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# Black and Asian Sources in the Suffolk Record Office

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## PARISH REGISTERS

There have been people from Africa, the Caribbean and South Asia living in Suffolk since at least the seventeenth century. One of the best sources of information about them before the twentieth century, and a starting-point for further research, is the Church of England parish registers of baptisms, marriages and burials. There is a list of entries found to date in an Appendix at the end of this leaflet. Very little work has been done on tracing the early history of the black presence in Suffolk, and more references probably remain to be discovered in parish registers.

## PAPERS OF FAMILIES WHO OWNED PROPERTY IN, OR TRADED WITH, THE WEST INDIES AND THE AMERICAN SOUTH

A number of Suffolk land-owners also owned plantations in the West Indies or the southern United States. Many of the coloured men and women who appear tantalisingly in the eighteenth century parish registers had been brought to this country from the plantations to act as servants in their masters' Suffolk homes. The families' archives often include records of the administration of those estates – information which can assist research into the wider context of coloured people's history. In addition the Record Office holds some records of trade between this country and the West Indies.

- Vanneck family, Lords Huntingfield  
Sale particulars, papers and plans, Golden Grove and Norbrook estates, Jamaica, 1804-1898 (Ipswich HB26/412; HB26/12012)  
Sale particulars, sugar estates in Grenada, 1876 (Ipswich HB26/412/1592)  
Sale particulars, Ffryes estate, Antigua, 1876 (Ipswich HB26/412/1595)
- Pocklington family of Chelsworth  
Recital of deeds, Hyde Plantation, Jamaica, 1804 (Bury HA552/2H/2)
- Thellusson family, Lords Rendlesham  
Correspondence, papers, accounts, plans relating to Las Cuevas, Trinidad, 1898-1926 (Ipswich HB416/D2/1-3)  
Financial papers, Bacolet estate, Grenada, 1812-1860 (Ipswich HB416/D1/1-3)
- Long family of Saxmundham  
Business and partnership papers, Lucky Valley estate, Jamaica, 1760-1808 (Ipswich HA18/GB and GD)  
Deeds of property in Jamaica, 1704-1736 (Ipswich HA18/GC/1-3)  
Plan of estate in St David's, Jamaica, 1754 (Ipswich HA18/GC/4)
- Maynard family  
Deeds, leases, plans and papers, estate in Nevis, 1832-1863 (Ipswich HA178/1/47-57)  
Ellis family, Lords Seaford

Conveyance of Montpelier New Works, St James, Cornwall, Jamaica [with list of slaves], 1798 (Bury HA507/4/26)

Letter describing conditions in Jamaica, 1832 (Bury 941/56/30)

- Middleton family of Shrubland Park  
Conveyance of Crowfield Plantation, St James, South Carolina [with list of slaves], 1808 (Ipswich HA93/2/3243-4)
- Blake family of Langham  
Deeds and estate papers of properties in Montserrat and St Kitts, 1792-1880 (Bury 1011/1/2; HA546/2/23, 30-31, 34-6; HA546/6/1-11)  
Blake Estate Act, 1800 [mentions payments to coloured women and their children on St Kitts] (Bury HA530/2/33)
- Capt Bostock of London  
Financial and legal papers, trading with Jamaica, 1719-1723 (Bury 1341/7/1-5)
- Alexander Symson of Grenada  
Valuation [with list of slaves] of Bon Accord plantation, Grenada, 1772 (Bury 613/63)
- Duer family of Chichester, West Sussex  
Lease of Great Plantation and slaves in Antigua, 1805 (Bury 391/25)
- Josiah Walley of London  
Articles of co-partnership, West Indies merchants, 1791, 1798 (Bury 1341/6/19)
- Soame family of Little Thurlow  
Extracts from parish registers of Tobago re Soame family, 18th cent (Bury HA540/6/11)
- Duncan H Campbell  
Plan of the coffee fields on the Petersfield Plantation, Port Royal, Jamaica, 1868 (Ipswich HD1034/186)

## **SLAVERY AND ANTI-SLAVERY**

These estates in the West Indies were dependent for their prosperity on slaves. During the eighteenth century the institution of slavery came under increasing criticism, until in 1807 the British Parliament abolished the transatlantic slave trade; slavery itself was abolished throughout the British Empire in 1838. Suffolk can be proud of its role in the campaigns to achieve these reforms. One of the leading opponents of slavery was Thomas Clarkson of Playford Hall near Ipswich and as a result the Ipswich Local Studies collection contains many of Clarkson's anti-slavery books and pamphlets. Quite apart from Clarkson, slavery and its abolition had been live social, moral and political issues in Suffolk for many years.

