
Remembering Slavery:

**South Shields' links to the
trans-Atlantic slave trade**

**Tamsin Lilley
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Remembering Slavery 2007: South Shields' links to the trans-Atlantic slave trade

By Tamsin Lilley

1. Introduction

South Shields is a town not often associated with the trans-Atlantic slave trade and its abolition. Drawing on research conducted throughout the Remembering Slavery 2007 project coordinated by Tyne and Wear Museums, this document uncovers some of the links South Shields had with the abominable trade. It will highlight the town's support for the anti-slavery cause as well as visits made to the area by William Wells Brown, the leading American anti-slavery campaigner. It will also bring to light the work of a local doctor who became a physician to former enslaved black Americans and contributed greatly to the study of native Africans in Sierra Leone.

2. Local supporters of the campaign to abolish the slave trade

Dr Thomas Masterman Winterbottom



© Tyne & Wear Archives Service

Dr Thomas Masterman Winterbottom (1766-1859) was born in 1766 in Dean Street, South Shields. In 1792 he gained his medical degree and in a matter of months became a doctor in the colony of Sierra Leone in Africa – a new homeland for former enslaved black Americans. Dr Winterbottom wrote about the medical practices of the native Africans and about illness in the middle passage based on his experiences in Sierra Leone. One of his books contains a description of sleeping sickness among Africans and the swelling of the glands in the neck which was followed by a ravenous appetite then the body wasting away. This was described to Dr Winterbottom by slave traders who would not buy Africans suffering from this condition because they were likely to die during the middle passage. Although Winterbottom was not the first to note this condition, the swelling of the glands in this way has become known as 'Winterbottom's sign'. In his

Account of the Native Africans in the Neighbourhood of Sierra Leone,¹ Winterbottom describes how 'the Africans are very much subject to a species of lethargy which they are very much afraid of, as it proves fatal in every instance'.² Winterbottom also describes the onset of dysentery on board slave ships, explaining that 'language is inadequate to convey a just idea of the loathsome state to which the poor wretches are reduced'.³ Dysentery was more prevalent on the Gold Coast and Winterbottom describes the natives' treatment of the ailment using lime juice and capsicum. He goes on to talk of surgeons running away from their ships due to the intolerable conditions and cruel treatment on board. Another of his books, *Medical Directions for the use of navigators and settlers in hot climates* published in 1803 provided guidance for trading vessels that had no medical officer on board. It addresses regulation of diet, clothing, exercise, and diseases.

In 1799 John Leyden published a historical and philosophical sketch of the discoveries and settlements of the Europeans in northern and western Africa. In it, he talks of an expedition inland from Sierra Leone made in 1794 by Messrs. Watt and Winterbottom – the latter being Dr Thomas Winterbottom's brother Matthew who later drowned off the coast of Africa.⁴

After spending four years in Sierra Leone, Dr Thomas Winterbottom returned home to South Shields where he took over his father's medical practice. In 1796 (or 1805)⁵ he married a rich widow Barbara Wardle whose family were wood importers and the couple settled in Westoe village.

Dr Winterbottom's extensive library reflects his interest in abolition and Africa. His collection also included medical works as well as studies on anthropology and ethnology. His collection of medical works was bequeathed to the General Infirmary in Newcastle and is now part of the Robinson Library in the University of Newcastle. The remaining items in his collection are contained at Durham University. He was a founder member of the Literary and Philosophical Society Newcastle and in 1804 he became a founder member of the Subscription Library in South Shields (now South Shields Museum and Art Gallery). In the 1800s, 21 'Winterbottom Cottages' were built in South Shields.

