

*Minute Book  
of the  
Ladies Society  
for the  
Redemption of Negro Slaves.*

**SLAVERY AND ABOLITION:  
A GUIDE TO RESOURCES**

# **Slavery and Abolition: A Guide to Resources**

## ***Contents***

**Birmingham: For or Against Slavery?**

**The Galton Family, Gun Making and the Transatlantic Trade**

**Resistance to Plantation Life**

**The Sturge Family and Nineteenth Century Antislavery Campaigning**

**Black Antislavery Activists in Birmingham**

**Summary of Key Themes**

**Sources from Birmingham Archives and Heritage Collections**

**General Sources**

*Written by Dr Andy Green, 2008.*

[www.connectinghistories.org.uk/birminghamstories.asp](http://www.connectinghistories.org.uk/birminghamstories.asp)



**“Oh the horrors of slavery!  
How the thought of it pains my heart!  
But the truth ought to be told of it;  
and what my eyes have seen  
I think it is my duty to relate;  
for few people in England know  
what slavery is.”**

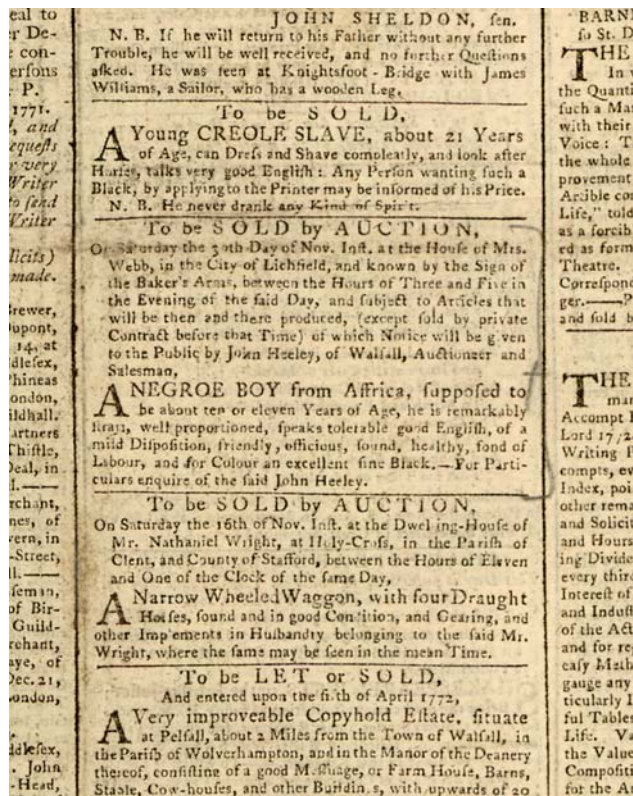
*History of Mary Prince, 1831.*

## Birmingham: For or Against Slavery?

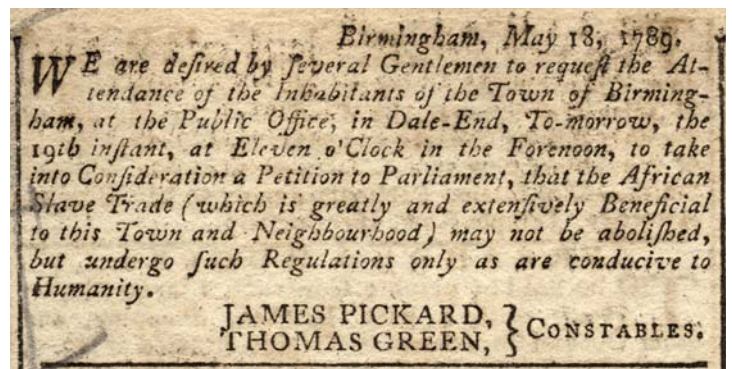
Was 18th century Birmingham a town of radicals, non-conformists and freethinkers who condemned slavery and desired to see the trade abolished? Or, was it a rising town of industrialists, who wanted to carry on profiting from ‘African Trade’ by making guns, chains, iron and plantation tools? Could it be both? How can we find out more?

In 2007 many new heritage projects, events and exhibitions took place in Birmingham to mark the bicentenary of the Abolition of the Slave Trade Act.

