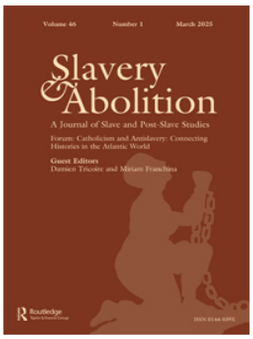
Finding George Freeman: a 'Liberated African' in Berkshire in the age of abolition



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Finding George Freeman: a 'Liberated African' in Berkshire in the Age of Abolition

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ABSTRACT
This article comprises a biography of George Freeman, an African boy 'liberated' from enslavement in West Africa and relocated to the countryside of Berkshire, UK. The article contributes to scholarship on the long-term presence and lived experiences of Black people in Britain, using digital humanities techniques and parochial records from the county of Berkshire to map the presence of Black people (and other minority ethnicities) in rural English counties. It also uses Freeman's biography to engage in wider discussions concerning the precarious experiences of 'Liberated Africans'. These two research areas are combined to construct Freeman's biography as a global microhistory, adding to the growing scholarship that aims to overcome these areas of archival silence within histories of slavery and abolition.

Introduction

On 3 April 1812, in the rural Berkshire parish of Remenham, a young boy was baptised under the name George Freeman.[1] In a rare piece of additional information, uncommon to the format of parish registers, the parish's vicar George Scobell recorded the following detail:

> 'an African Negro Boy, brought by Capt. Scobell from Sierra Leone, rescued by him, from a Portuguese Slave Ship & supposed to be about 11 years old'

This brief snapshot provides a glimpse into an extraordinary and tragic life story. Liberated from enslavement by the Reverend's brother, Royal Navy captain Edward Scobell, Freeman – whose original name may have been Buthay – gained the uncertain legal status of a Liberated African.[2] Like many of the thousands of Africans 'liberated' by British courts in Sierra Leone, Freeman's life after liberation was characterised by 'a dubious sort of freedom', and poses often unanswerable questions of consent and exploitation.[3] For the next

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six years, Freeman lived and worked as a servant at Remenham's rectory.[4] This new life was cut short in April 1818, when Reverend Scobell also recorded George's burial.

This article constitutes a microhistorical biography of George Freeman, expanding on work undertaken as part of a collaborative project between the Royal Berkshire Archives and the University of Reading (and now continuing with schools and community groups) investigating the diversity of lives described in the county's records. In Berkshire, Freeman is one of Imtiaz Habib's 'imperceptible lives': the 'unquantifiable', yet 'historically significant', population of Black (and, by reasonable extension, other minority ethnic) people in historic Britain.[5] This article pulls Habib's concept of 'imperceptibility' into the age of abolition and entwines it with the concept of 'archival silences', where the former directly addresses the imperceptible as a subject of research, and the latter aids interrogation of the liminal archival space engaged by the researcher.[6] Scholars such as Daina Ramey Berry and Leslie M. Harris have called for intentional action to overcome such silences, remarking that 'Archives have the potential to be reinterpreted or remade when scholars ask new questions of them'.[7] Adopting such a targeted approach enables us to build on the foundations laid by Habib (on imperceptibility), Michel-Rolph Trouillot (on silences), and many others, not only to do due diligence to the under-represented lives of those obscured in history, but also to 'recruit the past for the sake of the living'.[8]

This recruitment is not undertaken lightly. Well-evidenced examples of historic rural Black lives are rare; historicising Freeman risks a 'second order of violence', but *not* doing so risks another archival violence in occluding the lives and experiences of not only Freeman himself but those who are yet more imperceptible.[9] For Marisa Fuentes, lives like Freeman's are visible 'only where authority is enacted' upon them.[10] So, too, are the 'tantalising glimpses' described by Miranda Kaufmann, which inspire 'a mission that must be undertaken if we are to reclaim their stories'.[11] As a 'Liberated African' and a young Black boy in rural nineteenth-century Britain, Freeman is subject to 'several complementary levels of erasure'; however, his story has the potential to illuminate other 'imperceptible' lives by proxy, allowing them to 'occupy a virtual space in the map of visible history'.[12] Érika Melek Delgado recommends that historians studying the transatlantic slave trade take care to 'challenge dehumanising impulses', in research practice and in the nature of the records themselves.[13] Freeman defies dehumanisation: his role as both a Liberated African and a Black Briton places him at the forefront of two fast-growing areas of scholarship as well as efforts to 'populate the Atlantic world with real individuals'.[14] By directly addressing the archival and historical practices leveraged in uncovering Freeman's story, this article aims to make his reconstructed experience reflective of the invisible, yet likely numerous, others like him.

This article follows the supposition that 'silences' can best be given voice, and violences of archival extraction overcome, through a transparent and accountable methodology.[15] This is an ethical choice, achieved here by an emphasis on 'following' built around (the researcher's archival efforts to reconstruct) Freeman's life as a central narrative focus.[16] This enables Freeman to retain his own agency; as a 'global life', it also enables the article to investigate greater historical processes.[17] The global nature of Freeman's life story, spanning archives and activity across two continents, makes global microhistory the methodology of choice, where it enables historians 'to write on the scale of individuals from a global perspective'.[18] If a microhistory is an opportunity 'to see the world in a grain of sand', then charting the researcher's path from dune to archival dune allows us to transparently 'read against the grain'.[19] Such transparency has the additional benefit of enabling study, by 'dynamic interconnections', of others like Freeman – be it the often unseen Black population of nineteenth-century rural England, or the thousands who underwent the legal process of 'liberation' in Sierra Leone's colonial courts.[20]

The article will begin by discussing the use of signifying terminology in uncovering the lives of minority individuals within parochial records. It should be noted that the term 'minority' is used carefully within this article and only in relation to populations (e.g. Berkshire) where described groups were in fact a minority. These presences will then be mapped, linking to broader questions around the presences of minorities in English parochial records, and Freeman in particular. Following the biography outwards, the article traces Freeman's 'rescue' from captivity and discusses the roles of the West Africa Squadron and Sierra Leone's vice-admiralty court in creating his new legal status as a Liberated African. This links to broader questions concerning the nature of this status change, and the limits within which we might reconstruct George Freeman's newfound 'freedom'.

In Freeman's Footsteps: Mapping Historical Presences of Black and Minority Ethnicities in Berkshire

The typical English parish register, whilst a vital resource for local and genealogical history, is a formulaic affair. Most individuals only enter these records at three key (Christian) life events: baptism, marriage, and burial.[21] Even then, descriptive information is generally limited to set categories relevant to the religious ceremony at hand. For example, a baptism register entry is typically limited to the date of the ceremony, the name of the baptised, their sex, and perhaps their parentage. This creates an archival silence that goes beyond the presence of minorities and extends to the lives of the majority of English residents who existed above the poverty line but were not wealthy enough appear in taxation records.[22] This silence is compounded by the inconsistency inherent in parochial records which vary across time, geography, and demographics.[23]

By comparison, George Freeman leaves more of an archival footprint than many: he is afforded additional description in the parochial registers, and – if one connects the archival dots – is further present in Sierra Leone's colonial records. Freeman's archival footprint is an engaging, and therefore illuminative, outlier to a secondary form of archival silence that occludes his life, wherein the registers' format does not necessitate the inclusion of any information about what we might now term 'ethnicity'. Freeman is proof that there *are* instances in parochial records where ethnicity and cultural origins were marked. George's contemporaries would have identified these more closely with the term 'race', and it is 'race' that does sometimes appear in nineteenth-century registers in the form of 'signifiers'.[24]