¹ See appendix 1 for a synopsis of this work

² Winterbottom (1803), chapter III, 29

³ Winterbottom (1803), chapter III, 29

⁴ Leyden (1817)

⁵ There is no conclusive date for this event: Ian Rogers suggests 1805; Ron Drew suggests 1796 <http://www.rondrew.co.uk/shields/dates.htm>

After he retired in 1820, Dr Winterbottom founded several local charities. One of his passions was improving the education of seamen. He came up with the idea of the Marine and Technical College, now called South Tyneside College, which was established after his death when his bequest became available for use. His benevolence was recognised by the inhabitants of Freetown in Sierra Leone: 'In the year 1850 [Winterbottom] received a most gratifying address from Freetown signed by 34 of the coloured people, expressive of their kind wishes and gratitude for his services fifty-four years ago.'⁶

Dr Winterbottom died in 1859 at the age of 93 and was buried at Westoe Cemetery in a public funeral. His body lies in a section of the cemetery reserved for 'those eminent public men whom their townsmen may delight to honour'.⁷

Dr Winterbottom's obituary states that he was the oldest medical man in England. It refers to his time in Sierra Leone and how he formed a 'strong and lasting attachment to the African race'.⁸ The obituary also talks of his tours of the continent after his retirement and the existence of his French passport (held at Durham County Record Office).

Dr Winterbottom and anti-slavery

Winterbottom described the capture and enslavement of Africans and explained that children were sometimes left as a pledge for debts. Natives were happy to sell fellow Africans to European slave traders and Winterbottom described the Africans as 'shrewd and artful'. In his *Account of the Native Africans in the Neighbourhood of Sierra Leone*, Dr Winterbottom described the trans-Atlantic slave trade as 'that cruel trade which spoils unhappy Guinea of her sons'.⁹

Winterbottom was opposed to slavery and said there was a negative view provided by traders of the enslaved. He said that enslaved Europeans were just as disinclined to work as enslaved Africans and that 'negroes' can be educated if given the opportunity. This was an unpopular view at the time as western medicine was seen as being superior. It appears that Winterbottom was far ahead in his view of race.

⁶ Emmerson (1955)

⁷ Hodgson (1903)

⁸ Durham Directory (1860), 47-49

⁹ Winterbottom (1803) vol. 1 151

Winterbottom was interested in the discussion about slavery but distanced himself. Some people resurrected Pliny's ideas that the black colour was due to the skin being burnt on account of their proximity to the sun. Winterbottom offered a more scientific reason based on pigmentation of the skin.

Winterbottom was a member of the committee that printed the *Declaration of the objects of the Newcastle upon Tyne Society for Abolishing Slavery All Over the World* which was published in 1836.¹⁰

A copy of Stuart Menzies' thesis, *The Life and Work of Thomas Masterman Winterbottom MD* (published in 2001) is held at Durham University Library.

Russell Boulbey

Russell Boulbey (or Bowlby) stood for South Shields in the election on 11th and 12th December 1832. He lost to Robert Ingham by 205 to 2 votes. In his election address, Boulbey talked of how he was proud of his own freedom and that everyone should be blessed with the same opportunity. He suggested 'we had best civilize our Irish peasantry, at home, far sunk in worse than slavery, ignorance, and distress'.¹¹ His opponent Robert Ingham was also against slavery – provided the slave owners were adequately recompensed.¹²

James Mather

James Mather (1799-1873) was a friend of Robert Ingham (who won the South Shields election against Russell Boulbey in 1832). Mather was born in Newcastle in 1799 and his father was a wine and spirits merchant in Newcastle and South Shields. James was a free-thinker and campaigned for parliamentary representation for South Shields, and also for the abolition of slavery (despite being married to woman whose family had made its fortune from the slave trade). However, he was more widely known as a campaigner for mining safety. He was a spokesman for South Shields' shipping interest and by 1845 it had become possible to supply London with Midlands' coal by rail. In 1846, Mather published a pamphlet comparing rail and shipping costs, in the interests of a South Shields

¹⁰ Newcastle upon Tyne Society for Abolishing Slavery all over the World (1836)

¹¹ Durham Chronicle and Sunderland Times, July 27 1832

¹² *pers. comm.* Ian Rogers

coal trade. This is an interesting standpoint given the fact that the north east supplied coal to the Caribbean (via London) for use on slave plantations.¹³

