase people’s individuality and there is no consensus between people as to how they would wish to be addressed as a group. It is helpful to think about the history of the language of ‘race’ before you enter the classroom.

‘Negro’ – the Spanish and Portuguese word for black, comes from niger, the Latin word for black. In English speaking territories and countries in North America and the Caribbean, it was historically used to refer to people of African descent and was commonly used into the early twentieth century. For example, it forms part of the name of the organisation started in the early 1920s by Jamaican Pan Africanist Marcus Mosiah Garvey - The Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA). The word is no longer commonly used, with the shift occurring in the 1950s / 1960s when some people of African descent noted its association with slavery, segregation, and other forms of oppression. It has been replaced by a number of terms including but not limited to ‘black’ or ‘Black’, African, Afro–Caribbean, Caribbean and African American. These terms themselves are not accepted by all they are meant to include.

The racially loaded term ‘nigger’ was not in common usage in the British West Indies during the period of slavery. This is a term that many people associate with slavery; however, it was far more common for this language to be used in America. There are examples of its use in the British context and it became more common in the mid-Victorian and the later years of British imperialism. An example of this can be seen when Thomas Carlyle changed the title of his work Occasional Discourse on the Negro Question (1849) to Occasional Discourse on the Nigger Question (1854).

Certain phrases that were in common use during the period of slavery should also be open to analysis and discussion. People described themselves as ‘slave-owners’ however the ability for people to legitimately own other people should make us question this phrase. Some people prefer to use the term ‘enslaver’ in order to denote the practice of keeping someone in slavery rather than legitimising their ‘ownership’. In this resource we have used the terms ‘slave-owner’ and ‘slave-trader’ in order to be specific about which part of the slavery business the individual was involved in. Similarly the term ‘slave’ gives the impression that this was an organic status. In every instance possible this resource has used the term ‘enslaved’ in order to indicate that this was an active process of enslavement rather than a natural state of being.

Confronting the language of ‘race’ and slavery at the start of teaching the subject offers an opportunity to discuss with the students what they feel about the language and how they would define themselves. This kind of open discussion will make it easier to talk about the issues raised by the subject throughout the course of the programme.

You can read further about the use of language here and about handling traumatic histories here.
Section 1
Africa, slavery and history

• For the images to accompany this section see PowerPoint Section 1
• Accompanying background notes for teachers p.3 and p.9

African culture and history before transatlantic slavery

‘Until the lion has its own historian, tales of hunting will always be of the hunter’
African proverb

The way that Africa has been represented in history by some European writers has led to a distortion of how some people perceive African culture, history and identity. This historic misrepresentation is compounded by the way in which Africa is portrayed in some parts of the media today as violent, poverty stricken, disease ridden and primitive. Africa is a vast continent made up of many different countries, languages, traditions and histories. It is important to talk about the rich and diverse African past and present because it challenges myths that have persisted for hundreds of years.

Africa had its own civilizations that existed for centuries; there were kingdoms, agrarian societies, religious practices, trading systems and centres of learning. Kingdoms ranged from Egypt to the lesser-known ancient Kingdom of Kush located in present day Sudan / South Sudan. Across the continent people drew on a range of religious traditions, many of which included the belief that the ancestors acted as negotiators between the living and the gods. Orthodox Christianity was the main religion in Ethiopia, whilst from the seventh century the observance of Islam spread throughout Northern Africa and some parts of West and East Africa.

Africans also made critical contributions to science and the arts which in part were due to centres of learning and universities such as the Islamic university of Sankoré based in Timbuktu. Africa’s cultural influence could be felt in many parts of the world. Africans traded across the Indian Ocean and Arabic learning entered Europe via invasions of the Iberian peninsula (where present day Spain and Portugal are located) by the Moors of Northern Africa.

Justifying slavery – the myth of the civilising Africa

So why were people invested in portraying Africa as a place with no culture and history? Historian Catherine Hall has argued that this was a decision made in order to justify slavery and colonialism. She has written that for people at the time ‘History was a blessing ensuring that those who possessed it were more advanced than those who did not.’ Those in favour of slavery argued that they were civilising Africans by enslaving them. They claimed that Africans were ‘savage’ – without either civilisation or Christianity – and that slavery would benefit them by introducing them to European forms of culture and religion. It didn’t matter that Africans had their own traditions and beliefs – if Europeans could represent Africans as lacking in full humanity they could justify the inhumane treatment inflicted on them. These ideas persisted during the period of the colonisation of Africa in the nineteenth and twentieth century, providing an excuse for the British to move further into African lands.
Suggested lesson activities: Africa, slavery and history

Starters

This starter is aimed at getting the students to think about what they know about Africa and where that knowledge comes from.

• Africa has a long and varied history – ask the students to tell you something they know about Africa and its history? Write the answers on the board and share the information.

• Do you recognise Africa as it is portrayed in history books and the media? Use prompts such as the Oxfam adverts, Comic Relief or the images used in Band Aid to try and get them to think about how Africa is represented.

• Show the students PowerPoint slides 2 and 3. Do these images challenge or confirm their perception of Africa? Why?

Activities

1. Show PowerPoint slide 4 of Bet Giyorgis, Lalibela, Ethiopia. How do they think the building was constructed? What kind of skills and knowledge were needed in order to build it? Ask them about what this tells us about religion in Africa? Do they know what other country St. George is the patron saint of? What does this tell us about what we have in common as Britons and Ethiopians?

2. Ask the students who is the richest person in history (including the present day).
   - Show them PowerPoint slide 5. What impression of Mansa Musa is given by this image?
   - Read the students the description of Mansa Musa taken from the Catalan Atlas (1375) ‘This Black lord is called Musa Mali, Lord of the Black people of Guinea. So abundant is the gold which is found in his country that he is the richest and most noble king in all the land.’
   - Show the students this news story from The Independent: www.independent.co.uk/news/world/world-history/meet-mansa-musa-i-of-mali--the-richest-human-being-in-all-history-8213453.html

3. Show PowerPoint slide 6. The Benin Bronzes are priceless pieces of African art that were looted by the British in 1897. They are now housed alongside some of the greatest of the world’s treasures in the British Museum in London. Many people from across the globe come to the museum to see the Benin Bronzes. What does that tell us about the value of African art?

4. Show PowerPoint slide 7. Before you read out the quote you might like to talk to the students about the use of racial language. (See p.6 of this pack for further information on the language of ‘race’). Read the Hume quote out to the students. What was happening during the eighteenth century that might have influenced Hume to represent Africans in the way he did? Ask the students to recaps on what they have learnt by giving examples of African civilisation and culture.

5. Show PowerPoint slide 8. Read the quote out to the students. What does the curator’s attitude tell us about Victorian ideas about Africa and Africans? How does his experience of African art challenge the curator’s idea of Africans as ‘barbarous’?

You might like to finish by reading this quote:

‘When I see a Benin Bronze, I immediately think of the mastery of technology and art - the welding of the two. I think immediately of a cohesive ancient civilisation. It increases a sense of self-esteem, because it makes you understand that African society actually produced some great civilisations, established some great cultures. And today it contributes to one’s sense of the degradation that has overtaken many African societies, to the extent that we forget that we were once a functioning people before the negative incursion of foreign powers.’ Nigerian poet and activist Wole Soyinka
Plenary

• ‘The Europeans didn’t become slave traders because of racism; they became racist because of the slave trade.’
  Professor James Walvin

Read the quote above. Discussion: what came first slavery or racism? Did racism cause slavery? Or was the promotion of ideas about African inferiority a lie used to justify slavery?

Extension / homework

• Visit the British Museum and see if you can find the Benin Bronzes. Write a report answering this question – ‘If the British stole the Benin Bronzes should they give them back and why?’

Additional Web Resources

• Information on the uprising in Mombasa, Kenya against the Portuguese in 1631
  www.loc.gov/rr/amed/guide/afr-encounters.html

• Akala – African History Reading List
  http://illastate.posthaven.com/black-african-history-month-reading-list

• 100 Little Known African Facts
  www.whenweruled.com/?cat=2

• BBC Story of Africa
  www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/africa/features/storyofafrica

• Repatriating the Benin Bronzes
  www.elginism.com/similar-cases/nigerias-claims-for-the-return-of-looted-artefacts/20080919/1350

• A History of the World in 100 Objects – No.77 The Benin Bronzes
  www.bbc.co.uk/ahistoryoftheworld/about/transcripts/episode77

• Black Africans in Renaissance Europe
  http://veronese1515.blogspot.co.uk

• Images of the Black
  www.theimageofblack.com/

• West Africa before the Europeans (National Archive)
  www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/pathways/blackhistory/africa_caribbean/west_africa.htm

• Africa before European slavery (International Slavery Museum, Liverpool)
  www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/ism/slavery/africa

• Africa before transatlantic enslavement (Understanding Slavery website)

Books

• Robin Walker, When We Ruled: The Ancient and Medieval History of Black Civilisations (2006)

Section 2
Hackney in the eighteenth and nineteenth century

• For the images to accompany this section see PowerPoint Section 2

Hackney in the 1700s

Hackney was a fashionable semi-rural area on the outskirts of London surrounded by farms and market gardens, with watercress beds (in ponds and brooks), arable crops and livestock farming. Large country houses and suburban villas accommodated the wealthy, while small workers’ cottages existed in the villages for tenants of the manors. As trade and commerce expanded in the 1700s the area became popular with the new mercantile class because there were large houses, good schools and the City of London was only a short ride away.