A 'signifier' here refers to key terminology recorded by the incumbent clerk or record-keeper, surplus to the document's original requirements and indicating additional biographical information. Signifiers should be understood as limited to simple extraneous descriptive terms, although – as with Freeman's baptism – rare examples are accompanied by short, yet illuminative, passages of text.[25] Other descriptive additions, found at rare occurrences elsewhere in Berkshire's parochial records, are usually more brief. John Cuffee, baptised and buried in Wokingham (1779 and 1782 respectively), is simply described as 'a Black'.[26] James Catharine, baptised in Reading St Mary parish in September 1806, was described by the signifier 'negro'. Notes on age were also extraneous; however, the incumbent also saw fit to record that James was 16 years old at the time.[27] These are just a few examples amongst the 48 signified individuals found so far within the RBA's records.[28] Unfortunately, this list of ethnic minority individuals living within historic Berkshire cannot be exhaustive; as the use of signifiers was non-standard, a 'definitive' survey of the county's minority residents remains impossible.[29] For Habib, extant examples can only be 'symptoms of a larger population'.[30] This section discusses the visibility of such presences and places Freeman in the wider context of Black and minority presences in Berkshire's archives.

Signifiers drew on varied terminology, and a wide range of ethnicities become visible including Black (incorporating both African and 'West Indian'), 'East Indian', 'Aboriginal' and more. Shifts in signifying terminology reflect shifts in cultural views on minority groups. The terms 'blackamoor', 'black', and 'dark' are initially prevalent, until 'negro' and 'black' – likely representing individuals of West African origins in most cases – become prominent by the mid-eighteenth century.[31] Apparent accuracy, however, varied widely. For example, Thomas Munsaw and George Mungroo – both baptised in the parish of Old Windsor on 30 March 1788 – were described jointly with precision, as 'Natives of Benares in the East Indies & Servants of Warren Hastings Esq'.[32] Meanwhile, Thomas Green, Anne Elding, and Sampson Battyn's baptism record (from Warfield, 22 January 1760) simply grouped them as 'three adult Negroes converted to Christianity'.[33] Information can be scarce,

and the 'verbose' detail given for George Freeman should be considered extraordinary.[34]

Indeed, the visibility of these signified individuals relies predominantly upon the incumbent record-keepers' whims, whether born out of curiosity, prejudice, or – as in the case of George Freeman – personal interest. Freeman was brought to Berkshire by the vicar's brother, captain Edward Scobell, returning from service in the then-nascent West Africa Squadron aboard HMS *Thais*. George Freeman's baptised name both referred to and affirmed his new status as a free man, but it also reflected the input of those who aided his liberation and retained an influence over his new life: it is likely that he was named George after the Reverend George Scobell, whose household he now entered.

Freeman's entry into Remenham's burial register six years later, on 17 April 1818, notes his date of death three days prior (14 April).[35] It also provides George with an 'alias', 'Foray'. Presumably a phonetic Anglicisation of his original name (although, as noted later, it differs from the names attributed to any potential matches for Freeman in Sierra Leone's Liberated African Registers), this addition suggests that George – or Foray, or perhaps Buthay (see below) – had retained in part his earlier identity. Whilst other adjacent burials are described as 'son of', 'wife of', and so on, Freeman – with no biological family nearby – is recorded as 'Boy Servant to the Rev[erend] Dr Scobell at the Rectory'.

In carefully recording earthly attachments for each of the deceased, George Scobell was a more attentive record-keeper than most. Upon taking over Remenham's incumbency in 1824, Scobell's successor ('J.O. Parr') only saw fit to record the buried individuals' town or parish of residence, with no further biographic information. This again reminds us that Freeman is unusual – not necessarily in his life as a young Black boy in rural Berkshire, but in the fact that his ethnicity remains visible through the historical record.[36] The presence of any further Black people who may have been baptised, buried, or married in Remenham parish after 1824 is occluded by Parr's more minimal style of record-keeping; this shift also overlaps with a greater, nationwide move towards more standardised parochial record-keeping.

We are also able to glean several key pieces of information from Freeman's burial record: chiefly that Freeman's primary domestic relationship in England – at least, in the eyes of those who recorded his burial – was his service role in Scobell's household, and that he had been residing in the Rectory with Scobell. Given George and Edward's familial relationship, it is likely that Freeman had taken up residence immediately upon arrival in Berkshire. This working relationship also seems to have had a positive personal element – at least in George Scobell's eyes – as Scobell was present at the burial service in a non-official capacity. Unlike the majority of other burials conducted during Scobell's tenure in Remenham, Freeman's was not performed by the Reverend but by J.G. Bussell, the 'Office-Minister'. However, Scobell did enter the burial into

the register book himself. This confirms with some surety his presence in Remenham at the time, and thus his likely personal attendance at Freeman's burial service. Scobell may have felt an emotional attachment to the younger George and excused himself from performing the service on those grounds. This is an exercise in 'critical fabulation', and one further complicated by the fact that no records exist which allow us to properly consider how Freeman felt about the Scobells.[37] The paucity of evidence is such that these aspects of Freeman's life remain 'imperceptible'.

The direct evidence for Freeman's life in Britain is thus marked by two extremities. On the one hand, having two entries in Remenham's parish books – and outstandingly detailed ones at that – marks Freeman as an extraordinary case amongst the extant presences of Black lives within Berkshire's records. Yet on the other, there remains a scarcity of information about George himself. Where the archive is silent, we must fill its gaps, contextualising Freeman's direct records within wider patterns of Black lives in Berkshire and rural England.

Habib describes the Black historical presence in Britain as a 'function of geography'.[38] Compiling information on earlier occurrences in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, he charts a growing Black presence in archival records correlating with 'the emergence of overseas trading initiatives by merchant mariners backed by powerful aristocrats'.[39] Analysing the frequency of signifier occurrence in the RBA's parish archives confirms that trend, showing an increase in the use of ethnicity signifiers from the mid-eighteenth century into the early nineteenth; however, it also shows that the geographic function operates in two distinct ways.

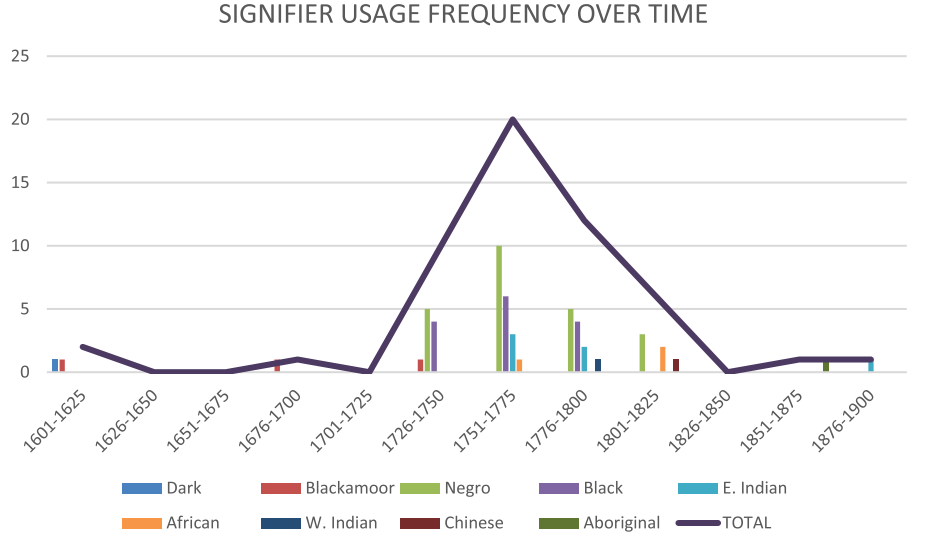

Figure 1. Graph showing frequency of use for different signifying terminology over time in RBA records, 1726-1825.