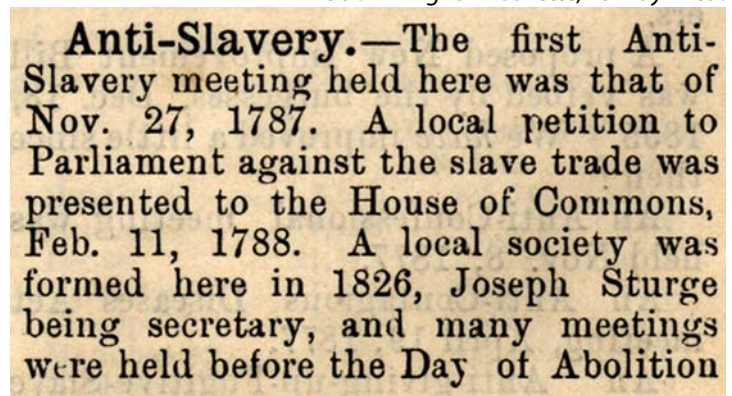
These explored the way in which local industries profited from transatlantic slavery, the history of Birmingham’s antislavery networks and the related forms of contemporary slavery still affecting global landscapes. We now need to continue these political and cultural debates to further our historical awareness of slavery and understand more about how the third world’s relationship of dependency on the west was formed. This learning guide highlights resources which could be used as part of these ongoing discussions.



Aris's Birmingham Gazette, 11 Nov 1771.



Aris's Birmingham Gazette, 18 May 1789.

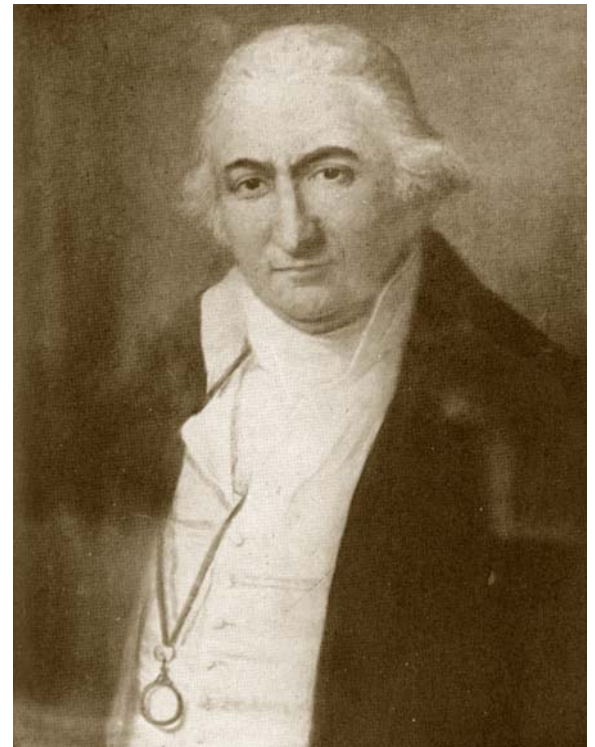


Showell's Dictionary of Birmingham, 1881.

**Key Debate:**  
what do these images start to tell us  
about 'slavery and abolition' in Birmingham?

# The Galton Family, Gun Making and the Transatlantic Trade

The history of the Galton family shows one way Birmingham became involved in profiting from slavery, by supplying guns that were used to barter for Africans as part of the transatlantic trade. Samuel Galton Snr went into business with James Farmer, taking control of the Birmingham branch of the gun making business on Steelhouse Lane. 'The Slave Trade' (1997) by Hugh Thomas suggests that in 1765 '150,000 guns had been sent to Africa from Birmingham alone'. A gun would often get traded along with some other pieces of hardware, metal or cloth as the price for a 'slave'.



Samuel Galton Jnr. [Portraits Collection]

**"I have another favour to begg but would not have it divulged that is that you would procure me an abstract for a cargo for the Windward or Gold Coast for a vesel that caries about 250 slaves, some particular persons desir'd me to gett it whom I expect to serve with the cargo: observe to add a few more guns' of Arabia."**

*Letter from James Farmer to his brother Joseph, 1743 [MS3101/C/C/2/1/5]*

Samuel Galton Jnr would follow in his father's footsteps by working in the gun trade. He also took part in the Lunar Society, formed of key local radicals, scientists and freethinkers like Joseph Priestley, Matthew Boulton and James Watt, who debated the morality of the slave trade. Highlighting Galton Jnr's contradictory stance, in 1795 Birmingham Quakers criticised his family involvement in supplying destructive weapons. Galton defended himself, stating: "Now, those who use the produce of the labor of Slaves, as Tobacco, Rum, Sugar, Rice, Indigo, and Cotton, are more intimately, and directly the Promoters of the Slave Trade, than the Vender of Arms is the Promoter of War;---because the Consumption of these Articles, is the very Ground and Cause of Slavery;---"