Hackney was described in 1774 as ‘a very large and populous village, on the north of London, inhabited by such numbers of merchants and wealthy persons, that it is said there are near a hundred gentlemen’s coaches kept.’ According to local historian Isobel Watson new townhouses in the area were designed ‘to appeal to the London resident who wanted city comforts without its noise and smells.’ Good examples of these can still be seen today at Clapton Terrace and Clapton Square. The area became so popular with the fashionable classes that the numbers of coaches being driven between London and the villages of Hackney, Dalston, Clapton and Homerton caused terrible traffic congestion on Mare Street.

Some of the wealthy merchants who made Hackney their home were involved in slave-trading, plantation-ownership, slave-ownership and West India commerce. They represented an important way in which slave-based wealth infiltrated the local economy.

But not everyone in Hackney was wealthy. Working-class people laboured on the land or in service, and lived in small cottages. In 1732 Hackney parish established its first workhouse to house those who were destitute, incapacitated or too old to work and look after themselves. Originally established to house 15 paupers, it expanded to house 600 inmates by 1900.

Hackney and the Industrial Revolution

Despite changing demographics and new developments Hackney retained its rural village character. However, by the mid 1800s the Industrial Revolution could be felt in the area with the arrival of the railways, mass urban development and factories. As in many London suburbs, house-building began to take the place of agriculture and property developers created masses of new streets full of housing for the working and middle classes. Smart streets of large Victorian family homes housed professionals and businessmen who worked in London, now just a short first-class train ride away. Smaller terraces and tenements were built for the working classes who had moved to the area both from over-crowded inner-city London, and agricultural workers from the provinces in search of factory work.

By 1900 Hackney’s population was 250,000 people of all classes. By then, the poor lived in unsanitary and overcrowded dwellings. Men, women and children scratched a living in piece work, matchbox-making, domestic service and even picking up firewood. Middle-class families employed servants and lived in comfortable terraced houses in different areas to the poor. Hackney, like the rest of the outskirts of London, had changed dramatically as a result of industrialisation.
Suggested lesson activities: Hackney in the eighteenth and nineteenth century

Starters

Before showing the images and maps (PowerPoint slides 2-8) ask students to imagine what Hackney may have been like 250 years ago. Collect and display the post-it notes to refer back to in the plenary.

• Post-it notes: what types of people lived in Hackney 250 years ago? (Teacher prompts: age, ethnicity, class, lifestyle, jobs, wealth, poverty)
• Post-it notes: what did Hackney look like 250 years ago? (Teacher prompts: buildings, roads, green spaces, animals, transport)

Activities

1. In pairs compare the map of Hackney in 1831 (PowerPoint slide 2) to a modern map of Hackney. Identify five things that have changed and five things that have stayed the same. Note names of roads and areas, routes of roads, waterways and buildings. Share findings and record individually or on the board. Link to prior learning about the Industrial Revolution if appropriate; focusing on industry, transport, population, agriculture and development.

2. In pairs compare the 1731 (PowerPoint slide 6) and 1853 pictures of Mare Street (PowerPoint slide 7). What has changed? What has stayed the same? What would it have sounded like and smelled like at those two points in history? Share findings and record individually or on the board.
   • Discussion: what caused the changes? Link to prior learning about the Industrial Revolution if appropriate, focusing on industry, transport, population, agriculture and development.
   • Discussion: how did the wealthy people of Hackney make their money? Where did the wealth come from to build all the houses throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth century? Make links to the slavery business.

3. Read the information about Hackney in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries aloud to the class. Students take down key points, or answer key questions.

4. Writing activity: Imagine you are the architect of a grand new set of expensive houses in eighteenth century Clapton. Write an advert to attract the merchants of the City of London. What would you say to them to encourage them to move to the area?

Plenary

• Review the post-it notes created at the start of the lesson. How accurate were the class's ideas about Hackney 250 years ago?

Extension / Homework

• Research and gather images of historical Hackney.
Additional Web Resources

- Contemporary map of Hackney
  www.map.hackney.gov.uk/gisMapGallery/Maps/Tom%20Duane%20Maps/Hackney%20Map.pdf

  www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=45254
  Date accessed: 09 September 2014

  www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=22696
  Date accessed: 09 September 2014

  www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=22714
  Date accessed: 09 September 2014

- British History Online
  www.british-history.ac.uk/place.aspx?gid=66&region=1

- Hackney Museum Local History packs Treasures on Your Doorstep
  www.hackney.gov.uk/museum-teaching-resources.htm

- Hackney Archives
  www.hackney.gov.uk/ca-archives.htm

- History and Heritage of Hackney
  www.hackney.gov.uk/xp-factsandfigures-history.htm#.VJlQ6UDFIEM

Books


- David Mander, Look Back, Look Forwards!: An Illustrated History of Stoke Newington (Borough of Hackney, 1997).

Section 3
Britain, sugar and slavery

• For the images to accompany this section see PowerPoint Section 3
• Accompanying background notes for teachers pp.5–17.

Bitter/sweet: the history of slavery and sugar

Enslaved people endured captivity and forced labour, while the traders and investors profited from enslavement and the products of slave labour. People enslaved by the British were forced to work in North American and the Caribbean colonies. The plantations grew a range of crops including sugar, tobacco, cotton, pimento, coffee, indigo, cocoa, ginger and other tropical commodities. Sugar proved to be the most profitable and on some islands the agriculture approached a monoculture. The hot Caribbean climate was ideal for growing sugar cane and plantation owners knew they could develop a market in Britain.

People in Britain had known of sugar since the fourteenth century, but it was a luxury good that only the very wealthy could afford. It was incredibly labour intensive and expensive to produce so it became known as known as ‘white gold’. As people realised the great profits to be made in sugar, they used slave labour to maximise their productive capacities and decrease the cost of production. As a result, sugar could be mass produced and it became hugely popular with both rich and poor alike. Sugar consumption rose:

• 1700 - 1709 annual British per-person consumption of sugar was 4lb.
• 1780-1789 annual British per-person consumption of sugar was 12lb.
• 1809 annual British per-person consumption of sugar was 18lb.

In 1806 London imported 2,344,999 hundredweights of sugar, Liverpool 556,470, Glasgow 356,848 and Bristol 342,583. One of the main reasons for the growth in consumption was the introduction of drinks from India, China and the Americas such as tea, coffee and chocolate. On their own they were bitter to the British palate, but sweetened with sugar they became addictive and soon they became part of the daily diet. Sugar was also used in bread, porridge and treacle which were staple foods of the working class. Soon the British required sugar in a wide array of popular puddings, cakes and pastries. Sugar and slavery generated an enormous income for both individuals and the government through taxation on colonial goods.

Conditions on the plantations

The C. L. R. James Library (which is also home to Hackney Archives) is named after the author, political activist and historian C.L.R. James. In 1938 James wrote the book The Black Jacobins in which he detailed the only successful uprising by the enslaved – the Haitian Revolution. In the early chapters he described what life was like on plantations.

• Conditions were inhumane:
  ‘Their work began at day-break: at eight they stopped for a short breakfast and worked again till midday. They began again at two o’clock and worked until evening, sometimes till ten or eleven... The sugar plantations demanded an exacting and ceaseless labour’.

• Discipline was maintained by force:
  ‘The slaves received the whip with more certainty and regularity than they received their food. It was the incentive to work and the guardian of discipline’.

• Punishment was horrific:
  ‘Their masters poured burning wax on their arms and hands and shoulders, emptied the boiling cane sugar over their heads, burned them alive, roasted them on slow fires, filled them with gunpowder and blew them up with a match’.
Sugar production involved many processes including: working in the fields growing and cutting the cane, crushing and boiling the cane, pouring the syrup into moulds and packing the crystallised cones for export. All of the cane and its by-products were made into something that could be sold. Sugar, molasses and rum were the result. All aspects of the work were hard and often dangerous and a working day could be 18 hours long. Sugar that was produced under these conditions was sold and consumed all over Britain. Hackney was no exception.

**Suggested lesson activities: Britain, sugar and slavery**

**Starters**

- Put the following quote about Elizabeth I on the board:
  
  ‘Her face is oblong, fair but wrinkled; her eyes small, yet black and pleasant; her nose a little hooked; her teeth black (a fault the English seem to suffer from because of their great use of sugar); she wore false hair, and that red’.
  
  Paul Hentzner, German visitor to Greenwich Palace, 1598.

- Ask students to guess to whom it refers and then tell them that rich people in Tudor Britain were very fond of sugary foods. Explain that although they tried to take care of their teeth by cleaning them, they were not able to control tooth decay, and this turned their teeth yellow and black in time. You can play this Tudor Horrible History clip to illustrate the point [www.youtube.com/watch?v=UueAyDBCnig](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UueAyDBCnig)

- Ask students how much added sugar they think they consume. Provide some facts such as: there are 7 teaspoons of sugar in a can of cola or 3.5 teaspoons in a serving of Coco-Pops. Compare their answers to the current national average of 700g per week (140 teaspoons).

- Ask students where and how sugar was produced in the past compared with the present. Clarify that nowadays sugar beet can be grown and produced cheaply in Europe, but sugar cane cannot hence its high cost and value in the past.

- Bring in a piece of sugar cane. Ask students what it is and how people use it in London today (juice). In pairs ask them to work out how sugar cane is turned into sugar.

**Activities**

1. Divide the class into groups and give the students a set of the five images contained in the PowerPoint (slides 2-6). Each image represents a stage of production through to consumption:
   
   Slide 2. Manilla represents the slave trade – supplying labour.
   
   Slide 3. The Driver’s Whip represents field work to grow the canes.
   
   Slide 4. The Boiling House represents the process of turning cane into sugar.
   
   Slide 5. Tom Sugar Cane represents the different products created on the sugar plantations.
   
   Slide 6. Family of Three at Tea represents the consumption of sugar.
   