After grouping the 53 total signifiers found throughout the records into 25-year periods, the period 1751–1775 shows the greatest frequency with 20 signifiers appearing in Berkshire records during that time. This figure is part of a marked increase in a 'peak' century of presences between 1726 and 1825 (see Figure 1).

These figures alone tell us very little about historical experience, aside from confirming 'the reality that black people were […] continually present in Britain', and visibly present in rural counties like Berkshire by the early seventeenth century.[40] However, applying digital analytical tools to this phenomenon allows for further engagement with Habib's hypotheses concerning the 'function of geography' in historical Black British lives. Figure 2 shows a geospatial model of the frequency of signified individuals for Berkshire parish between 1726 and 1825.[41] The size of the circular datapoints reflects the proportion of signified individuals found within the records of each parish, representing the geographic distribution of ethnic minority individuals across Berkshire during this 100-year period.

Two notable conclusions can be drawn from this mapping exercise. First, the geographical distribution concurs with Habib's 'function of geography', progressing along 'two tracks' that correlated with trade networks and with 'country residences'.[42] This is intriguing because it allows us to extend Habib's thesis beyond its intended (sixteenth – and seventeenth-century) chronology. To show this, I will address each 'track' in turn.

Berkshire's trade routes primarily lead to and from London: thus the first visible 'track' of presences runs along the river Thames from Windsor to Reading through Cookham and Remenham. However, the data-mapping also suggests an engaging development to the 'function of geography' in Berkshire. Instead of continuing along the Thames upon reaching Reading, where trade routed towards Oxford and beyond, recorded presences instead follow the river Kennet towards Thatcham. This area of Berkshire corresponds to two major avenues of commerce: the Kennet itself (navigable between Reading and Newbury from 1723 and later incorporated into the Kennet and Avon Canal), and the old 'Bath Road' which passes by Theale, Midgham, and Thatcham on its way between Bath and west London. Owing to its farther-reaching connections to locations of greater commercial importance (Bath, Bristol), the latter had a greater effect on the area's commercial links. Figure 2 shows this effect on the distribution of presences along trade routes in Berkshire which had their roots in the avenues of trade which emanated out of London towards the West Country.

The second track made visible by the mapping exercise is the cluster of presences which emanates westwards out of Windsor, incorporating the likes of Winkfield, Warfield, and Easthampstead. These parishes fall outside the region's major trade routes, so the signified presence of people from ethnic minority backgrounds within their records cannot be ascribed to the first,

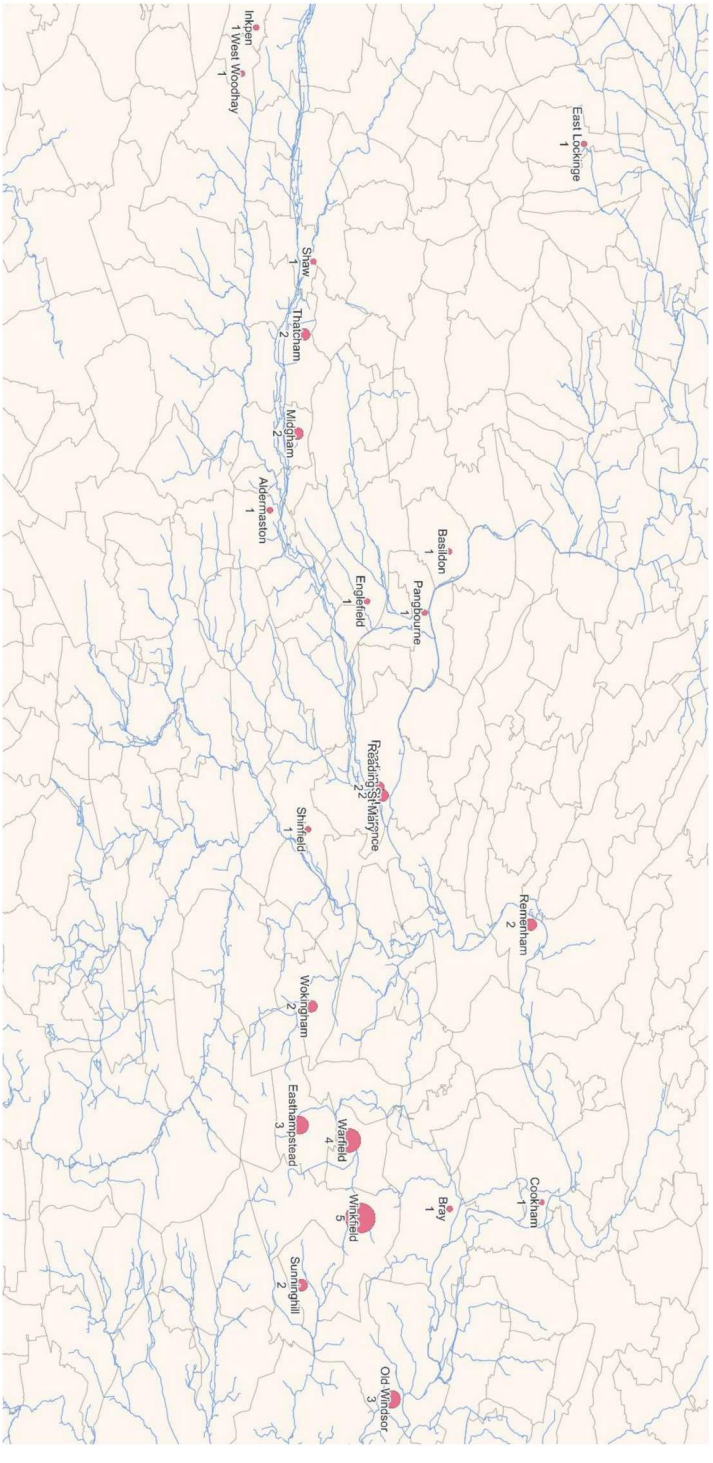

Figure 2. Geographical distribution of signified individuals per parish, with proportionatedata-point sizes, from BASA database 1726-1825. Mapped in QGIS using RBA data, over OS and NaturalEarth datapackages.[119]

'trade-routes' track. Instead, the region's social history provides a plausible answer. These parishes contained numerous country houses. Such estates, typically belonging either to aristocratic families or wealthy London merchants, were often host to individuals of ethnic minority (predominantly Black but also 'East Indian') – whether they were there willingly or not. Berkshire in particular was home to an extended network of East India Company 'nabobs', who used their wealth and connections to settle in parishes that became known, often perjoratively, as 'English Hindustan' during the eighteenth century.[43]

For example, Winkfield holds the highest number of signifiers per parish (5) for the 1750–1825 period. Of these, three are noted as 'servants' to resident individuals: George James and Mary Charlotte, 'natives of East India and servants to Mr Drake', and Thomas, 'black servant to Hugh Watts esq'. These descriptions support the hypothesis of a second track along socially-developed geographic lines of fashionable areas for rural residences of the wealthy and notable and not along internal trade routes.[44] Presences in parishes like Basildon, Pangbourne, and East Lockinge – which do not immediately fit a visual pattern when mapped geospatially – should also be understood as part of this development.