Meetings to address Earl Grey's Retirement, 1834

During the months of July, August and September 1834, meetings were held in the counties of Durham, Northumberland, Newcastle upon Tyne and Berwick upon Tweed to address the Right Hon. Earl Grey on his retirement. This included a meeting in South Shields' Town Hall on 1st August 1834. Great gratitude for Earl Grey's services was expressed by those present. Earl Grey's role in helping 'the manacle of the Negro' fall from the limbs of the enslaved was counted as among his most distinguished measures during his administration.¹⁴

3. South Shields and the American anti-slavery campaign

William Wells Brown

'In no place in the United Kingdom has the American Slave warmer friends than in Newcastle' - William Wells Brown, 1852



William Wells Brown (1814–1884) was born into slavery in America. He escaped and worked as a conductor for the Underground Rail Road before becoming a writer and famous abolitionist. Brown's autobiography, *The Narrative of William W. Brown, a Fugitive Slave*, was published in America in 1847. After this he gave anti-slavery lectures in Europe which became the theme of his next book, *Three Years in Europe*. He travelled 12,000 miles in Europe as part of an anti-slavery lecture tour addressing 1,000 meetings between 1849 and 1854 – including places in the north

© Wells Brown, *Three Years in Europe; or, Places I have Seen and People I have Met*, 1852

¹³ <http://www.durhamweb.org.uk/dclhs/James-Mather.html>

¹⁴ *An account of meetings held in the counties of Durham, and Northumberland, Newcastle upon Tyne, and Berwick upon Tweed: in ... 1834, to address the Right Hon. Earl Grey, on his retirement from office, with copies of the addresses.* Newcastle: Printed by and for T. & J. Hodgson, 1834. Literary and Philosophical Society, Tracts 042/4 v. 470: no.1

east such as South Shields. Whilst in Newcastle, he stayed with the Quakers, Anna and Henry Richardson, who helped to purchase his freedom. Even before Brown had left America, John Mawson of Newcastle had read about him and invited him to stay with him — which Brown did in 1849.

William Wells Brown’s lectures



© South Tyneside Libraries Local Studies Collection

**CENTRAL HALL,
SOUTH SHIELDS.**

**FRONT SEATS, 6D.
BACK SEATS, 3D.**

*On Wednesday Evening the 15th, and Thursday
Evening the 16th February.*

Doors open at Half-past Seven, LECTURE to Commence at Eight o'clock.

Hunting the Slaves with the Negro Dogs. Death of the President's Daughter.

W. WELLS BROWN,

A Fugitive Slave from the United States (Author of "Clotel, or the President's Daughter," "Three Years in Europe," &c.), will Lecture on American Slavery. The subject will be illustrated by new and splendid Dissolving Views, painted expressly for the purpose.

The following, with other Scenes, will be brought before the Audience.

<p>SCENES ON THE COAST OF AFRICA. The Slave Ship, SIGHTING OF SHORES. CHASE OF A SLAVE BY AN ENGLISH MAN-OF-WAR.</p> <p>SLAVE MARKET. THE HEROIC WOMAN. THE ATTEMPT TO ESCAPE; THE ARREST. CHASING OF FUGITIVES WITH NEGRO DOGS. SEPARATION AND THE BARTERERS. DEPARTURE OF UNCLE TOM'S CABIN AT SEASIDE.</p> <p>THE SLAVE-TRADER & HIS VICTIMS, THE AFRICAN MOTHER. THE CRAMER TAKEN FROM HIS BOARDS. JULIUS CAESAR.</p> <p>ELIZA CROSSING THE RIVER ON THE ICE, The Mother and her Child in the Forest. CURIOUS SCENE, all sorts of People. The Head Being the Negro's Friend.</p> <p>THE MOUNTAIN PASS; THE TERRIFIC FALL. The President's Mansion in Washington.</p> <p>CAPITOL OF THE UNITED STATES. BURNING RIVER, GREENS SOCIETY. THE PLANTING PALACE, THE FUGITIVE BOAT. The Elderly's Escape, Scenes of Evil by Uncle Tom. Topsy & Eva. — DEATH OF EVA.</p>	<p>The elderly young lady and the servant girl. Simon Legree and his Gang of Slaves. THE SLAVE-DRIVERS AND THEIR VICARS. DEATH OF UNCLE TOM.</p> <p>A Wonderful Escape, The Negro Dogs. The Red Indians and the English Slave in the Burning Forest. Wm. Wells Brown Caught by Negro Dogs.</p> <p>THE HAPPY FAMILY BROUGHT UP. Escape of W. Wells Brown & his Mother.</p> <p>W. Wells Brown & his Mother returned to Slavery. THE FUGITIVE TAKEN BY THE ESCAPE DOGS.</p> <p>A New Mode of Obtaining an Education. Successful Escape of William Wells Brown.</p> <p>A FUGITIVE AT THE FALLS OF NIAGARA. THE ESCAPE THROUGH BOSWORTH.</p> <p>A Slave Family in the Forest Worshipping God. The English Shore. Meeting of fugitives in the land of Freedom. Slaves presented by the British Flag. The California Gold Fields. SLAVES AT THE DIGGINGS.</p>
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This poster advertises a speech given by William Wells Brown in Central Hall, South Shields. The year in which this event took place has not yet been confirmed. However the poster refers to William Wells Brown as the author of 'Three Years in Europe' which was published in 1852 so his visit cannot have been earlier than this.