   Ask the students to put the images in order moving from the start of the process to the end. Ask them to explain why they chose to put the images in that order.

2. Give the students the C. L. R. James quotes about life on the plantation. Show the BBC clip ‘Life on a plantation’ [www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p00w4h9z](http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p00w4h9z)
   
   Ask students to take notes. Discussion: If we know people have suffered to produce something we consume should we consume it? Link to modern forms of sweat shop labour or forced labour to mine mineral components e.g. coltan for mobile phones.

3. Anansi stories: students work in small groups to dramatise an Anansi story and present to the class. Discussion: what do these stories teach us about enslavement and resistance?
Plenary

• Give Me Five: name five ways that people in Britain benefitted from the slavery and sugar?

Extension/Homework

• Research and record their actual sugar consumption over a week. Find out where their sugar comes from and how it is made.
• Visit the London, sugar and slavery exhibition at the Museum of London in Docklands.

Additional Web Resources

• Article by historian Dr Matthew Green on historical Hackney:
  www.telegraph.co.uk/travel/destinations/europe/uk/london/9448019/The-surprising-history-of-Hackney.html

• Article by historian Dr Matthew Green on eighteenth century coffee house culture:

• Podcast by historian Dr Matthew Green

• Historical social and cultural life in historical Hackney:
  www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=22705

• London, sugar, slavery exhibition pack

• ‘What does London owe to slavery’, UCL Lunchtime Lecture by Dr Nick Draper
  www.youtube.com/watch?v=AzUxQwez9fM

• Port Cities – London and the slave trade
  www.portcities.org.uk/london/server/show/ConNarrative.103/London-and-the-transatlantic-slave-trade.html

• Plantation life (Understanding Slavery website)
  www.understandingslavery.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=309&Itemid=221

Books

• James Walvin, The trader, the owner, the slave: parallel lives in the age of slavery (Vintage, 2008).
• Andrea Stuart, Sugar in the blood: a family’s story of slavery and empire (Portobello Books, 2012).
Section 4
Hackney and the slavery business

- For the images to accompany this section see PowerPoint Section 4
- Accompanying background notes for teachers pp.7–12 and pp.24–27
- Film chapter 1

Although Hackney is well-known for the role played by its resident abolitionists during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, it was also home to a number of people engaged in the slavery business. Involvement in the slave economy was not a bar to respectability at the time. Slave-owners and abolitionists lived in the same areas, sent their children to the same schools, and attended the same places of worship.

There were direct and indirect ways of being involved with slavery. The term ‘slavery business’ is used to denote all the economic activities which supported the system of transatlantic slavery. Here are some of the ways people became involved with the slavery business:

- Plantation owners relied on the enslaved to produce tropical commodities.
- Slave-traders sold enslaved Africans to provide labour on plantations.
- Insurance brokers insured ships carrying enslaved African and the goods they produced.
- Merchants traded in colonial produce and earned commission from the sales. Some merchants also lent planters money and sold them equipment for the plantations. If a planter could not repay his debt, the merchant could claim ownership of the plantation, the enslaved or sometimes both.
- Ship-owners, ship-builders, ship-fitters, sailors, dock workers and warehouse owners were involved with the transportation of enslaved people and the movement and housing of commodities produced by the enslaved.
- Factory owners and manufacturers produced finished good which relied on raw materials produced by the enslaved, sometimes these good were also used to trade for enslaved Africans e.g. finished cotton pieces.
- Women became involved through marriage settlements or annuities which involved enslaved Africans.
- Children could also become slave-owners through inheritance.
- Ordinary Britons bought and sold goods that were produced by the enslaved.

Many people in Britain and the Caribbean benefitted directly and indirectly from the slavery business, but not all of them were involved on a daily basis with the operations of the slave trade and the plantation. Some people involved with slavery never visited the Caribbean but instead profited from the misery of slavery at a distance.

Case studies

The four people detailed below were Hackney residents in the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Each individual had a different association to the slavery business. They all gained wealth and power through their involvement with the exploitation of enslaved people.
Fact sheet 1

A merchant family: the Boddingtons
(PowerPoint slides 2 and 3)

The Boddingtons were a powerful merchant and planter family whose involvement in the slavery business spanned three generations. Benjamin Boddington (1730-1791) and his brother Thomas Boddington (c.1735-1821) were West India merchants. Both men were involved with the South Sea Company and Benjamin was a Director. The Company won the right to something called the Asiento following the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713. This gave the company the sole right to sell enslaved Africans to the Spanish.

Benjamin Boddington’s son Samuel (1766-1843) and Thomas Boddington’s son Benjamin (1776-1855) were co-partners in the West India merchant house Boddington & Co. In 1797 the partnership of Boddington and Co. had a turnover of half a million pounds – the equivalent of 58 million today. Later Samuel Boddington went into partnership with his nephew Thomas the younger (1807-81) to whom he also left his entire fortune.

Samuel and Thomas the younger were eventually awarded £39,712 in compensation for 2100 enslaved people in Antigua, St. Kitts, Nevis, St. Vincent and Jamaica. Some of their plantations were owned directly by the family, even though they did not live in the Caribbean. This made them what was known as absentee planters (because they were absent from their plantations). Some of their plantations were owned by the family because they had lent money to their business contacts in the Caribbean and when those people couldn’t pay them back they took their property as a forfeiture for the loan. In this sense their ‘property’ could include both enslaved people as well as the plantation.

In 1766 the senior Boddingtons were residing in Hackney; Benjamin was living in Clapton and Thomas in Upper Homerton. The Boddingtons were a dissenting family, and Hackney with its thriving non-conformist community was an ideal place to make a home. In this respect the Boddington story reveals some of the ways that abolitionist and proslavery opponents coexisted in British society. New College Hackney was a dissenting academy set up in 1786; its staff included both Joseph Priestley and Richard Price, both of whom spoke out against the slave trade and slavery. Both Benjamin and Thomas Boddington were the at the same time governors of the College.

Fact sheet 2

A slave compensation recipient: Anna Maria Lucas (1809-1846)
(PowerPoint slides 4 and 5)

Not all British slave-owners were male. There are 15,000 individuals identified as females in the Legacies of British Slave-ownership database, with women making up approximately 40% of all the people who claimed to own enslaved people. Women could inherit enslaved people on the deaths of their husbands, as part of their marriage settlements, as annuities to support unmarried relatives, or as heiresses in their own right. The records show eleven women with connections to Hackney who received compensation.

One of them was Anna Maria Lucas. Her father Philip Monoux Lucas (1778–1830) was a Hertfordshire and Hackney-based slave-trader. Lucas bought and sold enslaved Africans in St Vincent.

Those involved in the slavery business were aware that abolition of the slave trade was on the way and they were determined to make as much profit as possible before it was passed into law. On 5 August 1806 Lucas received a letter from a slave trader called George Case. Case wrote that two ships were soon to arrive in St Vincent and that they would be carrying 426 enslaved Africans. He asked Lucas to arrange the auction of the enslaved people and encouraged him to do it quickly:

‘His Majesty’s present Ministers, as you will learn from other Quarters, seem determined to abolish the African Slave Trade, and they threaten to do so early in the next Session of Parliament: it behoves us therefore to make the most of it, whilst they permit it to continue, even under the present most injurious Restrictions.’

When the slave trade was abolished in 1807 Lucas rebranded himself as a ‘West India merchant’ and moved back to London. He was a partner in the commercial house Lang, Chauncy & Lucas. The firm was awarded £57,970 in compensation for 1121 enslaved Africans on estates in St Vincent and British Guiana.

Anna Maria, along with her four siblings, received compensation as a beneficiary of her father’s will. As a wealthy woman she was able to marry into the Austrian aristocracy – in 1842 she was wed to Joseph Ferdinand Count de Taaffe. Her sister and fellow compensation recipient Harriet Fraser Lucas had previously married Count Samuel Ernest Alexander Konarski in 1839. Anna Maria lived at Navarino Terrace in Hackney. Both Philip Monoux Lucas and Anna Maria Lucas are buried in a family vault in St John-at-Hackney churchyard, where their tomb can still be seen.
Fact sheet 3

A sugar factor: Christopher Jackson

(PowerPoint slides 6 and 7)

One of the documents identified in Hackney Archive gives details of a Christopher Jackson who leased a house in the area that is now London Fields. On the document he was listed as a ‘sugar factor’. There are further mentions of Christopher Jackson ‘sugar factor’ in the London Directory of 1811 and 1815. His business address was given as 53 Mark Lane which was an area that many sugar factors operated out of during the period.

A sugar factor was someone in Britain who was responsible for selling sugar. He would form relationships with sugar plantation owners in the Caribbean. He would write to them and they would send their sugar to him for sale in Britain. Sometimes he might be involved in the shipping, insurance and warehousing of the sugar. The sugar factor would take a commission for each part of the activity he was involved in. For example, he might charge a fee to arrange insurance. Eventually, once the sugar factor had judged the market to be right, he would then sell the goods at the best price.

A highly successful sugar factor could branch out into supplying his contacts in the Caribbean with credit for them to expand their plantations or labour supply, with luxury goods from Britain and useful agricultural equipment. Sometimes they invested in ships so that they could transport the sugar themselves.

Most sugar came from the British West Indies and at the time would have been produced using slave labour. The contract is dated 1816 – this was nine years after the slave trade was abolished, but seventeen years before slavery itself was abolished. The sugar that Jackson was receiving and selling would have almost certainly been produced by slave labour. Some sugar came from the East Indies as well but, as India was not a formal part of the British Empire at this point, people producing sugar there had to pay higher taxes to import their goods into the country.