Habib accredits the developing role of rural Black servitude to a 'competitive relationship', where traditionally wealthy groups – the aristocracy, and traditional mercantile groups in the metropole – initiated the 'fashionable' trend of Black people in country service. This trend was shortly copied by 'rival business groups' including the emergent middling class and non-metropole traders.[45] For these groups, enslaved Black people – or indeed any individual of visible ethnic minority living and working within the household – were a status symbol.[46] Black servitude became another 'marker' of power and status, a conspicuous part of the aesthetics of country residency in a desirable and well-connected area like Berkshire.[47] The proportionately larger presence of signified individuals – most of whom were described using vocabulary which denoted some form of Black or African identity – suggests that this social pattern continued through the period 1726-1825. When not following trade routes, Black (and other minority) presences in Berkshire were geographically distributed in accordance with the vast swathes of fashionable country estates held by wealthy merchants.

To an extent, Freeman's placement as a servant within the Scobell household refers to this pattern of 'servitude'. However, we must also imagine Freeman's situation as something of an outlier. This is first visible geographically – the quiet parish of Remenham, on the bend of the Thames downstream of Henley, does not easily comply with either 'track'. Although the Thames was a key trade route, Remenham has not historically been a trading parish, focusing more on agriculture. Meanwhile, although the parish boasted a large estate in Park Place, it was historically overshadowed by nearby Henley (across the river in Oxfordshire) and is noticeably displaced from the fashionable string

of Berkshire estates between Windsor and Wokingham. Nevertheless, Freeman's placement within the Scobell household implies that social status might be the governing element. As is often the case with imperceptible lives, closer inspection presents more questions than answers. Placing Freeman's experience within any such broader historical trend is inherently problematic, as relevant records operate within another form of archival 'silence' – silence by mediation.[48] Freeman himself leaves no personal record; instead, his experience is mediated through external perspectives and record-keeping. A similar dearth of direct records makes it difficult to assess the Scobells' own motivations in bringing Freeman to Berkshire. Exploring the nature of that silence is thus key to historicising Freeman's life.

Writing on two other examples of Liberated African children brought to England 'under the personal protection of [West Africa Squadron] naval officers', Mary Wills emphasises the inherent ambiguity towards these young Black 'servants' both in the historical record and in their contemporary settings.[49] It is unclear whether these liberated Black 'servants' were able to live truly free lives, or if – despite being freed from the bonds of slavery in a legal sense – they were yet subject to exploitation. This ambiguity extends to Freeman's life with the Scobells, where his silence by mediation renders the matter unanswerable. Speculation is possible, but the imperceptibility of Black presences in the archive will naturally weight such speculation towards the party for whom more information remains – the Scobells.

In some regards, the Scobells fit Habib's 'competitive', rising middle-class bill; like many who moved into Berkshire during this period, they were upwardly mobile and ambitious. Like George and Edward, many members of the Scobell family held upper-middling social positions. Their father, George Pender Scobell, was a vicar in Cornwall.[50] A cousin, George Treweeke Scobell, served in the Royal Navy alongside Edward; he was made commander in 1812.[51] George Treweeke then went on to a terrestrial career as a magistrate before taking a seat in parliament.[52]

Yet we might suggest the Scobells held more humanitarian (if possibly unsolicited) motives for taking a young Liberated African like George Freeman away from his birth continent. Whilst neither of the brothers' direct opinions on the matter remain, we can glean some ideas about their political stances from other biographical matter. Berkshire voting records from the 1818 general election show George Scobell – still living in Remenham but voting as a freeholder in Aldworth – casting votes for both winning candidates, Charles Dundas and Richard Neville.[53] Neville was a Grenvillite Whig and a supporter of parliamentary reform – but not, incidentally, any reform that extended so far as universal suffrage. He represented a moderate progressivism which may have appealed to the Scobells.[54]

Unlike some other West Africa Squadron captains, Edward does not appear to have actively pursued anti-slavery causes at home. Correspondences suggest

a personal and professional relationship with captain Frederick Paul Irby, who – commanding the *Amelia* – served alongside Scobell in the West Africa Squadron.[55] Irby also brought a liberated African boy to England: 'Charles Fortunatus Freeman', whose apprenticeship Irby purchased in Sierra Leone, was baptised in Norwich in 1813.[56] Charles' story might illuminate our understanding of George Freeman's own experience. Wills suggests a humanitarian ethos behind such extractions, and notes that both captains Irby and Charles Bosanquet (who similarly brought 'Thomas Alert' to Suffolk in 1846) were active in anti-slavery societies. Such actions 'went beyond normal expectations of service' and were associated with progressive, abolitionist stances.[57]

The same framing appears true for Edward Scobell. George Scobell's diction in the baptism record is interesting. Freeman is 'brought' from Sierra Leone, but only after being 'rescued' by Edward; 'brought' ascribes clear agency to Edward, and 'rescue' further implies that the Scobells thought their actions benevolent. Perhaps Scobell saw the act of 'bringing' Freeman with him to England as an extension of this benevolence, a chance for a better life than Edward envisioned awaiting Freeman in Sierra Leone. However, as will be discussed in the next section, Freeman's status as a Liberated African tied him inextricably to the Scobells by way of indentured apprenticeship. Even amongst contemporary abolitionists, the system of apprenticeship, into which the vast majority of liberated Africans were funnelled, had a 'highly controversial reputation': 'abuse, exploitation, and re-enslavement were believed to be endemic'.[58] Perhaps Scobell believed he would 'rescue' George a second time, or perhaps he himself took advantage of this system. It is somewhat telling that all three extant examples – Charles Fortunatus Freeman, Thomas Alert, and George Freeman – were young boys. Their age may have made these boys objects of sympathy for the officers who took them in, but more practical, selective considerations – age, gender, and lack of attachment – are implicit. The boys' potential as household servants may also have added to the officers' motivations.

No direct evidence allows us to construct a true image of George Freeman's life at the rectory. However, there are some brief glimpses. George Scobell's voting record, and apparent presence at Freeman's burial in a personal capacity, suggests a progressive outlook which may have translated into his treatment of Freeman. Yet the extent to which Freeman's apprenticed 'servitude' involved coercion is difficult to ascertain. His placement certainly bears similarity to the trend of 'aspirational', aestheticised service present in Habib's second track of minority historical presences in Berkshire. As servant to the vicar of such a small, sparsely populated parish, Freeman would have been a conspicuous presence. Yet Freeman's presence – resident in an outlying parish and servant to a vicar, not a Company man or socialite – still defies neat categorisation. If anything, his life testifies to the diversity of experiences we truly find when analysing the history of British rural diversity.