The poster advertises the lecture being illustrated by 'new and splendid Dissolving Views' and these are likely to have been part of a magic lantern show. This involved images being painted onto glass slides and projected onto a wall using a lantern. The poster reveals that

these scenes were 'brought before the audience', although there is no mention of these magic lanterns.

Some of the scenes include 'Hunting the Slave with the Negro Dog' and 'The Slave-trader and his Victim'. The images used were original to the British version of Brown's bibliography, and it is probable that these were also reproduced on canvas.

Another poster advertises two lectures given by William Wells Brown in the Seamen's Hall in South Shields on Thursday 5th and Friday 6th December 1851. The poster reveals that there would be a showing of *Views of Slavery*. This was to be displayed on 2000 feet of canvas and depicted a series of views describing events in the life of an American enslaved worker from their birth to bondage then to their death or escape. The 'opinions of the press' section at the bottom of the poster is of interest; as well as telling us that the artwork was also exhibited in Newcastle, it hints at the type of reception Brown's work might have received. The Newcastle Guardian states that Brown's illustrations are 'excellent in execution and pregnant with instruction' and readers are strongly recommended to visit.

It is not yet known whether these 'Views' refer to a painting (there is mention of 2000 feet of canvas) and it is possible that these were also displayed as a magic lantern show. Indeed, we are told that the scene 'occupies' the canvas rather than being painted *on* it; and if it was part of a magic lantern show, then the images would certainly appear in 'continuous succession', as the poster suggests.

However, there is evidence that Brown commissioned a twenty-four-scene canvas in September 1850 and produced an accompanying pamphlet providing a description of each scene.¹⁵ The first town to exhibit this painted panorama was Newcastle in October 1850.¹⁶ Furthermore, Brown discusses the advantage of using art to promote the anti-slavery message: 'a painting, with as fair a representation of American slavery...would do much to disseminate trust upon this subject'.¹⁷ Similarly, Henry 'Box' Brown, an escaped enslaved worker, toured the United Kingdom in 1850 to exhibit his 'Panorama or Mirror of Slavery'

¹⁵ Entitled *A Description of William Wells Brown's Original Panoramic Views of the Scenes in the Life of an American Slave, from His Birth in Slavery to His Death or His Escape to His First Home of Freedom on British Soil*

¹⁶ Ripley (1985), 191

¹⁷ *Brown, A Description of William Wells Brown's Original Panoramic Views etc.* (1850), iii See Ripley (1985), pp190-224

which displayed 'real life-like scenes' and letters were sent round to encourage people to visit the exhibition, which made an 'unfading impression upon the heart and memory'.¹⁸

Research surrounding these panoramas is ongoing, and it is probable that both paintings and magic lantern shows were used by Brown to convey his anti-slavery message. Speakers such as Henry 'Box' Brown and William Wells Brown would have been seen as exotic spectacles that allowed the middle classes to engage with moral causes in an uplifting way. Indeed Henry was more of an entertainer,¹⁹ suggesting that his audiences might treat attending one of his talks as if it were a trip to the theatre and this could have had an effect on the impact of his moral message.