*An Address...for the purpose of considering the propriety of petitioning Parliament for an abolition of the slave trade* by R Hamilton, 1792 (Ipswich Local Studies R328)

*A letter addressed to Edward Bacon Esq, upon his sentiments respecting slavery in the West Indies, as expressed by him at the corporation dinner* by 'Candidus', 1830 (Ipswich Local Studies S326)

*The Negro's Complaint*, c1830 (Bury FL517/7/44)

Anti-slavery election address, 1832 (Ipswich HA24:50/19/4.4(7))

Letter from the inhabitants of Ipswich to Thomas Clarkson, c1833 (Ipswich HA93/15/70)

*Man stealing by proxy, or the guilt of our countrymen in upholding slavery and the slave trade by the purchase of slave grown produce* by John Fitzgerald, 1850 (Ipswich Local Studies R326)

*The Escaped Slave: an autobiography of Charles Freeman*, 1853 (Ipswich Local Studies 920FRE)

*The Sorrows of Yamba* by Hannah More, nd (Ipswich HD827/bundle 9)

Works by Thomas Clarkson:

*An essay on the impolicy of the African slave trade*, 1788 (Ipswich Local Studies 306.362)

*An essay on the slavery and commerce of the human species, particularly the African*, 1788 (Ipswich Local Studies 306.362)

*An essay on the comparative efficiency of regulation or abolition as applied to the slave trade, showing that the latter only can remove the evils to be found in that commerce*, 1789 (Ipswich Local Studies 306.362)

*An abstract of the evidence delivered before a select committee of the House of Commons in the years 1790 and 1791 on the part of the petitioners for the abolition of the slave trade*, nd (Ipswich Local Studies 306.362)

*The true state of the case respecting the insurrection at St Domingo*, 1792 (Ipswich Local Studies R326)

*The history of the rise, progress and accomplishment of the abolition of the African slave trade by the British Parliament*, 1808 (Ipswich Local Studies 306.362)

*A letter to the friends of the slaves on the new order of council and on the necessity of new measures on their behalf*, 1830 (Ipswich Local Studies 306.362)

*The history of the rise, progress and accomplishment of the abolition of the African slave trade by the British Parliament: a new edition with prefatory remarks on the subsequent abolition of slavery*, 1839 (Ipswich Local Studies 306.362)

*A letter to the clergy of various denominations and the slave-holding planters in the southern parts of the United States of America*, 1841 (Ipswich Local Studies 306.362)

*Not a labourer wanted for Jamaica, to which is added an account of the newly-erected villages there, and their beneficial results, and of the consequence of re-opening a new slave trade as it relates to Africa*, 1842 (Ipswich Local Studies 306.362)

*Review of the Rev Thomas B Freeman's Journals of Visits to Ashanti etc, with remarks on the present situation of Africa and its spiritual prospects*, 1845 (Ipswich Local Studies 306.362)

## **SOURCES FOR THE ACTIVITIES OF THE BLACK AND ASIAN COMMUNITIES IN SUFFOLK SINCE THE 1950S**

- Ipswich and Suffolk Indian Association  
Constitution, minutes, annual reports, correspondence, publicity material, details of social and cultural events, press-cuttings and photographs, 1975-1999 (Ipswich GC427)
- Ipswich and Suffolk Council for Racial Equality [formerly Ipswich and District Committee for Community Relations]  
Annual reports, 1981-1998, Newsletters, 1981, 1993-1995 (Ipswich Local Studies)
- Ipswich and Suffolk Council for Racial Equality  
Correspondence files, 1980s-2003 (Ipswich GC683/14280)
- Ipswich Caribbean Experience Project

Tapes and transcripts of interviews with West Indian community elders; related press cuttings, newsletters and photographs, 2004-2006 (Ipswich GC684/14299)