Liberation and (Re)captivity: George Freeman and the Early West Africa Squadron

Despite his personal extraordinariness, Freeman's experiences were still shaped by larger, overbearing factors: his presence in Remenham is a function not only of transatlantic slavery but also of abolition and the processes of 'liberation' that accompanied it. After the Abolition Act of 1807, the Royal Navy's West Africa Squadron spent approximately six decades patrolling the continent's Atlantic coastline and suppressing transatlantic slave-trading: Freeman appears in the very early days of this activity.[59] The Royal Navy, the vice-admiralty courts, and the colonial administrations of Sierra Leone were still 'pioneering' ways to realise abolitionist policy, and Britain's 'benevolent self-image' still corresponded to a system of coercion and exploitation.[60] Often, the actual lives of those liberated were a mere 'afterthought'.[61] Meanwhile, the Squadron's activity was based on a 'modest' jurisdiction; it reduced slave-trading, but did not stop it.[62] The true end of the trade came only slowly, and for Liberated Africans like George Freeman, rescue from a slaving ship was not the end of their troubles.

Here, 'recaptive' refers to those removed from a state of captivity, but still detained by the British state for legal process. Supposing successful process by the courts, they were then assigned the status of Liberated Africans. This was a new, distinct form of legal status – and characteristic of prize law (of which it was a subsidiary), it more accurately constituted an effective change in property ownership.[63] But not every recaptive African was liberated. If the captured slave ship were declared an unlawful prize – for example, if the captor had not had true justification for taking her – then the vessel would be returned, complete with all cargo. Inasmuch as prize law treated ships and their cargo strictly as a transfer of property, if the ship's human cargo had not yet been given 'liberated' status then they, too, might be liable for return. Legal process against a slave ship could even be overturned after the initial prize case was settled, although in such cases it does not appear that any individual's Liberated African status was revoked.

Even if the prize process was successful, Liberated Africans lived in a state of ambiguity subject to colonial control and relocation.[64] Their legal status was fraught with complexity, and they were not precisely free: freedom 'was a state that existed either prior to enslavement or following a gradual instructional period under British-led tutelage'.[65] Whilst 'Liberated' status theoretically precluded them from the state of enslavement, many Liberated Africans were thrust into a system which exploited their labour and restricted their autonomy, benefitting private, colonial, and military interests in the name of abolitionism.[66] They were considered the responsibility of the British state during and after processing, a relationship characterised by a series of 'unguaranteed entitlements' and a religious, 'civilising' approach to reintegration.[67] Theirs was a 'dubious sort of freedom', with many, including Freeman,

pushed into an exploitative programme of 'apprenticeship'.[68] It is this backdrop against which the story of Freeman's 'rescue' and removal to England must be understood.

On 8 January 1811, Edward Scobell took command of HMS *Thais*.[69] By the end of March, he was in the Solent gathering a convoy; on 19 May, Captain Scobell was promoted to post-captain, a social milestone that added both job security and prestige.[70] Sailing southwards, the *Thais* began her true mission: policing transatlantic shipping as part of the West Africa Squadron's first true patrol, one of five ships set out for the purpose.[71] Her first successful capture was the *Havannah* on 27 July, an English vessel sailing under false Spanish colours.[72] Scobell's log records 100 enslaved people aboard; Sierra Leone's vice-admiralty recorded 98, a discrepancy attributable to fatalities post-capture.[73] Conditions aboard slave ships were notorious and did not necessarily improve even after a ship was captured: many 'recaptive' Africans still experienced what amounted to an 'alternative Middle Passage', and 'recapture' was only the 'first phase of an ambiguous journey to 'freedom'".[74] Under a small prize crew, the *Havannah* was taken to Sierra Leone where both ship and human cargo were processed as prize.[75] After the capture was legally validated and the vessel condemned, the 'recaptive' Africans would legally change possession from the slaver to the prize-taking captain and be assigned a set 'exchange value'. The vice-admiralty would then pay this value to purchase them and immediately renounce ownership, rendering them 'Liberated', though not truly 'free'.[76]

Tracing any individual Liberated African is reliant on the records of the vice-admiralty courts, which recorded specific information about each individual including African names, physical descriptions, and 'disposal' (their mandated destination after processing).[77] Each individual was assigned a unique registration number, intended to aid identification and prevent re-enslavement.[78] The LiberatedAfricans.org database compiles seven series of registers and includes over 200,000 recaptives who were assigned Liberated African status and freed, including 82 per cent of 'recaptive' Africans processed at Freetown.[79] Significantly, it is possible to cross-reference other archival sources (the Berkshire records, HMS *Thais*' naval records, the records of Sierra Leone's vice-admiralty court) with the registers of Liberated Africans in order to reconstruct George Freeman's life.

Whilst Scobell's captain's log does not explicitly mention Freeman, we can thus begin to narrow down which vessel the boy was held aboard. The Remenham baptism records state that Freeman was 'rescued […] from a Portuguese Slave Ship'.[80] Of the four slaving ships Scobell captured during his 1811 patrol, only two (the *Venus* and *Calypso*) were Portuguese; either could have been carrying Freeman.[81] However, Freeman's baptism record allows us to approximate his age: 'about 11 years old' in April 1812.[82] Upon arrival at Sierra Leone, descriptions of 'recaptive' Africans were soon registered in the 'disposal lists'.[83] Both the *Venus* and *Calypso* had children aboard; the Navy Board paid a bounty (or

'Head Money') for eleven Africans aboard the *Calypso* (two men, five women, and six children), and 21 aboard the *Venus* (twelve men, five women, four children).[84] Across both ships, only one registered individual fits the criteria (an African boy, aged 10-12): Buthay, aged 11, who was 'recaptured' from the *Venus* and assigned the registration number 1983.[85]

Information about Buthay is scarce. The register's physical description depicts a boy of around 4'5, with a mark or scar on his outside right thigh. Even the African name recorded is problematic: not only does 'Buthay' only partially phonetically comply with 'Foray', the alias noted in Freeman's burial record, but the accuracy of this data at point of recording is questionable.[86] Conveyed first by the registrant to an interpreter, the names were then written into the register phonetically by an English-speaking clerk. The potential for error is clear, and if Buthay *was* George, then failure to properly phoneticise Freeman's original African name both in Sierra Leone *and/or* in Berkshire may account for the frustrating discrepancy.[87]

The registration number assigned to George Freeman (alias Buthay, alias Foray) allows us to trace him a little further.[88] 'Disposal' information, drawn from contemporaneous despatches to the British Colonial Office, shows that Buthay was 'Apprenticed to a European'.[89] This 'European' might have been Scobell. In the early days of the Liberation process in Sierra Leone, 'disposal' options were theoretically limited to either military service or indentured apprenticeship. It is plausible that Scobell, as a 'reputable' private citizen, was able to purchase Freeman's (or, Buthay's) indenture.[90] Again, questions of exploitation arise; Freeman's indenturement contract would have required him to serve a period between three and nine years of essentially unfree labour, only obliging Scobell to treat the boy 'humanely' (or 'with humanity') in return.[91] Sierra Leone's administrative bodies were rarely interested in the fate of Liberated Africans after their initial processing.