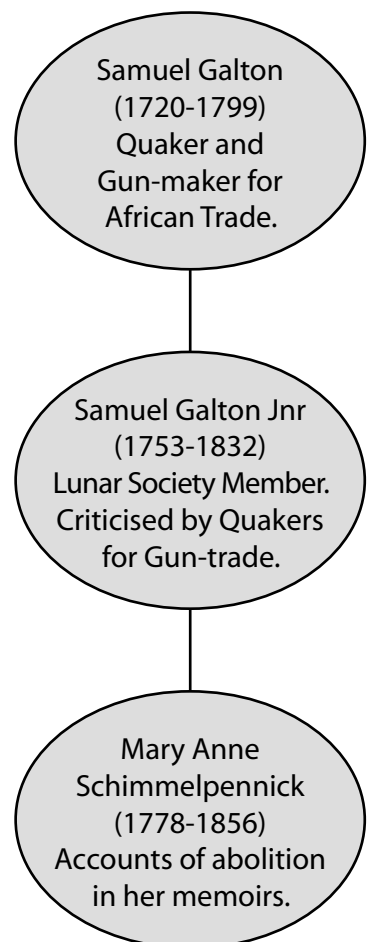
One of Galton Jnr's daughters, Mary Anne Schimmelpennick, later became part of the abolitionist movement. Her memoirs of 1856 reconsider Britain's participation in slavery.



Mary Anne Schimmelpennick.

But what surprised me most in the aspect of Liverpool was the multitude of black servants, almost all of whom had originally been slaves; this deeply moved my compassion, and when I saw the table laden with West India produce, in its various forms of fruit and sweetmeats, and saw the black servants looking on at the produce of a land, their native home, which they had left for us, and of which they might not partake, my heart often ached; and it is no wonder that my resolution was confirmed never to taste anything made with sugar, or to use other West Indian commodities.

*Memoirs of Mary Anne Schimmelpennick, 1856. [A942. 073]*



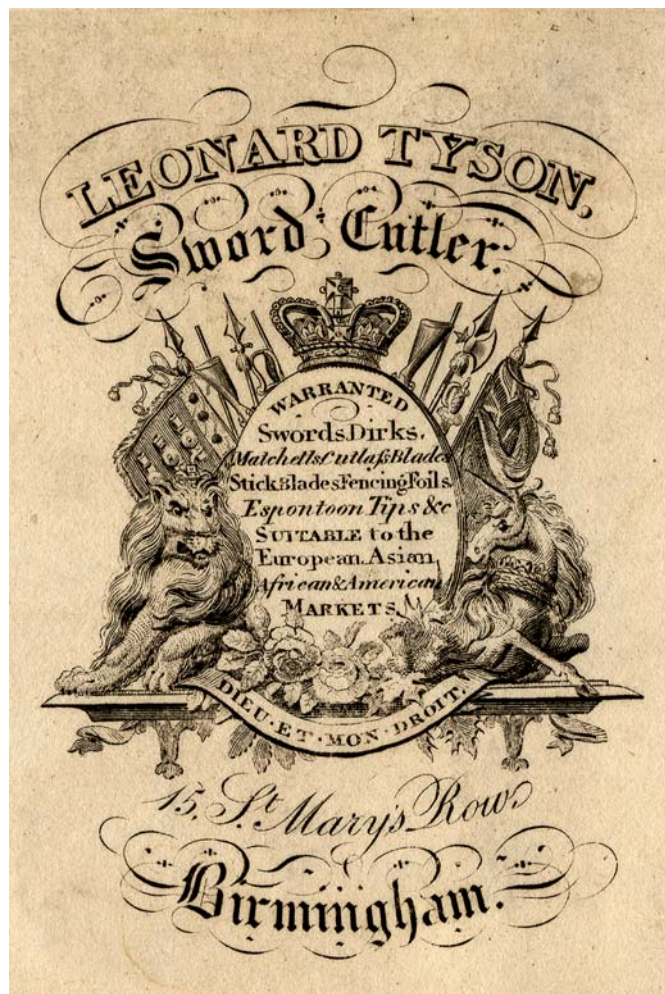
## Key Debate:

what does Galton family history tell us about the extent of Birmingham's industrial relationship to the African Trade?