- Crane Ltd, engineers, Ipswich  
File of letters of application for work from people in the West Indies, including information about the issue of work vouchers; photographs of immigrant workers, c1965 (Ipswich HC477:12380)
- Suffolk Multi-Agency Forum  
Annual report, 1996 (Ipswich Local Studies)
- Suffolk Inter-Faith Resource  
Council minutes, 1996-2001, Articles of Association, 1999 (Ipswich HD2063)
- Oral history  
Oral testimony gives a more personal impression than any other kind of record of what it was like for a Black or Asian person coming to Suffolk and adjusting to life there. There are tapes in the Suffolk County Council Libraries and Heritage Oral History collection: for further details see the printed catalogue, *The Past Remembered - a catalogue of oral history tapes*.
- Posters and programmes for multi-cultural artistic events in the Ipswich area, 1990s (Ipswich Local Studies)
- File of press-cuttings on 'immigration', 1950s-1960s (Ipswich Local Studies)

## MISCELLANEOUS

- Will of Sir Robert Davers of Barbados and Rushbrooke, 1688 [many references to slaves by name] (Bury Local Studies, *Rushbrooke Parish registers...with Jermyn and Davers Annals* (1903))
- Reveley family: correspondence from members of the family in India, 1751-1858 (Ipswich HA228/4/2/1-102)
- 3rd Duke of Grafton: correspondence relating to the East India Company, 1766-1767 (Bury Acc 423)
- Advertisement for a place by a 14-year old negro boy, 17 September 1786 (Ipswich Local Studies: *Ipswich Journal*)
- Charles Marquis Cornwallis: letter-book as Governor-General of India, 1787 (Ipswich HA411/1/9/1/1)
- *The History, Civil and Commercial, of the British Colonies in the West Indies* by Bryan Edwards, 1810 (Bury Local Studies Cullum Library)
- Printed correspondence between James Craufurd and Patrick Blake, partly relating to the treatment of the latter's two black servants, 1811 (Bury Local Studies Suffolk Tracts III)
- Correspondence between the Bishop of Calcutta and the Bishop of Lincoln, 1814-1817 (Ipswich HA119/4/4/10/3/1-3)
- Account of journey through India by the wife of the Bishop of Calcutta, 1816 (Ipswich HA119/4/5/1/7/8)

- Church Missionary Society, Suffolk and Ipswich Association: annual reports, 1817-1838 (some gaps) (Ipswich Local Studies 266.023)
- Suffolk Society in Aid of Missions: annual report, 1821 (Ipswich Local Studies 266.023)
- Sir Charles Fraser: letters and papers relating to India, including the Indian Mutiny, 1840-1879 (Ipswich HA11/A16/1)
- Letter from Charles Webber describing a journey on the River Ganges and the town of Calcutta, 1843 (Ipswich 50/23/7.6)
- Portrait and description by Rev Richard Cobbold, Rector of Wortham, of John Mattocks, a black parishioner, 1860 (Ipswich HA11/A13/10 and HD1025/2)
- Suffolk Regiment collection (Bury GB554)  
Photograph albums and loose photographs of India, 1860s-1940s. Most of the photographs are of soldiers and military activities, but most of the albums include some views of towns, the countryside and local activities.  
Printed maps of India, 1880s-c1940
- 1st Earl of Cranbrook (Secretary of State for India, 1878-1881): correspondence and papers relating to India, 1867-1892 (Ipswich HA43)
- Sketchbooks and diaries of W B Gurdon on travels in India and the West Indies (Ipswich HA54)  
1/649 sketchbook, India, 1879-1880  
1/650 diary, India, 1881-1882  
1/651 sketchbook, India, 1881-1883  
1/654 sketchbook, West Indies, 1893  
1/655 diary, West Indies, 1893  
1/656 sketchbook, West Indies, 1892
- Album of photographs taken by Sir John Wood of Hengrave on a cruise of the Caribbean, 1887-1890  
(Barbados, Trinidad, Grenada, St Vincent, St Lucia, Dominica, Martinique, Nevis, St Kitts, Saba, Virgin Islands, Cuba, Bahamas, Bermuda) (Bury 405/3)
- Illustrated diaries of Lt White, RN, in the West Indies, 1927-1931 (Ipswich HA244/T/28)
- Notes of a journey in the British West Indies by Rev Harry Bloomfield: describes life of local people and the local church, 1930s (Bury HA542/1/14)
- East Suffolk Police file on the conduct of American troops in the county, 1943-1945 (Ipswich A2437/1)
- Papers relating to the reception of Ugandan Asian refugees at Stradishall camp, 1972-1973 (Bury EF509/1/126)
- WRVS report on the work of the Stradishall Resettlement Centre for Ugandan Asians, 1972-1973 (Ipswich GC490/12)
- Papers relating to the education of Ugandan Asians at the Stradishall resettlement camp, 1973 (Bury HD904)