Unfortunately, the records found here do not allow us to reliably take Freeman's biography further back and reconstruct his African origins. Confirming his captivity aboard the *Venus* offers a start: according to Eltis and Richardson, 'patterns of concentration of trade by national carriers ensured that the distribution of African captives by ethnic characteristics around the Atlantic world was far from random'.[92] To establish contravention of the 1811 treaty between Portugal and Britain which prevented slave-trading at any non-Portuguese port, the *Venus*' prize proceedings concerned the location of its landfall in West Africa.[93] If a Portuguese slaving vessel could prove that it had taken on its human cargo at a Portuguese port, the prize would be forfeit and the vessel returned to its owners. For this reason, officers like Scobell kept detailed notes of their captures. Scobell's log shows that the *Venus* was taken near Badagry, in the Bight of Benin, and thus a lawful prize.[94] Internal African slave-trading patterns, and their 'bilateral' extension across the Atlantic to the *Venus*' intended destination in Bahia, allow some speculation as to Freeman's potential African

origins.[95] For example, early nineteenth-century, Bahian slavers (like the *Venus*) primarily carried Aja-Fon and Yoruba language-group captives.[96] However, such work is fraught with uncertainties. Lacking further records or autobiographical accounts, it is often impossible to fully recover the origins and passage of any individual enslaved or 'Liberated' African.

Although we can only biographise Freeman from Badagry onwards, further records generated by the *Venus*' prize litigation allow us to better understand Freeman's experience as a captive and 'recaptive' as well as illuminating the precarities of 'recaptivity'. Frustrated at the loss of their ship and human cargo, the *Venus*' owners filed an appeal for its return.[97] Appeals were reasonably common in Sierra Leone's courts, with 74 of 191 total captures appealed (39%) in the Squadron's early years (1808–1822); the 'vigour' of the Squadron's enforcement of abolition treaties took slavers by surprise, even to the extent of triggering diplomatic crises.[98] Of these, 11 were 'restored' (returned without condemnation) and 16 were 'reversed' (condemnation later overturned). This was a lengthy process; indeed, the modal average of time spent between condemnation and reversal was three years.[99] The 1811 condemnation of the *Calypso*, the other Portuguese ship taken by Edward Scobell, was overturned and 'reversed' in 1814.

When prize was overturned, all cargo was liable for return. Whilst there are no extant examples of Liberated Africans being returned – instead, they were likely treated as if sold prize cargo, with their monetary value liable for repayment – those who languished in 'recaptivity' were thus at risk.[100] The volume of appeals processed by Sierra Leone's vice-admiralty court in the early years of the Squadron shows the precarious status of 'recaptive' Africans. As vice-admiralty judges and lawyers forged 'an unprecedented experiment in international humanitarian intervention', 'recaptive' and 'Liberated' Africans like George Freeman risked being caught in the middle, their newly returned freedom at risk of being snatched away.[101]

The appeal documents themselves paint a grim, vivid picture of the vessel on which George Freeman spent some of the harshest months of his life.[102] Contained in the records are receipts and accounts of sales. The *Venus* and its various contents were sold in Sierra Leone for a total gross of £1,396 6s. 24d. (£1,327 4s. 11d. after brokerage fees). Large portions went to offset legal fees, not just for the prize proceedings but also for the 'Liberation' process.[103] Among the items sold were stores of tobacco left over from the vessel's outward journey: tobacco was Bahia's primary export in the 'bilateral' slave trade between South America and West Africa.[104] This tobacco was intended for use in purchasing captives along the Bight. Hundreds of pounds worth of rum were sold, along with the ship's sparse ordnance (one aging howitzer and two small guns), and nine barrels of cowries. Scanlan notes that 'captured ships with just a few captives aboard caused the most excitement' at Sierra

Leone, as their eastward cargo was more valuable than 'recaptives' who could not be resold.[105] The ship itself sold for only £260.

It is unpleasant to countenance the image of George Freeman and 20 other enslaved people consigned to the cramped conditions of the *Venus*' decks. The vestigial odour of tobacco, mingling with the stench of the rum rations and the inhumanity of captivity, is absent from the clean and neatly ordered records of the Sierra Leone brokers and auctioneers. The human cost of the *Venus*' voyage seems an afterthought, the need to register the vessel's human cargo appearing as a mere notation amongst the receipts:

> 'For copying two Lists Description of Slaves
> of the Brig Venus Condemned Oct 29 1811:
> £0.10.0.'[106]

The *Venus*' recaptive Africans were held at the captors' expense for varying periods prior to 'disposal': two for five days, one for five-and-a-half, another for 3, and fourteen for four days. During such periods, 'recaptive' Africans were often detained aboard the slave ship, prolonging their poor treatment.[107] However, by the time those receipts were compiled on 21 December, George Freeman had already left Sierra Leone, departing with Scobell in the *Thais* on 14 December 1811.[108] Detaining potential slavers en route, the *Thais* reached Spithead on 30 January 1812. From there, Scobell and Freeman made their way northeast overland to Remenham, where Freeman would live out his remaining six years.

Conclusion: Imaginative Afterlives

In writing another, earlier, microhistory of 'imperceptible lives', Habib and Salkeld wrote that 'Empirical black studies […] try to trace the impress of such lives inside the density of material history, working within the silences of the archives […] in sober acknowledgement of the difficulties of a necessary job'.[109] The same is true for this study into the life of George Freeman. Archival silences remain; we know nearly nothing of Freeman's life prior to Badagry and during his six years' in Remenham. The British colonial and domestic archives are not equipped to trace lives such as these which exist outside their foci.[110] This issue extends even into those periods of Freeman's life for which we *do* have a record: he first appears only by result of George Scobell's personal discretion. Had Scobell not found it of interest to record his newly-baptised servant's background, Freeman may have slipped the notice of history – just another name baptised, another boy buried in the quiet grounds of Remenham's parish church. Buthay's records in the Liberated African registers are similarly devoid of real biographical information by design. Nevertheless, we are able to gain some fuller picture of a life like Freeman's.[111]

In the eyes of the nineteenth-century colonial administration, Freeman was just one of over 175,000 Liberated Africans processed by the legal system.[112] In

Berkshire, his experience remains unknowable: was he exercising a will and opportunity to start a new life or removed there by coercion and exploitation? Freeman's own perspective is largely irrecoverable; in lieu of personal accounts or information, the structure of the records only provide us Freeman as object, not subject.[113] The record structures within which we find Freeman are intentionally dehumanising – whether in the parochial records, where 'signifying' personal information is rare and extraneous, or in the records of Africans processed by the courts in Sierra Leone which fundamentally treated 'liberation' as 'a change in legal possession'.[114] No matter: George may have 'been liberated', but we must nevertheless operate under the predicate that he himself acted, interacted, and lived according to his own self-determination.[115] This is the true 'silence' of the archive. However, through expanding the story of someone like George, it is possible 'to create spaces for people who may not appear in the archives to the degree we might hope, so that we can imagine their lives, rather than simply leave them invisible'.[116]

By transparently making archival silences 'part of the account', we may deconstruct them.[117] This necessarily strays into the 'politics of representation' – but then, representation is part of the story.[118] The observer, too, is not silent. George Freeman now has an afterlife of his own: an ongoing project between the University of Reading and the Royal Berkshire Archives has seen his story translated into classroom materials taught in Reading schools, who in turn have worked with local artists and authors to produce new fabulations of Freeman's life. Such endeavours allow a new generation to re-imagine Berkshire's diverse and often difficult histories for themselves. These are silences worth striving to fill; by finding George Freeman, we return him his voice. Through his voice, we may seek others like him.