## Blunting the Tools

The enslaved men and women who laboured on the plantations were the most persistent in their resistance to slavery. They resisted their subjugation in a number of different ways. One method of resistance, particularly pertinent to industry in Birmingham, was acted out through the sabotage of the tools and machinery with which they worked. Birmingham was host to a number of manufacturers who supplied tools for plantations.

'Sabotage' as a method of resistance was similar to other non-confrontational modes of defiance such as theft of property from planters' houses and 'go slows.' Many of these acts of resistance were interpreted as further proof of the 'laziness' or 'indolence' of black people by the plantocracy, who failed to grasp their seditious intent. Such stereotypes were contradictory. For example, the description of black people as 'stupid' and 'lazy' contrasted with the racist notion that blacks were also 'cunning' and more 'robust.'



Birmingham sword cutler. [Birmingham Trade Card Collection: 289]

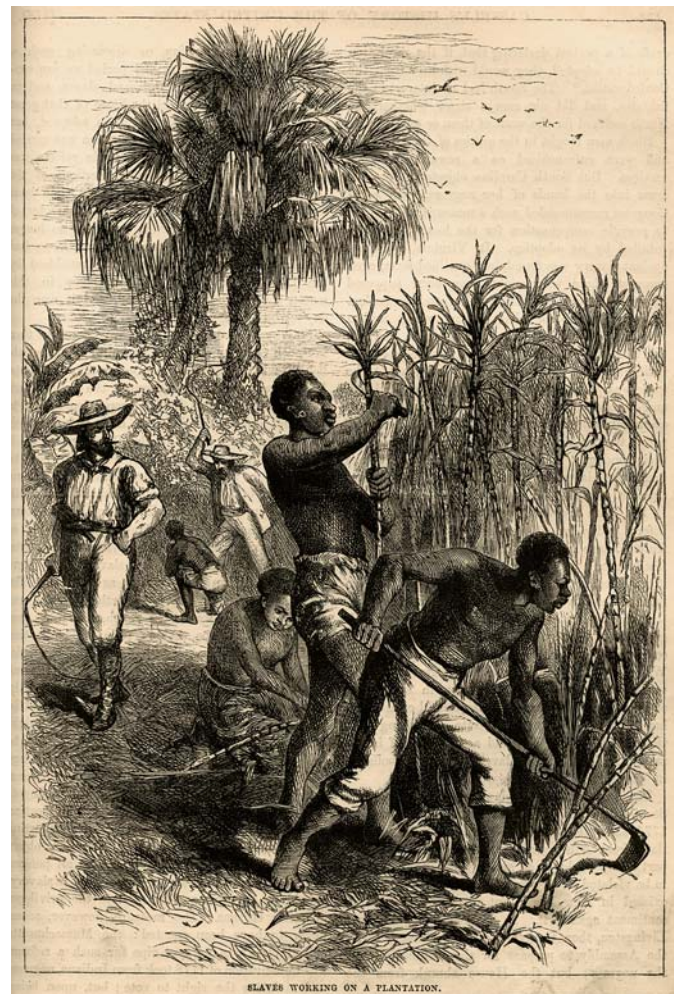
## Edged Tools and Violent Resistance

In more confrontational modes of resistance, the cutlasses, machetes, axes and even hoes which the enslaved used in their work were turned on their oppressors in violent insurrection.

In spite of the brutal manner in which rebels were punished, which included slow methods of torture such as gradual mutilation, slow burning, breaking on the wheel and starvation in cages, slave rebellions increased significantly after 1815 on all British Islands.

The Jamaican slave rebellion led by Baptist preacher, Samuel Sharpe, in 1831 was particularly important in finally bringing slavery to an end. The insurrection involved more than 60,000 slaves over an area of 750 square miles, with over 200 sugar estates in the North-West of the island burned and pillaged.

## Resistance to Plantation Life



Edmund Oller, 'History of the United States', 1881. [A 973.01/Vol 2]

**Key Debate:**  
what other forms of resistance would have been used by enslaved men and women?

# The Sturge Family and Nineteenth Century Antislavery Campaigning

## Joseph Sturge and Birmingham

Joseph Sturge (1793-1859), a Quaker, was not content with 'The Abolition of the Slave Trade Act' (1807). His campaigns were undertaken to promote a 'complete end' to slavery where oppression continued unchanged. His memorial still stands at Five Ways in Birmingham.