An article printed in 1849 provides details of two addresses given by William Wells Brown in North Shields on 27th and 28th December 1849. See appendix 3 for the full text. The Gateshead Observer also reported that a speech regarding the history of slavery was given in the area by Brown in 1850.

The speeches of William Wells Brown differed from those made by other American anti-slavery campaigners such as Frederick Douglass. Brown told stories of individual encounters and his lectures were not full of heroic rhetoric. His work appealed not only to the public as a whole but also to politically active women.²⁰

Professor Radiclan Clytus of Tufts University, English Department, provided detailed information concerning *William Wells Brown's Original Panoramic Views* and is continuing his research into this subject.

James Watkins

James Watkins, originally known as Sam Berry, was born on a plantation in Maryland in 1821. He finally escaped enslavement in 1844. He arrived in England in 1851 and gave speeches in Newcastle, Wallsend and North Shields (among other places) on the evils of slavery and spoke in favour of emancipation.²¹

¹⁸ Brown (1851), page v

¹⁹ Fisch (2000)

²⁰ Garrett and Robbins (2006)

²¹ Watkins (1852)

4. South Shields contributors to slave trade

An advertisement printed in The Tyne Mercury newspaper on Tuesday 25th July 1826 publicised a ship that was being built in South Shields that could be 'a very suitable vessel for the West Indian, American, Baltic, or Greenland Trade'. It would have almost certainly have become involved in transporting goods produced by enslaved Africans.²²

5. Objects linking South Shields to the trans-Atlantic slave trade and other forms of slavery

This section highlights some of the objects held in South Tyneside Local Studies Centre relating to the trans-Atlantic slave trade and slavery.

A poster for South Shields Theatre advertising a performance of the tragic play *Oroonoko; or The Royal Slave* on Friday 25th May 1798. It was to show the 'horrors and miseries' in West India Slavery and the 'evident necessity for the abolition of the detestable slave trade'. The poster states that the play was based on 'real occurrences'.

An article entitled *Slavery in America* recounts the tale of a slave being told he has been sent to live with his master again over the summer. Instead, he was taken to be sold into enslavement. See appendix 2 for the full text of this article.

A poster advertising a viewing of the painting *Negro Emancipation* in the Hall of the Mechanics Institute, South Shields. The poster includes an explanation of the painting which is based on William Cowper's *Morning Dream*. This poem is also the opening to William Wells Brown's book, *The Narrative of William W. Brown, a Fugitive Slave*. The painting depicted an enslaved worker in the foreground whose fetters have just been broken.

A poster advertising various productions at South Shields Theatre. Mr Ira Aldridge, a well-known black Shakespearean actor was to perform on Thursday 8th February 1849 in *Slave; or, the revolt of Surinam*. Ira Aldridge also performed *The Revolt of Surinam* or *A Slave's Revenge* in Newcastle and Sunderland in 1827.

²² Northumberland Collections Service, Record number ZM1/B16/VII

A poster promoting South Shields Theatre includes a musical entitled *Slave Or, the blessings of liberty* on Monday 19th February 1855.

A poster advertising a performance by the armour-clad Amazon group, Female Christys, in the Public Hall in South Shields, 24th-26th December 1870. It depicts the group 'in their antics of the slave fields' and the 'uproarious pastimes of plantation days!'

A poster promoting concerts of the African Native Choir on 5th and 6th November 1891 in the Free Library Hall in South Shields. The object of the visit was 'to interest the Public in the Internal, Social and Material Progress of South Africa and its Native Population, by the Establishment of Trade and Technical Schools, for teaching Manual Handicrafts, Domestic Economy, Cookery, Nursery....essential to the future well-being of the Native People of Africa'.

The following two items form part of the Museum of Antiquities collection.



© Museum of Antiquities,
Newcastle University

This blue glass vessel of an African male head was found in South Shields and has been on display at the Museum of Antiquities. The vessel would have probably been made in Alexandria, which had traded in slaves from Africa. It is unknown whether this vessel is depicting a slave or a freeman because there is little evidence of colour prejudice or a preference for African slaves in the Roman world.

