

LEGACIES OF BRITISH SLAVE-OWNERSHIP

WANDSWORTH AND SLAVERY (1)



Jamaican slave-owners

James Manby Gully was born in Jamaica in 1808. He inherited estates and enslaved people there on his father's death in 1824 and collected slave compensation in the 1830s. He was a pioneering hydrotherapist, using water treatments to cure a range of ailments, and treated Charles Darwin, Tennyson and Carlyle. He was drawn into a lurid scandal surrounding the 'Balham Murder' of Charles Bravo, the husband of a previous lover of Gully's, and died at Orwell Lodge, Balham in 1883. His son, William Court Gully, became speaker of the House of Commons.

Left: caricature of James Manby Gully by Spy in Vanity Fair Magazine (1876)

Slave-traders

Alexander or Alexandre Lindo was a major slave-factor in Jamaica. Slave-factors in the Caribbean took delivery (and ownership) of the whole 'cargoes' of enslaved people from slave-ships and then sold the people on in smaller groups to estate-owners. Between 1802 and 1808 he lived at Putney Park. In a codicil to his will he said he expected shortly to have a complete title to a coffee plantation in Jamaica called Pleasant Hill 'with the slaves and appur[tenance]s'.

Putney Manor House, Elm Row, by R.B. Schnebbelie



Political lobbyists

Joseph Marryat, Chairman of Lloyds of London, colonial agent for Grenada and Trinidad, and MP was one of the most articulate of the absentee slave-owners. He owned enslaved people in Trinidad, Grenada, Jamaica and St Lucia. In 1807 he petitioned parliament against the abolition of the slave trade. He published numerous pamphlets and took part in a long running controversy with the leading abolitionists James Stephen and Zachary Macaulay. In 1815 he bought Wimbledon house in Wimbledon Village where his wife Charlotte lived until her death in 1854. At his death in 1824 Marryat was said to be worth half a million pounds.

Marryat's illegitimate daughter Ann was the product of an early liaison with an enslaved woman when he had been in the Caribbean – but he manumitted her and she was able to establish herself independently in colonial society. Like many women of colour she did not marry though she lived with a man, thus keeping control of her 'property'. Marryat's legitimate daughters received £20,000 each in his will while Ann fared very differently. His son Frederick Marryat was the author of *Children of the New Forest*, *Mr Midshipman Easy* and other popular adventure novels.

Above right: 'Wimbledon House, the residence of Mrs Marriott' by I.H. Shepherd
Right: cover of *The Children of the New Forest* by Frederick Marryat (1911 edition)



Female slave-owners

The important role played by women in the consolidation of family wealth and of networks of influence, including wealth and influence from the slave-economy, is frequently obscured by the way the laws and customs of the 18th and early 19th centuries worked to subordinate women in matters of property and public life.

Mrs Frances Lyles of 7 Lombard St, Battersea Bridge wrote repeatedly to the Commissioners of Slave Compensation concerning her claims for 11 enslaved people in Kingston Jamaica, asking whether 'the £150 named as my claim is likely to be the sum I shall obtain... it is of the utmost importance.' Elizabeth Fonnereau, who lived on Clapham Common with her husband George Hibbert, connected the worlds of the Bank of England, of which her father was a director, and the London West India merchants such as her husband. William Matthew Coulthurst, a banker with Coutts & Co. who lived at Streatham Lodge, 'East side of Croydon Road' Streatham Surrey, was trustee for Anna Susannah Watson Taylor, the heiress of a Jamaican slave fortune which was squandered by her husband the MP George Watson Taylor.

Above left: Elizabeth Margaret Hibbert (née Fonnereau) by James Ward ©National Portrait Gallery
Left: letter from Frances Lyles to the compensation commissioners, T71/1606 Kingston no. 298