As part of his leadership of local and national anti-slavery societies, Sturge undertook international voyages to the West Indies (1837) and the United States (1841) to show the true condition of enslaved Africans on plantations. On 1st of August 1838, Sturge led processions of children from the Town Hall to lay the foundation of a 'Emancipation Schoolroom'. Sturge stressed this was not a 'celebration', but a new chapter of struggle: slavery still continued in America.

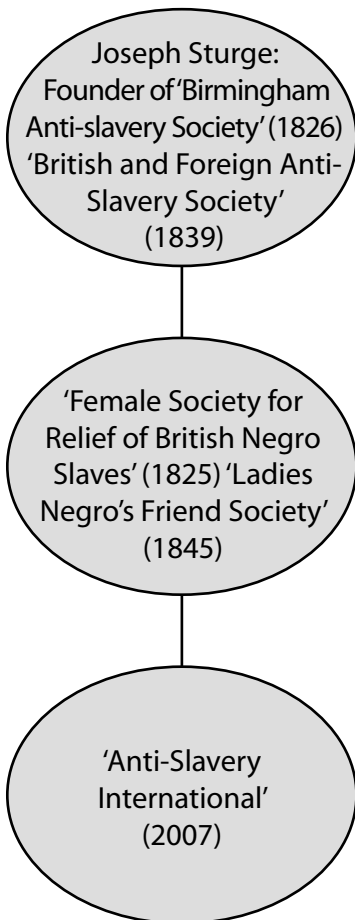


Sturge statue, Five Ways, 1974. [Statues & Mosaics]

## Women Antislavery Activists in Birmingham

The Sturge family was part of a wide network of activists who wanted to bring an end to slavery. The Sturge women were also closely involved in raising antislavery funds, arguing against the use of sugar that was the product of 'slave labour'. This challenges the idea that 'men' led abolition campaigns.

The 'Female Society for the Relief of British Negro Slaves' started in 1825. The final reports of what came to be called the 'Ladies Negro's Friend Society' were not published until after WWI in 1919. This marked nearly a hundred years of campaigns by women to raise funds and antislavery awareness.



*"The ending of the slave trade in 1807 did not bring any comfort to the slaves already at work in the colonies, nor did it bring any marked improvement in slave conditions."*

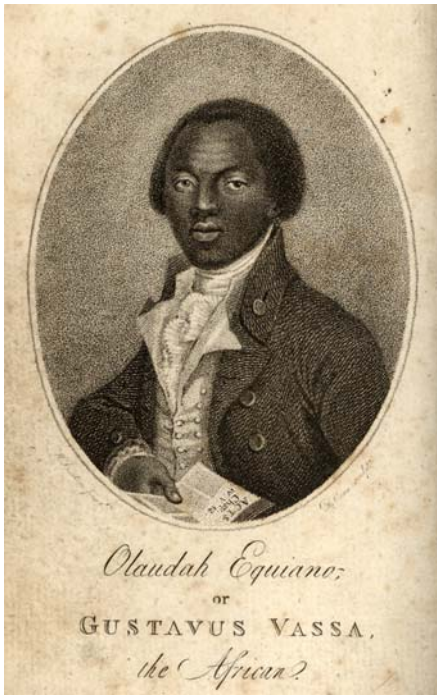


Portrait of Sturge. [Courtesy of BM&AG]



Sturge Family with John Bright. [Sophia Sturge, A Memoir]

**Key Debate:**  
what different issues did local men and women face when 'fighting slavery' in Birmingham?



Olaudah Equiano.



Frederick Douglass.



Amanda Smith.

The Interesting Narrative, 1793. [HGD/094/1793/36]

The Narrative of Frederick Douglass. [BHC/A326.973 DOU]

The Life of Amanda Smith. [L52.45]

## Black Antislavery Activists in Birmingham

**"The whole history of the progress of human liberty shows... If there is no struggle there is no progress"**

*Frederick Douglass.*

Olaudah Equiano sold his 'narrative' to Birmingham's local audiences in 1790. He would not be the last black activist to 'protest' in the town. For instance, in 1846 the famous ex-slave Frederick Douglass also came to Birmingham. He gave a speech in Ebenezer Chapel, Steelhouse Lane, an area where generations of gun makers had been involved in supplying the African Trade. In the audience were members of the Birmingham Anti-Slavery Society, including Joseph Sturge. Visits by men such as Equiano and Douglass helped to change local attitudes towards slavery, race and justice. Rev. Peter Stanford was an anti-lynching campaigner who later became the city's first black minister (1889).