Data access statement

No new data were created in this study.

Notes

1. Royal Berkshire Archives (RBA), Remenham parish: register of baptisms and burials (1798-1812), D/P99/1/3.
2. In order to retain fluency, I have used the name 'George Freeman' throughout. I recognise the problematic elements of this choice but believe it useful where biographical information has been constructed by 'following' the name 'George Freeman'. These nominative tracing efforts are indebted to the Liberated Africans database:

   LiberatedAfricans.org, 'Case: Venus' [LA-E-25], *Liberated Africans – Cases* database, https://liberatedafricans.org/event_details.php?EventID=25, accessed 14/09/22.

   Jake Christopher. Richards, 'Anti-Slave-Trade Law, "Liberated Africans" and the State in the South Atlantic World, c.1839-1852', *Past & Present*, Vol. 241, No. 1 (November 2018), 182.

3. Suzanne Schwarz, 'Reconstructing the Life Histories of Liberated Africans: Sierra Leone in the Early Nineteenth Century', *History in Africa*, Vol. 39 (2012), 205.
   Mary Wills, *Envoys of Abolition: British Naval Officers and the Campaign Against the Slave Trade in West Africa* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2019), 120, 128.
4. RBA, Remenham parish: register of burials (January 1813 – July 1909), D/P99/1/13.
5. Imtiaz Habib, Black Lives in the English Archives, 1500-1677: Imprints of the Invisible (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), 7, 11-14. 'Ethnicity' is used in the modern sense and differentiated from 'race'. Critical discussion of this differentiation: Noémie Ndiaye, 'Race and Ethnicity: Conceptual Knots in Early Modern Culture', ed. Nicholas Hudson, A Cultural History of Race: Vol. 4, In the Reformation and Enlightenment (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2021), 113; Kenan Malik, The Meaning of Race: Race, History, and Culture in Western Society (London: Macmillan Press, 1996).
6. Michel-Rolph Trouillot, Silencing the past: power and the production of history (1995; Beacon Press, 2015), 26.
7. Daina Ramey Berry & Leslie Harris, 'Guest Editors' JCWE December 2023 Note: Researching Nineteenth-Century African American History', *The Journal of the Civil War Era* (22 November 2022). https://www.journalofthecivilwarera.org/2022/11/guest-editors-jcwe-december-2023-note-researching-nineteenth-century-african-american-history/, accessed 08/03/23; Michael Moss & David Thomas, 'Theorising the Silences', eds. Michael Moss, David Thomas, *Archival Silences: Missing, Lost, and Uncreated Archives* (London: Routledge, 2021), 11.
8. Hartman, using de Certeau: Saidiya Hartman, 'Venus in Two Acts', *Small Axe* 12, No. 2 (2008), 14.
9. Hartman, 'Venus in Two Acts', 5.
10. Ibid., 127.
11. Miranda Kaufmann, *Black Tudors: The Untold Story* (London: Oneworld, 2017), 262.
12. Habib, *Black Lives*, 11, 15.
13. Érika Melek Delgado, 'Freedom Narratives: The West African Person as the Central Focus for a Digital Humanities Database', *History in Africa* 48 (2021), 55.
    Fuentes, *Dispossessed Lives*, 134-139.
14. Lisa Ford & Naomi Parkinson, 'Legislating Liberty: Liberated Africans and the Abolition Act, 1806-1824', *Slavery & Abolition* 42, No. 4 (2021), 828; Lisa A. Lindsay & John Wood Sweet, *Biography and the Black Atlantic* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014), 2.
15. Hannah Cusworth, 'Whose Emotions?', *Slavery & Abolition* 45, No. 1 (2024), 175, 182.
16. John-Paul A. Ghobrial, 'Introduction: Seeing the World like a Microhistorian', *Past and Present* 242 (2019), 13, 19-20; Carlo Ginzburg, 'Microhistory: Two or Three Things That I Know About It', tr. J. Tedeschi, A.C. Tedeschi, *Critical Inquiry* 20, No. 1 (1993), 14; Sarah Fox, 'Archival Intimacies: Empathy and Historical Practice in 2023', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 1 (2023), 241, 247, 261.
17. Miles Ogborn, *Global Lives: Britain and the World, 1550–1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 9-10.
18. Tonio Andrade, 'A Chinese Farmer, Two African Boys, and a Warlord: Towards a Global Microhistory', *Journal of World History* 21, No. 4 (2010), 574.
19. John Brewer, 'Microhistory and the Histories of Everyday Life', *Cultural and Social History* 7, No. 1 (2010), 97. Berry & Harris, 'Guest Editors' JCWE December 2023 Note'.
20. Brewer, 'Microhistory', 97.
21. Moss & Thomas, 'Theorising the Silences', 15.

22. Ibid., 15.
23. Katherine L. French, *The People of the Parish: Community Life in a Late Medieval English Diocese* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000), 57-62.
24. Race/ethnicity in Western thought: Ndiaye, 'Race and Ethnicity', 123; Ivan Hannaford, *Race: The History of an Idea in the West* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1996), 6; Jacob Selwood, *Diversity and Difference in Early Modern London* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2010), 3-4.
25. Habib, *Black Lives*, 2.
26. RBA, Wokingham All Saints parish registers, D/P154/1/2.
27. RBA, Reading St Mary parish registers, D/P98/1/4.
28. Another notable example is William Wimmera. A Wotjobaluk Australian boy, William was taken to England by one Lloyd Chase after his family was killed by English settlers in Wimmera, New South Wales. William died aged 11 and was buried in Reading's London Road cemetery. For more information, see: H.C. Schofield, *A Short Memoir of William Wimmera, An Australian Boy, who sailed from Melbourne, April 1, 1851; died at Reading, March 10, 1852* (Cambridge, 1853). State Library of Victoria, 920.999458. https://thewimmerastory.com/william-wimmera/a-short-memoir/, accessed 09/03/23; Adam Stout, *The Story of Willie Wimmera* (Reading: Two Rivers Press, 1995).
29. Habib, *Black Lives*, 13-14.
30. Ibid., 262.
31. Nandini Das, João Vicente Melo, Haig Z. Smith, & Lauren Working, *Keywords of Identity, Race, and Human Mobility in Early Modern England* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2021), 40-50.
32. Now Varanasi, India. RBA, D/P150/1/1.
33. RBA, D/P144/1/2.
34. Kaufmann, *Black Tudors*, 262.
35. RBA, D/P99/1/13.
36. Habib, *Black Lives*, 262.
37. Hartman, 'Venus in Two Acts', 11.
38. Ibid., 197.
39. Ibid., 193.
40. David Olusoga, *Black and British: A Forgotten History* (London; Pan Macmillan, 2016), 19.
41. Note *individuals*, not *signifiers*. In rare instances, individuals occur more than once or are described by multiple signifiers. Coincidentally, there are no instances where individuals, who occurred more than once in the records, appeared across different parishes.
42. Habib, *Black Lives*, 195, 236.
43. Kate Smith, 'Englefield House, Berkshire: Processes, practices and the making of a Company house', eds. Margot Finn & Kate Smith, *East India Company at Home, 1757–1857* (London: UCL Press, 2018), 193.
44. Habib, *Black Lives*, 193.
45. Ibid., 195.
46. Olusoga, Black and British, 87.
47. Habib, *Black Lives*, 194-195.Smith, 'Englefield House', 203.
48. Michael Moss, & David Thomas, 'Introduction', eds. Michael Moss, David Thomas, *Archival Silences: Missing, Lost, and Uncreated Archives* (London: Routledge, 2021), 6.
49. Wills, *Envoys of Abolition*, 128-130.