Fact sheet 4

Director of the Royal African Company: Sir John Cass

(PowerPoint slides 8 – 10)

The Royal African Company was awarded a chartered monopoly from Charles II in 1672. The monopoly granted the Company the sole right to trade with Africa including the right to trade in enslaved people and establish slave forts on the coast.

Sir John Cass (1661-1718) was a powerful merchant who became an Alderman, Sheriff and then represented the City as its Member of Parliament. His family had moved to Grove Street in South Hackney in 1665. Cass was involved in slave-trading through his membership of the Royal African Company Court of Assistants between 1705 and 1708. He was a director and a member of the committee of correspondence which meant that he had direct dealings with both the Company’s representative in the slave forts in West Africa as well as with its agents in the Caribbean. As his will testifies, Cass retained shares in the Company up until his death.

Cass was determined to leave a philanthropic legacy and he set up a school at St. Botolph’s Aldgate in 1709. In 1748, following legal wrangling over his will, the Sir John Cass Foundation was established. The Foundation continues to provide support to the only state primary school in the City and a secondary school in Stepney. The Sir John Cass Faculty of Art, Architecture and Design within London Metropolitan University, the Sir John Cass School of Education at the University of East London and the Cass Business School at City University are all named for him. The Sir John Cass halls of residence, belonging to the University of the Arts, is located on Well Street in Hackney. Cassland Road, also in Hackney, remembers his family’s former land-ownership in the area.

Cass has left his imprint in stone – his statue was carved by Louis François Roubiliac and was valued at in excess of one and a quarter million pounds in 1999. It was formerly placed on the outside of the old Cass Foundation on Jewry Street but was replaced by a replica in 1899. It is now housed in the Guildhall.
Suggested lesson activities: Hackney and the slavery business

Starter

- Group or pairs brainstorm: ‘In what ways could people in Hackney be involved in the slavery business?’

  Teacher prompts: what goods did slavery produce? How did the produce get to Hackney? Who sold the produce? Who bought it? Students write their answers on mini whiteboards or post-it notes. Record and share ideas.

Activities

1. Show the introduction and chapter 1 of the film Local Roots / Global Routes. Pause the question for discussion to return to later.

2. Give a case study each to four groups of students. Groups note down key facts about the person / people and work on a presentation of their case study. Select one person from each group to present their case study.

3. Students rank the four case studies in order of how heavily each individual was involved in the enslavement of Africans. Discuss whether different levels of involvement require a different moral judgement when looking at them today.

4. Return to the discussion question in the film – ‘Slave-owners in Hackney became wealthy from the transatlantic trade. To what extent has London been built on the exploitation of people?’ Students think of all the arguments for and against the question. Group or class debate.

Plenary

- Return to the answers of the starter questions and review them in the light of new information.

- Ask the students: Was Sir John Cass a hypocrite? Discuss the apparent hypocrisy of being both a slave trader and an influential philanthropist. Ask students to prepare arguments for and against. Debate and vote.

- Ask students to think of examples from modern society of people or governments doing both beneficial and harmful things (e.g. providing aid overseas and selling arms).

Extension/Homework

- Display a modern map of Hackney in the classroom, and ask students to mark on the map each place with a connection to slavery or abolition. Encourage them to undertake their own research to add to that provided in this resource.
Additional Web Resources

- The Legacies of British Slave-ownership database
  www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs
- The Legacies of British Slave-ownership project introduction by Kate Donington
  www.historyworkshop.org.uk/the-legacies-of-british-slave-ownership
- The Slavery Business – Open University Resources
  www.open.edu/openlearn/whats-on/ou-on-the-bbc-the-slavery-business
- The trade in slaves: letters from the Lucas family records
  www.lib.cam.ac.uk/deptserv/rcs/slavery/case4.html
  http://hwj.oxfordjournals.org/content/64/1/162.full.pdf+html
- The Sir John Cass Foundation:
  http://sirjohncassfoundation.com
- Article on Sir John Cass, the Foundation and its roots in slavery:
- Trade and Commerce (Understanding Slavery website)

Books

Section 5
Resistance to Slavery
Baptists, Boycotts, Burchell and Sharpe

- For the images to accompany this section see PowerPoint Section 5
- Accompanying background notes for teachers pp.18–23 and p.28
- Film chapters 2 and 3

(PowerPoint slide 2)

Slavery was an important part of the British economy but that does not mean it was universally supported. There had always been individuals who objected to the system and in the late eighteenth century the call for abolition became a mass movement. Traditional history has emphasised the role of people like William Wilberforce and other elite politicians in ending slavery. As soon as slavery was abolished former slave-owning countries like Britain began re-writing their histories to highlight the role that political leaders had played in ending slavery and not the role they had played in establishing, maintaining and profiting from it.

Enslaved Africans resisted their captivity from the very beginning of the process of enslavement. There were numerous uprisings by the enslaved (see timeline in Background Notes for Teachers p.35). The most successful of these was the Haitian Revolution that ended slavery in Saint Domingue (modern Haiti). Many enslaved people engaged in everyday resistance by working slowly or temporarily absconding. They risked their lives or harsh punishment for doing so. African abolitionists also campaigned in Britain; perhaps the most of famous of these was Olaudah Equiano. His daughter Joanna Vassa is buried in Abney Park Cemetery in Stoke Newington.

Ordinary British people also came to reject the institution. Working class people could see parallels between their own harsh conditions in the factory and the conditions on the plantation (which have sometimes been described as a ‘proto-factory complex’). They signed petitions and attended meetings in large numbers. The anti-slavery campaign is often thought of as the first political mass movement.

The reasons why slavery was abolished are very complex. Historians have argued over this issue for many years. There is no simple cause and effect answer. Resistance by the enslaved and the abolition movement in Britain played a part but there were other factors, including economic reasons and changes to the structure of the British Empire, which were also important.

Case Studies

The case studies below give details of different groups and individuals who became involved with the abolition movement and had links to Hackney.
Fact sheet 1

Resistance by enslaved people: Samuel Sharpe and Rev. Thomas Burchell

(PowerPoint slides 3–5)

Samuel Sharpe was an enslaved man who was a deacon at the Baptist church run by the missionary Thomas Burchell in Montego Bay, Jamaica. Burchell served in Jamaica between 1822 and 1846. The Baptist Missionaries were unpopular with the resident slave-owners because they feared that teaching the enslaved about equality before God would encourage them to seek freedom. Sharpe's life experience combined with his religious beliefs gave him a profound sense of the injustice of slavery. A Methodist minister called Henry Bleby wrote that Sharpe ‘denied that the white man had any more right to hold the blacks in bondage than the blacks had to enslave the whites.’

At Christmas in 1831 Sharpe declared a non-violent general strike and demanded greater freedoms as well as a working wage of ‘half the going wage rate’. The strike escalated into a violent uprising involving some 60,000 enslaved African (20% of the island’s 300,000 enslaved inhabitants). It was the largest uprising in the British West Indies. Events were concentrated in the west of the island. Fourteen Europeans were killed and property damage was estimated in the Jamaican Assembly summary report in March 1832 at £1,154,589.

The uprising was brutally suppressed by the militia under the command of Sir Willoughby Cotton. In the aftermath over 500 enslaved people were summarily executed, some for the most trivial of ‘crimes’. Evidence from the slave courts at the time reflected the arbitrary nature of the sentencing.

The planters did not believe that enslaved people had the ability to rise up by themselves and were convinced that Burchell and other Baptist missionaries had fomented agitation with their radical teachings. In reality the enslaved people of Jamaica had acted to fight for their own freedom. In retribution Baptist churches were destroyed by the planters and Burchell was forced to flee off shore to escape the violence taking place on land.

When Sharpe was captured he did not deny the role he had played. He was executed in Montego Bay on 23 May 1832. His last words were ‘I would rather die upon yonder gallows than live in slavery’. Because enslaved Africans were treated as property, when Sharpe was executed his owner was paid £16 compensation. His was buried on the beach at Montego Bay, but later on his friends reinterred him beneath the church he had served at. Just one year later - in 1833 - slavery was legally abolished. Sharpe is remembered as a Jamaican National Hero. His image is used on currency notes and there is a dedicated memorial to him in Montego Bay.

Burchell returned to Hackney and when he died he was buried at Abney Park Cemetery – you can still see his grave today. His gravestone proudly proclaims that he ‘took a prominent part in achieving the freedom of the slaves.’

Fact Sheet 2

Radical Hackney and the abolition movement

(PowerPoint slides 5 – 7)

During the eighteenth and nineteenth century Hackney was a centre for radical and non-conformist thinkers. Hackney had lots of dissenting chapels, meeting houses and well-known religious colleges for Christian sects outside of the Anglican Church (Church of England). Radical writers and thinkers also made Hackney their home. Radicalism and religious dissent had close ties to abolition although not all non-conformists were abolitionists. The following list gives details of Hackney residents who were involved in the fight to abolish the slave trade and slavery both in Britain and all over the world:

- Joseph Woods, Sr. (1738-1812) was a wool merchant and a Quaker and Samuel Hoare, Jr. (1751-1825) was a banker and a Quaker. Joseph and Samuel lived in Stoke Newington. They were part of a group who founded the Society for Effecting the Abolition of the Slave Trade in 1787.
• Anna Laetitia Barbauld (1743-1825) was a poet and writer and her brother John Aikin (1747-1822) was a doctor and writer. They lived on Stoke Newington Church Street and were early supporters of the anti-slavery movement. They attended the Unitarian Newington Green Church and there is a memorial there to Anna. Anna wrote a poem ‘Epistle to William Wilberforce, Esq. on the Rejection of the Bill for Abolishing the Slave Trade’ in 1791.