The tombstone of Regina was discovered in South Shields and dates from the second century AD and provides evidence of a slave being born in Britain. Regina was the wife of Barates, who was from Syria. Regina herself was from a Catuvellaunian tribe in St. Albans. She was born free, became a slave (perhaps because she was an orphan) and was set free when she married Barates. A cast of the tombstone is on display at the Museum of Antiquities; the original is at Arbeia.



© Museum of Antiquities,
Newcastle University

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Appendices

Appendix 1:

A synopsis of Dr Winterbottom's *An account of the native Africans in the neighbourhood of Sierra Leone: to which is added, an account of the present state of medicine among them* (London: John Hatchard, 1803)

Summary by Peter Livsey, Remembering Slavery Archive Mapping and Research Project volunteer.

Volume 1:

Chapter 1. Description of the general area and its peoples.

Chapter 2. Climate.

Chapter 3. Agriculture.

Chapter 4. Food and drink – difference between pagans and Muslims. Quotes about Smeathman and from J.G.Stedman re Surinam.

Chapter 5. Towns – in the interior they are larger and mainly Muslim.

Chapter 6. Work and customs.

Chapter 7. Amusements, including story-telling (two examples); greetings – hand contact and/or 'Salaim Alaikum' if Muslim.

Chapter 8. Government and justice – superstition of trial by ordeal can result in the guilty being sold as slaves. Wrongly encouraged by British fort commanders on the Gold Coast. Case in 1799 of a young woman so condemned who fled to Freetown.

Chapter 9. Women.

Chapter 10. War - Eyewitness in 1796 to siege of a settlement of rebel slaves by their Mandingo masters, using muskets and old cannon. Unjust accusations of cannibalism. No proof. Same charge levelled by the Romans at the Irish, and by the 'Gentleman's Magazine' of 1798 at the French Revolutionaries.

Chapter 11. Trade.

Chapter 12. Physical form of people – long discussion as to why they are black, with climate explanation generally favoured. Skin colour is a very superficial difference. A couple of generations in Scandinavia would turn them white. Have as great a variety of facial features as whites – the usual caricature is not a constant. Features are affected by climate, diet and civilization. Rejects argument from the chain of being that they are intermediate between man and orang outang. Quotes Goldsmith's *Animated Nature* on the superficiality of differences.

Chapter 13. Character.

Chapter 14. Religion.

Chapter 15. Magic.

Appendix 1. Sierra Leone – which Dr Winterbottom left in 1796.

Appendix 2. Meteorology.

Appendix 3. Termites.

Appendix 4 and 5. Vocabularies of local languages.

Volume 2: Specialist medical material on e.g. sleeping sickness, yaws etc.

Appendix III and IV continue the debate about race.

III: Against Charles White: *An Account of Regular Gradation in Man* [published in 1799 by a childbirth specialist and founder member of the Manchester Literary and Philosophical Society.] None of White's physical proofs of intermediate gradation of blacks between human and lower animals stands up. Thomas Jefferson is also wrong about their intellect – slavery degrades, not race. Phyllis Wheatley's poems are beautiful. Dr Winterbottom quotes Thomas Clarkson in support of the Mosaic view of Creation [i.e. all races equal because descend from a common father?]

IV: Quotes a Professor Blumenbach [Johann Friedrich Blumenbach, a German natural scientist who asserted the unity of humanity while defining its varieties] who writes that he thought Van Dyck's painting of negro heads were just 'black-coloured Europeans' (as were Jordaens' and Rubens'), because they were not of the supposed type, but he has since

seen a black woman from San Domingo in Yverdon, Switzerland who was both beautiful and the most skilled midwife in town. Now convinced negroes vary in facial line as much as Europeans. Nor are they inferior in mental capacities. Quotes Clarkson on musical skill, contradicting Bryan Edwards. Francis Williams' Latin poems can be found in [Long's] 'History of Jamaica.' Has heard of a Negro poetess. Writings of Sancho. Dutch pastor James John Eliza Capitein, whose portrait was painted by Van Dyck. Found out a negro got a doctorate, with high praise from the examiners, at Wittenberg in 1734 – Anthony William Amo. The French Academy of Sciences has as a correspondent a M. Lislet, a Negro of Ile-de-France [Mauritius], who provides excellent meteorological observations. Can think of areas of Europe which have not produced people like this.

