

Digital History Workshop: Legacies of British Slave-Ownership

HIST-100 Modern Britain since 1750 - Fall 2018 - Professor Regan-Lefebvre

Background and Context:

Slavery was legal in the British Empire, although not in the United Kingdom itself. Most slaves were of African origin and worked on plantations in the British Caribbean colonies (which included Jamaica, Barbados, and Grenada). Most slave-owners were British; some lived on their plantations, and some were ‘absentees’ who lived elsewhere and left the running of their plantations to agents. Slavery was integral to the economic success of the British Empire up through the early nineteenth century.

The slave trade was abolished in 1807 but slavery itself was not abolished until 1833. Slave-owners were compensated by the British state for their loss of ‘property’ – that is, their loss of slave labor. A research team at University College London has created a database to track who applied for and received compensation money, and in some cases how they might have spent that compensation money. We also can learn a bit more information about individual slaves from information that some claimants provided. The database also includes those who made their fortunes through slavery and put that money into banking, finance, industry, building projects, etc. This information helps us to understand more fully the impact and legacies of slavery.

The database is available here: <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/>

The Assignment:

- In groups, search and find information from the database about your assigned topics.
- You will then make these into points on a map, with technological assistance from Dr Mahoney. Each one of you should contribute at least four (4) points. For at least one of these points, add a relevant image, a paragraph of context and additional detail, and your source citations.
- As a group, you will write a 5-6 page paper, contextualizing your work and analyzing your findings. Explain the significance of your topic. Each of you should contribute a section on one of your own map points. You will write this paper using Google Docs, which will show me who contributed or edited which sections. Include a bibliography. (Due by email at the start of class on October 2).
- In groups, you will present your topic to the entire class, offering a contextual overview and commenting on what you found. Each of you will speak. (5 minutes + questions, October 2)

Workshop Goals:

- Gain a deeper understanding of slavery’s impact on the British Isles;
- Become comfortable using a database and mapping software, and understand both the advantages and limitations of these methodologies for historical research;
- Collaborate in teams, get to know others in the class, and share knowledge and experience.

Mapping Resources

You can access Google Tour Builder here: <https://tourbuilder.withgoogle.com/>

- This is a helpful resource for working with Google Tour Builder:
<https://www.google.com/earth/outreach/learn/storytelling-with-maps-using-tour-builder/>

Guidelines for Additional Research:

- Start with peer-reviewed articles and books. Try the Trinity Library catalogue and the JStor journal database (available through the Library OneSearch 'Databases' section). You can also search British periodicals and newspapers through 'Databases' - choose 'Newspapers' as your database type.
- Be careful with Google. You may find useful information from local history society or company webpages, for example, but consider whether your source is reliable. Just because it is on the internet does not mean it is accurate.
 - This is a helpful guide on evaluating internet resources:
<https://www.library.georgetown.edu/tutorials/research-guides/evaluating-internet-content>
- Make sure you give a full citation for any image, fact, language or idea that you use.

Student Groups and Topics

Divide up the research within your group: who will map which points? When will you map them? How will you organize your group presentation – who will speak first? Etc.

Group 1: Railways

Jordan Barr, Tommy Davlin, Timmy Galvin, Kevin Klotz, Mary Papantonis

Group 2: Banking

Matthew Benedict, Claudia Deeley, Fiona Gray, Henry Llorens, Logan Peterson

Group 3: MPs

Tanuja Budraj, Chris Eldridge, Aedhan Healy, Kyle Lometti, Christian Porydzy

Group 4: Iron, Steel, Minerals, Brass, Coal

Corey Cheung, Henry Farr, Lauren Ianelli, Kip Lynch, Robby Revera

Group 5: Country Houses

Max Christian, Ricky Feliz, Nick Johnson, Adam Marinello, Eliza Rogers

Group 6: Public Buildings (schools, churches, monuments. etc)

Ben Cuca, Jake Fredo, Tucker Johnston, Erik Mohl, Nick Rose

Group 7: Charities and Public Institutions (museums, libraries)

Ben Salfield, Danny Shea, Harrison Silver, Kate Swanson

Questions?

Mary Mahoney –Mellon Postdoctoral Fellow in Digital Humanities

Mary.Mahoney@trincoll.edu

Professor Regan-Lefebvre Jennifer.reganlefebvre@trincoll.edu

TA: Maddy Kirton madison.kirton@trincoll.edu