ESCAPED SLAVES TO THE LAND OF FREEDOM.  
**A PUBLIC MEETING** will be held in the Town Hall, at which the Rev. S. R. WARD, of Canada, will deliver an ADDRESS, on the CONDITION, PROSPECTS, and WANTS of the REFUGEES from AMERICAN SLAVERY in CANADA, on WEDNESDAY EVENING NEXT, October 19th. The Chair will be taken at half-past Seven o'clock, by the Right Hon. Lord CALTHORPE. The Rev. S. R. WARD, who is of pure African descent, is accredited by the Committee in London, of which the Earl of Shaftesbury is the President.

*Birmingham Journal, 15 October 1853.*

**1790**

Olaudah Equiano visits Birmingham.

**1846**

Frederick Douglass meets Birmingham Anti-Slavery Society.

**1879**

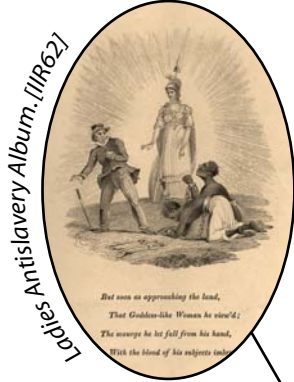
Amanda Smith meets Ladies Negro's Friend Society.

Meanwhile, women like Amanda Smith had also ensured the voice of black resistance was heard in Britain. On the left is evidence of another black activist in 19th century Birmingham. How many more were there?

**Key Debate:**  
 what what would have been the impact of black abolitionists in Birmingham?

# Summary of Key Themes:

How did Birmingham industries profit from slave trades?



Contradictions between 'trade' and 'morality' in 18th century Birmingham.



Continual resistance and rebellion on slave plantations.

Network established by 'Female Society for the Relief of British Negro Slaves'.

**Slavery and Abolition:  
A Guide  
to Resources**

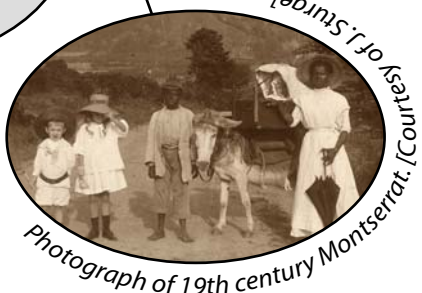
The role of Black abolitionists in Britain.



Significance of Quaker and 'Non-conformist' influences.

Local leadership of Joseph Sturge and the Birmingham Anti-Slavery Society.

What is the legacy of slavery in society today?





# Slavery and Abolition: Guide to Resources

## ***Sources from Birmingham Archives and Heritage Collections***

### **Archives:**

The Birmingham Anti-Slavery Society Minute Books [IIR 62]  
Female Society for the Relief of British Negro Slaves. [IIR 62]  
Birmingham Ladies Negro's Friend Society, 1845-89, 1890-1915. [IIR 62]  
The Birmingham and Midland Freedmen's Aid Association, 1864-65. [IIR 62]  
The Quaker Reading Society [MS 2160]  
The Montserrat Company [MS 1436]  
Papers relating to Rev Thomas Swan [MS 1675]  
The Galton Papers [MS 3101]  
The Boulton and Watt Collection [MS 3147]  
The Friends Book Society [MS 2160]

### **Primary Printed Sources:**

Birmingham Newspapers: *Aris's Gazette* and *The Birmingham Post* [Microfilm]  
Birmingham Portraits Collection  
Birmingham Trade Card Collection  
Maria Cadbury, *The Life of Amanda Smith*, 1916 [L52.45]  
R.K. Dent, *Birmingham Old and New*, 1880 [BCOL 73]  
Frederick Douglass, *The Narrative of Frederick Douglass* (1846 ed.) [BHC/A326.973 DOU]  
Olaudah Equiano, *The Interesting Narrative* (sixth edition, 1793) [HGD/094/1793/36]  
Mary Anne Galton, *Life of Mary Anne Schimmelpenninck*, 1860 [A942.073]  
Langford, LL.D, John Alfred, ed. *A Century of Birmingham Life*, 1870 [BCOL]  
Edmund Oller, *History of the United States*, 1881, Vol 2 [A973.01]  
Henry Richard, *Memoirs of Joseph Sturge*, 1865 [BCOL: 78.1STU]  
Showell's Dictionary of Birmingham, 1881 [L78.1 ]  
Sturge, Joseph and Thomas Harvey, *The West Indies in 1837*, 1838 [Black History Collection]  
Slavery Pamphlet Collections [A326.08: C/1 D/1 D/2 D/3 D/4 E/1]  
William Hughes, *Sophia Sturge, A Memoir*, 1940 [BCOL: 78.1STU]