Appendix 2:

Article, 'Slavery in America'

An article from a New York newspaper, printed in a South Shields newspaper. It recounts the tale of how a slave is told he has been sent to live with his master again over the summer. Instead, he was taken to be sold. The article is held at South Tyneside Libraries Local Studies Collection.

While travelling not long ago in one of the south western counties in Virginia the following thrilling incident took place:--Starting in the stage coach, soon after breakfast, the morning being a delightful one in the latter part of the month of May, I took my seat on the box by the side of the driver, and behind me on the top was seated a bright, intelligent-looking mulatto boy, apparently 18 or 19 years of age. After being on the road a few minutes, I turned about and asked him where he was going. He replied he was going down a few miles to live with Master ----, who kept the stage house at the West Stand; that he lived with him the last summer, and that his master had sent him down to live with him the coming season. Turning from the boy, the driver remarked to me in an undertone, "The boy is deceived; I am taking him down to the slave-pen a few miles on, where slaves are kept preparatory to being sent to Louisiana; this deception is practiced to get him from his house and mother without creating a disturbance on the place." Shortly after we drew near to the place where the boy supposed he was to stop; he began to gather up preparatory to leaving the stage, the few articles he had brought away from his home. The driver said to him in a decided tone of voice, "You are not to get off the stage here." The boy, in

astonishment, replied, "Yes I is; I've got a letter for Master – I'm going to live there this summer." By the time we had reached the house, and Master – made his appearance, John (for that was the name of the boy) delivered his letter, and appealed to Master – to be delivered from the command of the driver. The Master made no reply, as this kind of deception was no new thing to him. After reading the letter and folding it up, he was about putting it in his pocket, when it flashed on the mind of the boy that he was sold and was bound for the slave-pen. He exclaimed in agony, "Tell me, Master, if I'm sold?" No reply was made. He exclaimed again, "Tell me if I'm sold?" This last appeal brought the response, "Yes, John, you are sold." The boy threw himself back on the top of the stage, and, rolling in agony, sent up such a wail of woe as no one in the stage could endure; even the _____ walked away in _____, and the driver hurried into his box and drove off in haste to drown the noise of his cry. The passengers were all deeply moved by the dist_____ of the boy, and tried in various ways to soothe his wounded and crushed spirit, but his agony was beyond the reach of their sympathy. When his agony was somewhat abated he exclaimed, "Oh, if they had only let me bid my mother good bye. They have lied to me! They have lied to me! If they had a'told me I was sold, and I could a'bid my mother good bye, I'd a'gone without making them trouble—hard as it is." By the time we had passed on some two or three miles since leaving the last stand, when driving near to a pretty thick wood, the boy became tranquil. Waiting till we had entered the wood a few _____, he darted from the top of the stage and ran into the woods, as agile as a deer, no doubt with the feeling that it was for his life. The driver instantly dropped his reins and pursued the boy. Proving himself no match, he returned, exclaiming, "You see, I have done what I could to catch him." He mounted his box and drove on a mile or so, where he reined up his horses to a house, and calling to the keeper, asked "Where are your sons?" He replied, they left the house this morning with the dogs to hunt a negro, and would not be home before night. The driver said to him that Mr-- had sent his boy John on that morning to be delivered at the pen, and that he had jumped from the top of the stage and taken to the woods. His reply was, "We will hunt him for you to-morrow." The driver said he wished only to notify him of his being in the woods. As we drove on I made the inquiry, "How long have you driven a stage on this road?" He replied, "About 15 years." "Do you frequently take negroes down to the slave-pen?" "Yes, frequently." "What will become of this boy John?" He replied, "He will skulk about the woods until he is nearly starved and will some night make his way up to his master's house, and in about two w____ weeks I shall bring him down again to the slave pen in handcuffs." After a pause, even his driver feeling his degradation in being the instrument of such misery, broke out in the exclamation, "This is a

_____ business; but in this _____ this is not the worst feature (?) in it. The man who sold him is his own father!" – *New York Paper*.