• James Stephen (1758-1832) was a lawyer specialising in British foreign trade. He played a leading role in drafting the Slave Trade Act of 1807. He served as a Member of Parliament between 1808 and 1815. Stephen lived in Stoke Newington with his wife Sarah, William Wilberforce’s sister. He and Sarah are buried in St Mary’s Old Church.

• William Allen (1770-1843) was a Quaker and abolitionist. William was a member of the Society for Effecting the Abolition of the Slave Trade. He is buried in the grounds of the Yoakley Road Quaker Meeting House (now a Seventh Day Adventist chapel) in Stoke Newington.

• Rev. James Sherman (1796-1862) was a Congregationalist and abolitionist. James was one the founding trustees of Abney Park Cemetery in Stoke Newington where he is buried.

• Rev. Dr. Thomas Binney (1798-1874) was a Congregationalist and abolitionist. Thomas was an active member of the British and Foreign Anti-slavery Society (now called Anti-Slavery International). He is buried in Abney Park Cemetery.

• Rev. Thomas Burchell (1799-1846) and Rev. Samuel Oughton (1803- 1881) were Baptist missionaries. They worked for emancipation in Jamaica and are buried in Abney Park Cemetery.

• Rev. Joseph Kelley (1802-1875) was a Congregational missionary. Joseph worked for the abolition of slavery in Demerara (now Guyana). He is buried in Abney Park Cemetery.

Fact Sheet 3

Women and children protest against slavery: the Hackney sugar boycott

(PowerPoint slides 6 – 9)

In 1791 Wilberforce introduced a bill to abolish the slave trade, but the House of Commons rejected it. In response, the Quakers led a nationwide boycott of sugar. At the height of the sugar boycott, between 300,000 and 400,000 people boycotted sugar produced using slave labour on the plantations. Some people gave up sugar altogether and other people switched to East India sugar – a product they believed had been made using free labour. Indian indentured labourers produced the sugar. Indenture was in a fact another form of unfree labour, but people believed it to be better than slavery and therefore a more ethical consumer choice.

The sugar boycott was a way in which women could express themselves politically and many took the decision to ban slave-produced sugar from their homes. At the time women had no formal political voice because they could neither vote for their MPs nor become one themselves. Parliament was considered to be public politics and part of the masculine world. Women, and particularly middle-class women, were expected to maintain private domestic lives. However, as they were responsible for overseeing food shopping and meal preparation, they could protest through their purchasing choices. In Hackney children joined the boycott alongside the women.

In Hackney Archive there is a letter that gives details of the protest through the eyes of someone who lived through it. John Aiken and his sister Anna Laetitia Barbauld were anti-slavery sympathisers who lived in Stoke Newington. In 1791 he wrote a letter to her giving details of the sugar boycott. Here are some extracts from his letter:

‘But with respect to the young people and even children who have entirely on their own accord resigned an indulgence important to them, I triumph and admire! Nothing is to be despaired of if many of the rising generation are capable of such conduct.’

‘I am at length become a practical anti-saccharist. I could not continue to be the only person in the family who used a luxury which grows less and less sweet from the suffering mingled with it.’
Suggested lesson activities: resistance to slavery

Starters

• Show PowerPoint slide 8 – the image of the sugar bowl – and ask students what it is. Make links to the Fair Trade label in supermarkets today. Flag up the difficulties in making claims about ethical labour practices in relation to the use of indentured labour to produce East Indian sugar.

• Provide students with sections of Aiken’s letter (see PowerPoint slide 9) and challenge them to read it and copy it out. Discuss with them why historians use original historical documents (primary sources).

• Pair/group brainstorm: ‘If there’s something you don’t agree with, what are the ways you can protest about it?’

Activities

1. Show chapter 2 of the film Local Roots / Global Routes. Students note key facts. Use the discussion question to talk about language and the differences in meaning between the words resistance, revolt, rebellion, riot, uprising, protest and war.

2. Give the case studies and related images to different groups in the class. Students role play the different people who resisted slavery and interview each other in pairs. A pair from each group presents their case study interview in character to the class.

3. Show chapter 3 of the film Local Roots / Global Routes. Discuss how those with limited access to formal political power (women and children, enslaved Africans) were able to make their voices heard and affect change.

4. Students imagine they are at school in Hackney in 1800. They have decided to join the sugar boycott and design posters to attract their classmates to the cause.

5. Returning to Aiken’s letter – ask the students to think about what consumer goods are produced unethically today. Ask them to write a letter boycotting something they feel strongly about e.g. clothes produced in sweat shops or real fur.

Plenary

• What were the key motivations behind each example of resistance?

• How important is it that some of the key abolitionists were formerly enslaved Africans?

• Why has Wilberforce been championed by British historians, whereas the history of formerly enslaved African abolitionists has been hidden?

• Why do we know more about male abolitionists than females?

• Have a discussion around whose history. Who writes it? Why? Who reads it?

• Use the film chapter 3 discussion question and ask students to think of ways that people protest nowadays.

Homework / Extension

• Research a boycott, strike or other protest which has affected change in recent history.

• Visit Abney Park Cemetery and follow the trail: Abolition, Voices from Abney Park.
Additional Web Resources

- Slavery in the Caribbean: resistance and abolition (BBC resources)
  www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b00b0gr9/clips?page=2
- How and why did the enslaved Africans rebel in 1816? (National Archive)
  www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/education/resources/bussas-rebellion
- Making Freedom exhibition website
  http://makingfreedom.co.uk
- Slave Revolt in Jamaica 1760–61
  http://revolt.axismaps.com
- The Life and Times of Joanna Vassa
  www.equiano.soham.org.uk/daughter.htm
- The Abolition Story - Hackney Council
  www.hackney.gov.uk/hackney-archives-abolition.html#.VJgmP0DFIEM
- Abolition '07 Teachers Resource Pack by Hackney Museum
  www.hackney.gov.uk/Assets/Documents/PDF1_abolition_pack.pdf
- The Abolition Project – Resistance to Slavery
  http://abolition.e2bn.org/resistance.html
- Resistance and Rebellion (Understanding Slavery website)
- The Importance of Abney Park Cemetery in Stoke Newington

Books

- Clare Midgley, Women Against Slavery: The British Campaigns, 1780-1870
  (Routledge, 1995).
- Richard Hart, Slaves Who Abolished Slavery: Blacks in Rebellion
  (University of the West Indies Press, 2002).
  You can read a copy for free here:
  www.gutenberg.org/files/15399/15399-h/15399-h.htm
- Mary Prince, The History of Mary Prince, a West Indian Slave (1831)
  You can read a copy for free here:
  www.gutenberg.org/files/17851/17851-h/17851-h.htm
Section 6
Compensation and reparations

- For the images to accompany this section see PowerPoint Section 6
- Accompanying background notes for teachers pp.24–26
- Film chapter 4

Traditional narratives of abolition that focus simply on the rise of Evangelical Christianity and philanthropy have failed to take into account the economic process that accompanied the dismantling of slavery in the British Caribbean. As part of the measures taken to end slavery the government compensated former slave-owners for the loss of their ‘property’ in enslaved people. The amount paid out by the government was £20 million which can be calculated in today’s money (2014) using a variety of different indicators:

- Retail Price Index = £1.6 billion
- Real wages = £16 billion
- National Debt = £30 billion
- GDP = £80 billion
- State expenditure = £200+ billion

The amount represented approximately 40% of government expenditure, although at the time the state was much smaller than today. The loan was incorporated into the national debt, a move which was presented as a form of atonement for what had been described as a ‘national sin’.

The process of paying compensation to the slave-owners has left behind a record of all the individuals who claimed ownership in enslaved people after abolition in 1833. The Legacies of British Slave-ownership project has digitised the records of the Slavery Compensation Commission and turned them into an online searchable database. The database can tell you who received slavery compensation and how much they received. It is searchable by name, address, geographic area, gender or the colony in which the enslaved people were held. The database has been designed so you can search by looking at different categories of impact on society for example political, economic, cultural, imperial or physical.

Searching for local histories of slave-ownership

The database is a very useful tool for exploring local histories of slave-ownership. People in the database have different kinds of associations to the areas they are linked to. Some were born, baptised, married, educated or were buried in particular places and these links have been flagged up. Others lived in the area and so their connections to and impact on that space are much more concrete. Looking at different kinds of links allows the students to measure different degrees of influence of slave-owners on particular locales. You might also consider the kinds of comparative work students could do with other areas.

You can also find information about slave-owners who lived in Hackney by putting the term ‘Hackney’ into the ‘quick address’ field. You can search for slave-owners associated with Hackney more generally by entering the search term ‘Hackney’ into the notes search field. This will bring up more hits on the database as it will also include other kinds of links such as births, deaths, marriages etc.

Once you have the group of people you are interested in you can click on each name and read their biography. The links on the right hand side of the page will tell you if they left any legacies associated with slavery. For example, did they build country houses, did they collect art or books, did they donate to charitable institutions, were they M.P.s etc.?

You can click on their claims to find out more about how many enslaved people they claimed ownership in, where those people lived and if there was anyone else involved in the claim. This will give you a better idea of what their connection to the colony was as you can also see in what capacity they were awarded money e.g. as trustee, as owner, as benefactor etc. This will allow students to compare different kinds of associations to slave-ownership.
Reparations

The reparations movement has a long history. Ottobah Cugoano (1757-?) was a formerly enslaved African who became an outspoken voice in the anti-slavery movement in Britain. He published his thoughts on slavery and toured the country with Olaudah Equiano. Cugoano discussed the notion of repair in relation to slavery and is often quoted as one of the first advocates of reparations.

There is not a full consensus within the reparations movement as to what reparations should look like. For example, the recent ten point plan (see additional web resources below) published by the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Reparations Commission does not include any form of repair for Africans or for people of African descent living in Britain.