50. Baptism entry for 'Edward Scobell (1783)', Cornwall OPC Database. www.cornwall-opc-database.org, accessed 28/09/22.
51. William Richard O'Byrne, 'Scobell, George Treweeke', *A Naval Biographical Dictionary* (London; John Murray, 1849), 1038; https://en.wikisource.org/w/index.php?title=A_Naval_Biographical_Dictionary/Scobell,_George_Treweeke&oldid=7365852, accessed 28/09/22.
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53. RBA, 'Berkshire county electoral poll books [transcribed]', TB 17. Berkshire, at the time, was a double-member district. On voting patterns in nineteenth-century electoral districts with multiple representatives: G.W. Cox, 'The Development of Party-Voting in England, 1832-1918', *Historical Social Research*, No. 31 (July 1984), 5-11.
54. Edith Haden-Guest, 'Dundas, Charles (1751-1832, of Barton Court, Berks.', eds. Lewis Namier, John Brooke, *The History of Parliament: The House of Commons 1754–1790* (Suffolk: Boydell & Brewer, 1964). historyofparliament.org, http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1754-1790/member/dundas-charles-1751-1832, accessed 28/09/22; David R. Fisher, 'Neville, Hon. Richard (1783-1858), of Billingbear, Berks.', ed. R. Thorne, *The History of Parliament: the House of Commons 1790–1820* (Suffolk: Boydell & Brewer, 1986). historyofparliament.org, https://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1790-1820/member/neville-hon-richard-1783-1858, accessed 28/09/22.
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57. Ibid., 129-130.
58. Maeve Ryan, '"A moral millstone"? British humanitarian governance and the policy of liberated African apprenticeship, 1808-1848', *Slavery and Abolition* 37, No. 2 (2016), 400.
59. Wills, Envoys of Abolition, 1.
60. Andrew Pearson, Distant Freedom: St Helena and the Abolition of the Slave Trade, 1840–1872 (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2013), 14; Maeve Ryan, *Humanitarian Governance and the British Antislavery World System* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2022), 231.
61. Ryan, '"A moral millstone"?', 402.
62. Lauren Benton & Lisa Ford, *Rage for Order: The British Empire and the Origins of International Law, 1800–1850* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2016), 122.
63. Richards, 'Anti-Slave Trade Law', 182, 180.
64. Wills, *Envoys of Abolition*, 120-122.
65. Ryan, '"A moral millstone"?', 416.

66. Ryan, '"A moral millstone"?', 416-417; Padraic X. Scanlan, *Freedom's Debtors: British antislavery in Sierra Leone in the age of revolution* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2017), 132; Ryan, *Humanitarian Governance*, 53; David Northrup, 'Becoming African: Identity formation among liberated slaves in nineteenth-century Sierra Leone', *Slavery & Abolition*, 27, No. 1 (2005), 1-21; Wills, *Envoys of Abolition*, 8, 41.
67. Richards, 'Anti-Slave Trade Law', 183; Bronwen Everill, 'Bridgeheads of Empire? Liberated African Missionaries in West Africa', *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 40, No. 5 (2012), 792.
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70. Ward, The Royal Navy and the Slavers, 23-24.
71. Ibid., 43.
72. TNA ADM 51/2913.
73. TNA, 'Captures carried to Sierra Leone and proceeded against in the Court of Vice-Admiralty since 1808 … ' [1808-1822], HCA 49/97A, 21.
74. Wills, *Envoys of Abolition*, 98-103, 119.
75. Pearson, Distant Freedom, 14.
76. Richards, 'Anti-Slave-Trade Law', 180-181.
77. British Library (BL), EAP 443/1/17/20, 'Liberated African Register [1808-1812]'. Sierra Leone Public Archives/British Library. https://eap.bl.uk/archive-file/EAP443-1-17-20#?c=0&m=0&s=0&cv=418&xywh=-1253%2C-1%2C5769%2C4928, accessed 14/09/22; Schwarz, Liberated Africans, 179; Ryan, '"A moral millstone"?', 402.
78. Richard Anderson, Alex Borucki, Daniel Domingues da Silva, David Eltis, Paul Lachance, Philip Misevich, & Olatunji Ojo, 'Using African Names to Identify the Origins of Captives in the Transatlantic Slave Trade: Crowd-Sourcing and the Registers of Liberated Africans, 1808-1862', *History in Africa* 40 (2013), 167, 174.
79. Anderson et al, 'Using African Names', 167; LiberatedAfricans.org; H.B. Lovejoy (project dir.), K. Chadha (programming); www.liberatedafricans.org, accessed 20/03/24; www.SlaveVoyages.org is another landmark example; Schwarz, Liberated Africans, 179.
80. RBA, D/P99/1/3.
81. TNA ADM 51/2913. The fourth was a Spanish brig, taken 5 November 1811.
82. RBA, D/P99/1/3; Schwarz, Liberated Africans, p. 182.
83. Anderson et al, 'Using African Names', 173; The Venus undertook this process on 29 October 1811, at cost of 10s: TNA, 'Manuscript prize appeal No. 1267 … ' [Venus], HCA 42/519/1267.
84. TNA HCA 49/97A, 7; Melek Delgado complicates the 'artificial collectiveness' implicit in the Office's definition of 'children': Érika Melek Delgado, eds. 'Liberated African "Children" in Sierra Leone: Colonial Classifications of "Child" and "Childhood", 1808-1819', Richard Anderson & Henry B. Lovejoy, *Liberated Africans and the Abolition of the Slave Trade, 1807–1896* (Rochester NY, University of Rochester Press, 2020), 97.
85. BL EAP 443/1/17/20, 420; Equivalent 'African ID' number 101983: SlaveVoyages.org, *African Origins - database*, 'Voyage ID 7572' [Venus], https://www.slavevoyages.org/past/database, accessed 14/09/22; LiberatedAfricans.org, 'Case: Venus' [LA-E-25], *Liberated Africans – Cases* database, https://liberatedafricans.org/event_details.php?EventID=25, accessed 14/09/22.
86. Schwarz, Liberated Africans, 182.
87. Moss & Thomas, 'Theorising the Silences', 19-22.
88. Schwarz, Liberated Africans, 186.

89. Anderson et al, 'Using African Names', 174-5; 'Buthay; 101983', SlaveVoyages.org, *African Origins - database*, 'Voyage ID 7572' [Venus], https://www.slavevoyages.org/past/database, accessed 14/09/22.
90. Ryan, '"A moral millstone"?', 401; Wills, *Envoys of Abolition*, 120.
91. Ryan, '"A moral millstone"?', 402; Melek Delgado suggests up to fourteen years indenturement for children: Melek Delgado, 'Freedom Narratives', pp. 40-41.
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97. TNA, HCA 42/519/1267-9.
98. Helfman, 'The Court of Vice-Admiralty in Sierra Leone', 1146.
99. Duration rounded to 'years', via given year of entry.
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