Appendix 3:

Article relating to two addresses William Wells Brown gave in North Shields on 27th and 28th December 1849; printed in 1850. The article is part of South Tyneside Libraries Local Studies Collection.

Wm. Wells Brown, a fugitive slave, delivered two addresses on the subject of American Slavery, in the Lecture Room, North Shields, on Thursday and Friday, 27th and 28th ult. Alderman Mease p_____d on both occasions, and the meetings were numerous attended by respectable audiences. The chairman, after a few appropriate observations on the demoralizing effects of slavery both on the slaves and on the owners, introduced Mr. Brown to the meeting, who gave many interesting details relative to the condition of the slave, and the present [sic.] aspect of the anti-slavery movement. He stated that many slaves were not distinguishable in colour from the whitest Europeans, and cited an instance where two highly educated young ladies, daughters of a physician who had redeemed his wife (their mother) from slavery, were dragged back by the ruthless creditor of their father, who had died insolvent, into a state of bondage. The Congress of the United States have, within the last few years, passed an iniquitous law, according to which any free man of colour found in Washington or in the district of Columbia, without the evidences of his freedom upon him, may be immured in prison until he is able to produce proof of his freedom. If these evidences of his freedom are produced, and he is yet unable to pay his gaol fees, which amount to 5s. per day, he is liable to be sold into slavery at the expiration of six months, when the balance of the money received for him, after paying the gaol fees, is carried to the United States exchequer. What are called negro pens, places in Washington where negroes are received, who are brought to the city for the purposes of sale, are the property of government, which lets them out to the highest bidder. As a specimen of the garbled religious instruction which is given to the slaves, where any attention is paid to the subject, he instanced the teaching of his own master. His slaves were regularly assembled for the purpose of religious tuition, when he read to them portions of Scripture, and encouraged his slaves to ask for explanation of what they did not

understand. On one such occasion, soon after Mr. Brown, alias "Sampe," had returned to him after having been hired out for a year, many of the slaves asked questions on various points, when the master turning to him said "Sampe, have you any questions to ask?" "Yes sir I have." "Well, what is it?" "Pray, masser, what does this mean, 'what thing soweever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them.'" "Sirrah, where did you learn that?" "I heard it when I was hired out massa." "Strange thing that we cannot hire out a nigger man a day without his being spoiled; however, I'll explain it to you. If you were a white man you would be a white man, would'nt [sic] you?" "Yes, sir." "And if I were a black man and your slave, you would wish me to be very good and obedient to you, would'nt [sic] you?" "Yes, sir." "Well then, as you would wish me to be, so you are to be obedient and do every thing I tell you. But now, sir, you are only to aks [sic] questions about what I read to you, and if you ever ask me such a question again, I'll give you a right good harruping. I'll teach you not to go up and down hunting for what Scriptures you choose to question me upon." In regard to the progress of public opinion in America, in consequence of the abolition movement, his statements were cheering, and furnished a satisfactory answer to those who doubt the utility of any impression of sentiment in England on the subject. The Americans are exceedingly sensitive on this point, and to that may in fact be attributed the entire disappearance of negro pens from the churches, and of "Jim Crow cars" from the railways, throughout the whole of the New England States. In the city of Boston, when 15 years ago, Wm L. Garrison, was on the point of being subjected to Lynch law, the halter being actually placed around his neck, for no other reason than that he had ventured to meet a few ladies to give information respecting slavery, in that city, the negroes are now placed on a footing of almost perfect equality with the white people. Indeed they receive much the same treatment which they would meet with in any of our English cities. The condition of the slaves has also been in some degree ameliorated, and their escape from slavery facilitated. The lectures closed after a resolution had been unanimously passed deprecating slavery, and pledging each individual to use his influence to abolish it. A vote of thanks to the chairman and lecturer was likewise passed.

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