In 2007, during the commemorations of the bicentenary of the abolition of the slave trade, Prime Minister Tony Blair stopped short of issuing an apology for transatlantic slavery by expressing instead his ‘sorrow.’ In response to the 2014 calls for reparations from the Caribbean the British government stated ‘we do not see reparations as the answer. Instead, we should concentrate on identifying ways forward, with a focus on the shared global challenges that face our countries in the 21st century. We regret and condemn the iniquities of the historic slave trade, but these shameful activities belong to the past. Governments today cannot take responsibility for what happened over 200 years ago.’

Suggested lesson activities: compensation and reparations

Starter

• Why were the formerly enslaved not compensated in 1834? Students write on post-it notes all the other things they would like to know about slavery and its legacies.

Activities

1. Show PowerPoint slide 2 from the proslavery lobby the Society of West India Planters and Merchants resolutions. Make a list of the arguments for compensation being presented.

2. Show PowerPoint slide 3. Before you show this image you should warn the students that the representation of the group of enslaved people is highly racialised. The transcription of this source contains the word ‘nigger.’ You might want to use this as an opportunity to discuss the language of ‘race’ with the students. For more information on the history of this term please see p.6 of this pack. This demonstrates some of the attitudes toward race that existed in Britain at the time. What does the image and the accompanying text (see transcription below) tell us about the debate about slavery compensation?

From left to right the caricatured figures represent a West Indian slave-owner, a Whig politician, a character called ‘John Bull’ who was used to represent the British public, an abolitionist and a crudely racialised group of enslaved people.

The captions read:

Slave-owner: ‘We slave robbers must have compensation for our loss. As to how the money’s got, what the devil do we know, so long as we get it. John Bull’s a well known flat, and don’t much care how he’s robbed so long as he can get grub to eat and straw to lay on.’

Whig politician: ‘Only see how neatly I take it out of his pocket. We Whigs are dapper hands at taking swag.’

John Bull: ‘Yes, Philosopher, I do begrudge it, and most damnably too: and I can tell ye, that if ye do have it, it won’t be a voluntary grant on my part, but a complete extortion on your’s and your pals. You call ’em dear, do ye? Yes and so do I, infernal dear. You call ’em suffering slaves too, and that in the face of our poor innocent factory children for whom you hav’nt one small part to pity. To them emancipation would be an absolute blessing, but to these bishop looking niggers it’ll only be a curse.’

Abolitionist: ‘Here’s a gratifying sight for ye, Johnny Bull. Freedom for the poor dear half-starved suffering slaves. Surely after such a joyous and affecting scene as this, I know your GENEROUS disposition too well to think that you would begrudge the paltry pittance of £20,000,000 for their emancipation!!’

1st Enslaved: ‘You black teef, do you know what emancipation mean’

2nd Enslaved: ‘No nor I no no care. I know dat Massa Bull pays for it, and it must be good.’

3rd Enslaved: ‘Ha Jonny Bull you be one dam fool.’
3. Show PowerPoint slide 4. Examine the source, working in pairs note down what kinds of information the source gives us. How can this help us to build a picture of British slave-ownership?

4. Put the following quote on the board (See PowerPoint slide 5):

‘The just law of God requires an equal retaliation and restoration for every injury that men may do to others, to share the greatness of the crime; but the law of forbearance, righteousness and forgiveness, forbids the retaliation, to be sought after, when it would be doing as great an injury to them, without any reparation or benefit to ourselves. For what man can restore an eye that he may have deprived another of, and if even a double punishment was to pass upon him, and that he was to lose both his eyes for the crime, that would make no reparation to the other man whom he had deprived of one eye. And so, likewise, when a man is carried captive and enslaved, and maimed and cruelly treated, that would make no adequate reparation and restitution for the injuries he had received, if he was even to get the person who had ensnared him to be taken captive and treated in the same manner. What he is to seek after is a deliverance and protection for himself, and not a revenge upon others.’

Ottobah Cugoano, *Thoughts and sentiments on the evil and wicked traffic of the slavery and commerce of the human species*, p.64

What is Cugoano saying about repairing injustice? Do you think he is advocating a form of reparations?

**Plenary**

- Pair/group brainstorm: Is compensation the same as reparations? (Teacher prompt – think about non-financial forms of reparations). Give the students the CARICOM ten point plan to help them to think about different concepts of reparations: [www.leighday.co.uk/News/2014/March-2014/CARICOM-nations-unanimously-approve-10-point-plan](http://www.leighday.co.uk/News/2014/March-2014/CARICOM-nations-unanimously-approve-10-point-plan)

- Play chapter 4 of Local Roots / Global Routes and pause on the discussion question. Use the structure of a spectrum debate to start the discussion. Ask the students to form a line across the classroom. The extreme right hand side of the room strongly disagrees with the statement. The extreme left hand side of the room strongly agrees with the statement. If the students are unsure they should stand in the middle. Go along the line and ask each student to explain their position. Inform them that they can move if they are influenced by anything that has been said by their classmates or teacher.

**Extension/Homework**

- Use the link to the database of British slave-ownership: [The Legacies of British Slave-ownership Database](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs)

- Take some time to explore the database and read through the search guide on how to use the resource.

- For the purposes of this exercise please use the ‘notes search’ function on the advanced search page. Type in a ‘Hackney’ and note down: How many slave-owners were associated with this area? What kinds of associations to the area do these individuals have?

**Additional Web Resources**

- Legacies of British Slave-ownership database
  [www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs)

- Legacies of British Slave-ownership Blog (Case studies for use in the classroom)
  [http://lbsatucl.wordpress.com](http://lbsatucl.wordpress.com)

- Legacies of British Slave-ownership Introduction by Kate Donington
  [https://colonialfamilies.wordpress.com/2012/05/15/the-legacies-of-british-slave-ownership-project](https://colonialfamilies.wordpress.com/2012/05/15/the-legacies-of-british-slave-ownership-project)

- Transcript of a reparations debate (Liverpool Museums)
  [www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/podcasts/transcripts/reparations_kuya.aspx](http://www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/podcasts/transcripts/reparations_kuya.aspx)

- CARICOM nations unanimously approve 10 point plan for slavery reparations
  [www.leighday.co.uk/News/2014/March-2014/CARICOM-nations-unanimously-approve-10-point-plan](http://www.leighday.co.uk/News/2014/March-2014/CARICOM-nations-unanimously-approve-10-point-plan)
• ‘A message from the Prime Minister’ – Tony Blair’s statement of ‘sorrow’ in 2007
  www.lifelineexpedition.co.uk/mota/downloads/calanderofevents.pdf

  www.theguardian.com/world/2014/mar/09/caribbean-nations-demand-slavery-reparations

• Owen Bowcott and Ian Cobain, ‘UK firmly resists paying for reparations for slave trade atrocities and injustices’,
  The Guardian, 24 February 2014

• Eds. Andrew Hann and Madge Dresser, Slavery and the British Country House (English heritage, 2013).

• Legacies of Slavery (Understanding Slavery website)
  www.understandingslavery.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=313&Itemid=225

Books

• Nicholas Draper, The Price of Emancipation: Slave-ownership, Compensation and British Society at the End of Slavery
  (Cambridge University Press, 2010).

• Ottobah Cugoano, Thoughts and sentiments on the evil and wicked traffic of the slavery and commerce of the human
  species: humbly submitted to the inhabitants of Great Britain (1787).
  You can read a free copy of the text here:
  https://books.google.co.uk/books?id=BkUSAQAAMAAJ&printsec=frontcover&output=text
Section 7
From slavery to emancipation: people of African descent in Hackney

- For the images to accompany this section see PowerPoint Section 7
- Accompanying background notes for teachers p.18 and p.27

The African or Black presence in Britain, and indeed in Hackney, has a long history. Africans did not only come to Britain through force under slavery, nor did they first arrive in the 1940s during the Windrush era. The story is more complicated and sometimes difficult to trace. Who gets remembered and why is an issue that affects the history of Africans in Britain. Historians working on ‘Black British History’ have had to work hard to uncover traces of people of African descent in the historical archive but nonetheless they are there. Their stories range from the exceptional to the ordinary.

Septimius Severus was the first Roman Emperor born in Africa. He ruled between AD 193 and 211. He was an accomplished general who died and is buried in York. There were African courtiers and ambassadors at the Tudor court and Henry VIII had a trumpeter of African descent called John Blanke. The parish records of St. John-at-Hackney contain the earliest known occurrence of an African person living in Hackney (one Anthony, who was buried on 18 May 1630, aged 105). Prior to transatlantic slavery Africans came as free people to live in Britain. African people occupied all kinds of different trades and sometimes married into the local population. Significant communities grew up, particularly around port cities where a number of African and Indian sailors had made their home following their voyages around the world.

For some people of African descent residence in Britain was linked to slavery. However, they were not always enslaved themselves. Some came as formerly enslaved free people of colour who wanted to make a life away from the slave societies. Others were the children of unions between slave-owners and African women. Some came as enslaved people and others as slave-owners themselves. Following emancipation some people left the Caribbean and came as free people to settle in Hackney.

Case studies

The following four case studies give information about different people of African descent who lived in Hackney during the period of slavery, abolition and emancipation. We have varying degree of information about these individuals. Each case study highlights how much we know about each person and suggests reasons why this is.
Fact sheet 1

Henrietta Hyatt of Dalston

The Hackney Archives holds a petition written by Henrietta Hyatt in 1809 when she was 18 years old. Because of this, we are able to learn something about who she was. Henrietta was the daughter of Dalston resident John Hyatt (also spelt Hiatt). She is described as his ‘natural daughter’, which means her parents were not married when she was born.