## ***Other Useful Archives and Historical Collections Held Elsewhere***

Papers of The Church Missionary Society [Special Collections, Birmingham University]

# Slavery and Abolition: A Guide to Resources

## General Sources

### Secondary Reading:

- Robin Blackburn, *The Overthrow of Colonial Slavery 1776-1848* (1988)
- Malcolm Dick, *Joseph Priestley and Birmingham* (2005)
- Paul Edwards and David Dabydeen, *Black Writers in Britain 1760-1890* (1991)
- Peter Fryer, *Staying Power The History of Black People in Britain* (1984)
- Grosvenor, McLean and Roberts, *Making Connections Birmingham Black International History* (2002)
- Gerzina Gretchen, *Black England: Life Before Emancipation* (1995)
- Gerzina Gretchen (ed.) *Black Victorians / Black Victoriana* (2003)
- Catherine Hall, *Civilising Subjects: Metropole and Colony in the English Imagination 1830-1867* (2002)
- Richard Hart, *Slaves Who Abolished Slavery: Vol 1. Blacks in Bondage* (1980)
- Richard Hart, *Slaves Who Abolished Slavery: Vol 2. Blacks in Rebellion* (1985)
- Adam Hochschild, *Bury The Chains: The British Struggle to Abolish Slavery* (2005)
- C.L.R. James, *The Black Jacobins* (1938)
- Clare Midgley, *Women Against Slavery: The British Campaigns, 1780-1870* (1995)
- F. O. Shyllon, *Black Slaves in Britain* (1974)
- F. O. Shyllon, *Black People in Britain* (1977)
- Hugh Thomas, *The Slave Trade* (1997)
- Alex Tyrell, *Joseph Sturge and the Moral Radical Party in Early Victorian Britain* (1987)
- Jenny Uglow, *The Lunar Men: The Friends Who Made The Future* (2002)
- James Walvin, *Britain's Slave Empire* (2000)

### Websites - Museums - Libraries - Institutions:

- [www.connectinghistories.org.uk](http://www.connectinghistories.org.uk) - learning packages 'Campaigning for Social Justice' and 'Researching Black History'
- [www.revolutionaryplayers.org.uk](http://www.revolutionaryplayers.org.uk) - Birmingham Industrial Legacies and Lunar Society
- [www.antislavery.org](http://www.antislavery.org) - Anti-Slavery International website
- [www.docsouth.unc.edu](http://www.docsouth.unc.edu) - Documenting the American South
- [www.brycchancarey.com/abolition](http://www.brycchancarey.com/abolition) - information on British Abolitionists by Brycchan Carey
- [www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/ism](http://www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/ism) - Liverpool's 'International Slavery Museum'
- [www.portcities.org.uk](http://www.portcities.org.uk) - information on Bristol and Transatlantic Slavery
- [www.understandingslavery.com](http://www.understandingslavery.com) - teaching resource for planning lessons on slavery
- [www.equiano.org](http://www.equiano.org) - Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery 'Equiano Project' website
- [www.bbc.co.uk/abolition](http://www.bbc.co.uk/abolition) - BBC website on abolition
- [www.bl.uk](http://www.bl.uk) - the British Library website

***Contact us:***

**Birmingham Stories Project Office  
Central Library  
Chamberlain Square  
Birmingham  
B3 3HQ**

**(+44) 0121 4641608**

**Birmingham School of Education  
University of Birmingham  
Edgbaston  
Birmingham  
B15 2TT**

**(+44) 0121 4144866**

**Birmingham Archives and  
Heritage Service  
Floor 6, Central Library  
Chamberlain Square  
Birmingham B3 3HQ**

**(+44) 0121 3034217**

302206  
11/29/62