She was born in Jamaica and was sent to England to be educated sometime between the ages of 10 and 12. Her father arranged for her to be taught by a private governess at Bayswater in London. She had continued her studies until only a few months before the petition was written, and then went to live with her father.

Henrietta received a marriage proposal from a City of London merchant named William Hyde. In her petition she asked that Reverend Matthew Armstrong be appointed as her guardian so that she could accept the proposal. As she was considered a minor, she needed an adult male to arrange the marriage contract for her.

The petition was successful.

Although we learn quite a bit about Henrietta from the document we are also left with many questions. Who was her mother? Was she of mixed heritage? Why couldn’t her father act as her guardian? What was her life like afterwards?

We can learn a bit more about her family from other sources. A marriage certificate shows that she married William Hyde in Hackney in November of 1809. A Richard Hiatt is listed as being a witness to the marriage. It is possible that this is the same Richard Hiatt who is listed in the Legacies of British Slave-ownership database receiving compensation of £644 2S 5D. Some people who have conducted research on this family have suggested both that Richard was Henrietta’s brother and that they were both of mixed heritage.

Fact sheet 2

Joanna Vassa (1795-1857)

Joanna Vassa was the daughter of the famous African abolitionist and writer Olaudah Equiano (c.1745–1797). Equiano’s autobiographical work *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano*, published in 1789, made him an important voice in the abolitionist movement. His story introduced many readers to the horror of slavery. Joanna’s mother Susannah Cullen (?-1796) had been a subscriber to Equiano’s *Narrative*. The couple were married in Soham, Cambridgeshire in 1792.

Joanna’s parents and sister died within a year of each other – Susannah in 1796 and Olaudah and Anna Maria in 1797. As her father’s only heir Joanna inherited his estate, which was valued at £950, as well as a silver watch.

Joanna married the Congregational Minister Reverend Henry Bromley in 1821. The couple lived in Devon and later Essex before moving to 12 Benyon Terrace, Buckingham Road in De Beauvoir Town, Hackney. It was here that she died aged 61. The inscription on her grave reads ‘In memory of Joanna, beloved wife of Henry Bromley, daughter of Gustavus Vassa, the African. Born April 11, 1795 and died March 1857.’

Very little is known about Joanna Vassa’s life. Historians have tried to discover if Joanna, like her famous father, was an active abolitionist. No one has been able to find any evidence of abolitionist activities, but that does not necessarily mean Joanna did not support the cause. It is often more difficult to find information on the lives of women because they did not necessarily get recorded in the public record. Historians rely on people to leave a trace of their lives either within public documents or to write private correspondence or diaries. What happens if people don’t do this? What happens if people are not considered important enough to collect their documents?
Fact sheet 3

John Casper Mais (1800-51)

John was born in Kingston, Jamaica in 1800. He was the son of John Mais and Phillippina Weise both of whom were described as 'free people of colour.' Family historian Howard Mais has suggested that John Casper's father was an illegitimate son of John Mais Senior. It was a common practice for European men to have what became known as 'outside families' with women of colour in the colonies. Slave-ownership by people of mixed heritage did occur in the Caribbean, although it was never on the scale of European slave-ownership. This was in part due to the legal restrictions on property ownership by free people of colour. John Casper appeared in the slave compensation register as an unsuccessful claimant. He had lodged his claim on 76 enslaved people held on York Castle plantation in St. Ann, Jamaica but his claim was unsuccessful following a counterclaim by his reputed uncle the Hon. John Mais.

John Casper was referred to as a ‘gentleman and attorney of Kingston’ in a document of 1828. John married Sarah Evena Mclachlin and the couple had five children, four of whom were born in Middlesex. By the baptism of their second child Laura Ellen in 1835, their address was Rectory Place, Hackney. They were at the same address for the baptism of Phillippina in 1836 and at Palatine Houses, Stoke Newington, for the baptism of Caspar in 1838. John Casper had attempted several different business ventures but was unsuccessful to the extent that he spent time in gaol for debt in Dover in the late 1840s. On his death he left behind the not inconsiderable sum of £800.

Historians have been able to piece together some of John Casper Mais's life because he appeared in some legal documents, particularly those relating to property. As a man he would have been able to claim and own property as well as make decisions about it. His time in prison meant that he is also in the public record.

Fact sheet 4

Joseph Jackson Fuller (1825-1908).

PowerPoint slides 4-6

Joseph was born into slavery in 1825 in Spanish Town, St. Catherine, Jamaica. His father Alexander McCloud Fuller and his mother were enslaved to two different families and could not marry. The Fullers became part of the congregation of Reverend James Phillippo, an anti-slavery campaigner and member of the Baptist Missionary Society. When slavery was legally abolished in 1833 Joseph stated that he became immediately free in 1834. Joseph wrote about the ending of slavery in his autobiography; ‘The scene on the night I believe all over the island will never be forgotten by all of us who witness it… to see the upturned eyes of the thousands as they waited around the grave which was to receive the coffin which contained the implements of slavery and as the last stroke of the clock tolled the hour of twelve, the coffin lowered and doxology was sung, the morning dawn[ed] on us a free people.’ Joseph dated the end of slavery as 1838 – that was the date when the system of apprenticeship ended. This tells us a lot about how formerly enslaved people viewed apprenticeship.

Joseph was educated at Phillippo’s Mission House and in 1843, at the age of 18, he left Jamaica to become a Baptist Missionary in West Africa. Joseph was ordained as a Baptist priest in 1859. He spent 30 years in West Africa preaching the Gospel. Joseph married firstly a Jamaican school teacher Elizabeth Jackson, but she died in 1859. He later married Charlotte Diboll, the daughter of missionaries who herself was active in the movement.

After moving to England, Joseph and his family travelled around the country and he delivered sermons at different Baptist churches. In Birmingham in 1889 he addressed an audience of 4000. Although there had been African communities in some of the large port cities in Britain for a long time, many people had not encountered African people before. Joseph wrote that when he visited a church in Norwich ‘my appearance with wife and children caused a little sensation as we entered’. Joseph settled permanently in Hackney and lived on Sydner Road in Stoke Newington. He died in 1908 and was buried in Abney Park Cemetery.

Unlike many ordinary people living in Britain, Joseph has left behind a distinctive archival trace - he wrote an autobiography of his life and his papers can be found amongst those of the Baptist Missionary Society. His role as a missionary was the key factor in getting his memoir and indeed his memory preserved. Joseph also features in the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography.
Suggested lesson activities: from slavery to emancipation – people of African descent in Hackney

Starter

• Ask the students when people of African and Caribbean descent first arrived in Britain? Does anyone in the class have any family stories about migration they can share? If so encourage the students to ask family members more about their experiences, record their stories and bring them into the next class to share.

• Read the article by Miranda Kaufmann (see additional web resources below). Ask the students if they have heard about African people in Tudor England? Did they know there was an African man living in Hackney in 1630? Does it change the way they think about British history? What about local history?

Activities

1. Working in groups ask the students to read the four fact sheets about Hackney residents of African descent. Ask the students to put the case studies in order of who we know the most about to who we know the least about. Ask them to consider why we know more about some people and less about others.

2. We know the least about Joanna Vassa and Henrietta Hyatt. Ask the students to discuss what that might tell us about the position of women in history. Has women’s position in history improved? Can the students think of any historical female figures? Write on the board and share answers.

3. Joanna Vassa’s tomb was ‘rediscovered’ in the lead up to the commemoration of the bicentenary of the abolition of the slave trade in 2007. It was restored by Hackney Council and its location was publicised that year. What does this tell us about the relationship between memory and history? Why do we remember certain things at certain times and not at others? Can the students think of any examples of this in their own lives (teacher prompt – birthdays and anniversaries, historical anniversaries e.g. the centenary of the First World War in 2014). Why is it important to remember?

4. Cross-discipline work with English Literature. Ask the students to imagine they are Joseph Jackson Fuller writing a letter to be sent back to Jamaica describing arriving in either Africa in 1844 or London in 1877.

Plenary

• How can we find out about history through what has been preserved? Whose history gets preserved and why? What histories have been destroyed / lost? What was never recorded in the first place?

• ‘Knowledge is power’ – in what ways is history writing an exercise in power? Discuss.

Homework / extension

• Visit Hackney Archives and request to see the document relating to Henrietta Hyatt.
Additional Web Resources

- Emancipation (Understanding Slavery website)
  www.understandingslavery.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=312&Itemid=224
- Diaspora (Understanding Slavery website)
- Black presences and the legacies of slavery and colonialism in rural Britain, c.1600-1939
  www.nottingham.ac.uk/isos/research/rural-legacies.aspx
- Joseph Jackson Fuller by Jeffrey Green (author of the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography entry)
  www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2014/sep/15/black-chronicles-ii-victorians-photography-exhibition-rivington-place
- Black presence in the eighteenth and nineteenth century
  www.blackhistory4schools.com/1750-1900
  www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2012/oct/17/slavery-black-history-month
- Black Londoners 1800-1900
  www.ucl.ac.uk/equianocentre/Black_Londoners_1800-1900.html
- Patrick Vernon, Black Victorians, History Today, Volume 55 Issue 10 October 2005
  www.historytoday.com/patrick-vernon/black-victorians
- Archives, records and power: the making of modern memory
  www.nyu.edu/classes/bkg/methods/schwartz.pdf
- Embracing the power of archives (Society of American Archivists)
  www.archivists.org/governance/presidential/jimerson.asp
- Mixed Race Studies website includes historical work by Dr Daniel Livesay on the children of slave-owners and women of African descent
  www.mixedracestudies.org/wordpress/?p=9595

Books

- Caroline Bressey, Empire, Race and the Politic of Anti-Caste (Bloomsbury, 2014).
- Angelina Osborne, Equiano’s Daughter: The Life and Times of Joanna Vassa (Momentum Arts, 2007).
Section 8: Carnival, Jonkonnu and Belisario of Clapton

• For the images to accompany this section see PowerPoint Section 8

Carnival

Carnival has ancient roots and is a mixture of cultural expressions drawn mainly from African and European traditions. Ancient Egyptian festivals had dancers, singers and musicians who celebrated death, rebirth and the struggle for survival. Many African Kaiso festivals involved masks, music, drumming and singing. Later, Medieval Christians celebrated Mardi Gras, or Fat Tuesday, the feast before Lenten fasting (hence the word ‘carnivale’ meaning farewell to flesh). Carnival in all its forms can be seen as the control of a space by people who do not have control of it normally.

Today’s carnival traditions were also influenced by the slave colonies established by the Catholic Portuguese, French and Spanish. The ancient African traditions were mixed with Christian celebrations - the European tradition of holding its carnivals at the start of lent. In the colonies, this changed to include dinners, balls, hunting parties and outdoor picnics. The elite classes mocked their servants and slaves by dressing up in scruffy clothes and mimicking them.

Jonkonnu (otherwise known as Jankunu or John Canoe) was a masquerade parade, ritual and dance that still takes place today. Jonkonnu has culturally African origins and was adopted in Jamaica in the eighteenth century. Since then it has spread to the Bahamas and Belize as well as North Carolina and Virginia in the United States. It is another important root of today’s carnivals. Although there are regional differences it almost always includes masks, parades, drums and dancing and it takes place on Boxing Day.

For most enslaved people Christmas was the only festival that they were given time off from work to celebrate. Jonkonnu was an outlet for the enslaved Africans and was a break from their everyday lives of brutality, intense physical labour and boredom. They would dress in ways that mocked the slave-owners and their costumes would question social and racial hierarchies. The plantation owners were often extremely worried about the festivities turning to violence and after emancipation Jonkonnu was banned as it was considered likely to inspire agitation against the still powerful ruling classes of Jamaica.

By 1838 apprenticeship ended and carnival was transformed into a festival that everyone could participate in. Formerly enslaved people took carnival onto the streets. They called it Canboulay or Cannes Brulées after the period when the sugar was harvested, the cane fields burnt and horns and shells were blown to bring together people from surrounding plantations.

Capturing carnival: the art of Isaac Mendes Belisario of Clapton (1795–1849)

There has been a Jewish population in Jamaica since the earliest days of colonisation by the Spanish. When the British captured the island in 1655 some of those inhabitants stayed and were sometimes referred to as ‘Spanish’ or Portuguese’ rather than Jewish. Under the British the Jewish population could practice their faith although they were still subject to prejudice. They were not equal citizens and were not given full political rights until 1831. Some Jewish people changed their names or practiced their faith in secret. The Jewish population in Jamaica grew to become the largest Jewish community in any British colony during the eighteenth century.
The Belisario family's slavery connections

Isaac Mendes Belisario was born in Kingston, Jamaica in 1795 the son of Esther Mendes Belisario (born Lindo) and Abraham Mendes Belisario. He had five siblings – Caroline, Lydia, Hannah, Rose, Maria. His family were Sephardic Jews who had grown wealthy through their mercantile activities. Like many people on the island, the family were involved with the slavery business. Both Isaac's grandfather Alexandre Lindo and his father Abraham were involved with slave trading and plantation ownership. In 1809 Isaac's father Abraham was appointed by William Payne Georges to manage seven sugar estates in Tortola in the British Virgin Islands for £2000 a year. Members of the Belisario family were awarded slavery compensation.

Life in London

In 1803 the Belisario family moved back to London to Finsbury Square where they lived with Isaac's grandfather Alexandre Lindo. In 1812 Isaac painted an interior view of Bevis Marks synagogue in Aldgate where his grandfather Isaac (for whom he was named) had been a Rabbi. Isaac showed an aptitude for art and between 1815 and 1818 trained as an artist and exhibited at the Royal Academy.

Belisario in Jamaica

Isaac returned to Jamaica in 1834 shortly after slavery had come to an end and just as the system of apprenticeship began. A number of his family still lived on the island. His paintings depicted plantation scenes and elite society – he painted the man who owned Samuel Sharpe (see section 5). In 1837 he captured the Jonkonnu festival as well as depicting local people during the last year of apprenticeship. These lithograph images were collected together and published as Sketches of Character; In Illustration of the Habits, Occupations, and Costume of the Negro Population, in the Island of Jamaica in 1838.

The Belisario family in Hackney

Whilst Isaac was in Jamaica his mother and four sisters remained in London at 5 Wickham Place, Lower Clapton. In 1807 they had established a boarding school for girls. In the 1841 census all four sisters are listed as governesses. Isaac returned to London in 1839 and lived with his sisters. After one last return to Jamaica, Isaac died of tuberculosis on the 4 June 1849 in Lower Clapton and was buried at the Novo Cemetery at Mile End.

Isaac Mendes Belisario, Sketches of Character (1837)

When looking at Isaac's work it is important to consider the ways in which slavery (and his family's participation within the system) might have influenced his attitude to Africans. In Sketches he described Africans as 'monstrous and uncouth' and 'a savage nation.' He clearly viewed the formerly enslaved people as unequal and mocked their culture and traditions. He was nostalgic for pre-revolutionary Haiti describing it as that 'once finely cultivated Island St. Domingo' and recollecting how 'many respectable families took flight from the appalling scene.'

Jaw-Bone or John Canoe (PowerPoint slide2)

This figure was dressed in clothing symbolic of the ruling planter class – a periwig, sash and regimental coat. Atop his head balanced a model of a plantation great house. All these elements directly referenced slavery and Britain. Isaac's description of John Canoe betrayed a begrudging admiration for the rhythmic movement of the dancer 'to poise his body at one and the same moment, with his paper castle borne aloft... it is truly astonishing to witness the celerity and precision.' He compared the dancer to 'the Foreign Dancers at the Opera-House' but betraying his prejudice added 'Pardon the comparison ye Artistes!'
Koo-Koo or Actor Boy (PowerPoint slide 3)

This figure was likely to have been a literate person. Isaac recorded contemptuously that Actor Boy sometimes performed theatre as well as pantomime ‘they dared perpetrate “murder most foul” even on the plays of Shakespeare.’ The figure carried a fan and a whip - symbols of slave-owners representing leisure and punishment. The figure lifted his mask to reveal his face in a knowing display of the subversion of racial hierarchies. These tropes are indicative of the carnival idea of ‘the world turned upside down’ when normal life is inverted, things become their opposite and normal rules of life and society are suspended.

Red Set Girls and French Set Girls (PowerPoint slides 4 and 5)

The two images depicted the Red Set and French Set - rival groups of dancers at Jonkonnu. Each would be led by a ‘queen.’ Isaac noted their animosity and recalled a time in their history when the women would break out in ‘violent affrays: proving fatal in most instances, to their articles of dress.’ He reassured his reader that ‘Such unlady-like conduct in the present day, being regarded as highly indecorous’ was now ‘rarely witnessed.’

The French Set Girls were descended from enslaved women who had left Haiti with the fleeing slave-owners who were escaping the Haitian Revolution. Isaac described them as ‘faithful slaves’ although we might question what choice they had in the matter. He thought them ‘invariably observers of taste and decorum, considering it derogatory to dance elsewhere than in dwelling-houses’. In contrast Isaac described the Red Set Girls as dressing ‘without the slightest regard being had to the selection of colours, or the mode in which the garments are worn.’

Suggested lesson activities: Jonkannu, Carnival and Belisario of Clapton

This section could be used as a one-off lesson in Black History Month, as a launch of a unit on local history or transatlantic slavery, or as an introductory history lesson for new Year 7s in the autumn term following the Notting Hill Carnival and coinciding with Hackney One Carnival.

Starters

1. Show PowerPoint slide 6 – a picture of Hackney carnival. Ask students if they have been to the carnival.
   Pair/group brainstorm: What is carnival for? Who celebrates at carnival? What are they celebrating?
   Record and share answers.

Activities

1. Show a film clip of contemporary Jonkannu celebrations (see additional resources below).
   Students write down all the features that stand out.

2. Give the Belisario images John Canoe and Actor Boy and descriptions to pairs of students. Students answer questions:
   • Describe the costumes. How do the costume and accessories depict the ‘world turned upside down’?
   • From the descriptions the artist gives what does the he think about the people he is depicting? Why do you think he might have those attitudes?
   • How representative of the actual carnival are these paintings?

3. Focus on the images of the Red Set and French Set Girls. What does Belisario’s description of the two different groups of dancers tell us about attitudes to women during this period? Are they specific to African women?
Plenary

- How does participating in a carnival strengthen cultural or community identity?
- What does the Jonkannu tell us about the lives of the enslaved?

Homework / Extension

- Cross-departmental activity with art and design: create a Jonkannu-inspired mask, headdress or costume to represent a contemporary world-turned-upside-down theme.

Additional Resources

- From Mockery to Celebration – Jonkannu Part 1 (10 minute film clip)
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LXV4RHaXrvU
- From Mockery to Celebration – Jonkannu Part 2 (10 minute film clip)
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e3d501Y8Qlw
- From Mockery to Celebration – Jonkannu Part 3 (5 minute film clip)
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a1ThgkJfWPA
- Belisario blog at the National Gallery of Jamaica:

Books

Acknowledgements

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Community Support
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Project Funded by
Share Academy (Arts Council England).