## Books

- Articles on 'Records relating to India in the Suffolk Record Office' by Sushil K Soni, in *Suffolk Review* New Series no.6 (March 1986) and no. 38 (Spring 2002). These contain more detail than is given in the 'Miscellaneous' section above.
- *Tracing your West Indian Ancestors* by Guy Grannum (Public Record Office 2002)
- *Immigrants and Aliens: a guide to sources on UK immigration and citizenship* by Roger Kershaw and Mark Pearsall (Public Record Office 2000)

## Web sites

- **Moving here** – [www.movinghere.org.uk](http://www.movinghere.org.uk)  
A database of digitised photographs, maps, objects, documents and audio items recording migration experiences of the past 200 years.
- **Origination** - [www.channel4.com/culture/microsites/O/origination](http://www.channel4.com/culture/microsites/O/origination)  
Many links to other sites providing information on Black and Asian immigrants to Britain; celebrates the cultural diversity that they contribute to British society.
- **The First Black Britons** - [www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/empire\\_seapower/black\\_britons\\_01.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/empire_seapower/black_britons_01.shtml)  
Describes the circumstances through which the first black immigrants arrived in Britain.
- **The Windrush** - [www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/modern/arrival\\_01.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/modern/arrival_01.shtml)  
Tells the story of some of the passengers who arrived in Britain in 1948 on MV Empire Windrush.
- **The Black Presence** - [www.blackpresence.co.uk/](http://www.blackpresence.co.uk/)  
Information about African Britons from the past and the present. Contains articles about black servicemen who fought in the two world wars and links to useful African websites and African British News.
- **Casbah** - [www.casbah.ac.uk/](http://www.casbah.ac.uk/)  
Contains a database with examples of resources to help research black ancestry. Many links to other useful sites.
- **The Black and Asian Studies Association** - [www.blackandasianstudies.org.uk/interface.htm](http://www.blackandasianstudies.org.uk/interface.htm)  
Contains information about current projects as well as useful links to other sites.
- **Society of Genealogists** - [www.sog.org.uk/](http://www.sog.org.uk/)  
The Library has a good section on the West Indies, including transcripts of parish registers. It also has 'Caribbeana', a series of publications containing transcripts of all kinds of records relating to the British West Indies.
- **Rootsweb** - [www.rootsweb.com/~caribgw](http://www.rootsweb.com/~caribgw)  
The site has a good section on Caribbean history sources including extracts from some of the parish registers.

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Suffolk Record Office web site: <http://www.suffolk.gov.uk/sro>

Suffolk Heritage Direct website: <http://www.suffolkheritagedirect.org.uk>

## Appendix

### References to people from Africa, the Caribbean and the Indian sub-continent in Suffolk parish registers, 17th to 19th centuries

- Christianna Niger Anglice a blackamore, baptised Sibton, 25 December 1634
- Robert Smith of York, a Blackamore and Trumpeter, buried Hadleigh, 14 April 1685
- Rosanna a blackamore woman of Sir Robert Davers, baptised Rougham, 12 February 1688
- John son of John and Rosanita Blunt, blackamores, baptised Bury St Edmunds St Mary, 14 August 1690
- John, son of John Blunt, Blackmoor, buried Bury St Edmunds St Mary, 16 August 1690
- John son of John Blunt and Rosanna (Blacks), baptised Bury St Edmunds St Mary, 18 January 1692
- Rachel the Moor's wife, buried Barningham, 28 December 1698
- Peter le-Blacke, buried Barningham, 3 September 1701
- Robert Yoxford a Black Boy brought over by Thomas Betts Esq, baptised Yoxford, 25 December 1713
- Patrick Brink, blackamor, buried Bury St Edmunds St Mary, 17 September 1720
- Thomas Rundell a negro, buried Bardwell, 22 February 1732
- William Byrom (a blackamoor servant to Capt Rycart) and Sarah Knights, both of this parish, married by licence Aldeburgh, 16 August 1744
- Joseph Moulton an Asiatic black of Madras in the Kingdom of Golconda aged about 17 years of age, servant to John Tompson Esq, late of Little Gadsden in Hertfordshire, baptised Beccles, 23 August 1745
- Elizabeth Pickerell, wife of Isaac, a blackamor, buried Bury St Edmunds St Mary, 17 March 1748
- Hannah, daughter of Henry Norbrook, a negro, and Hannah his wife baptised Tunstall, 29 September 1761
- Stephen, a Negro Boy, about 9 years of age, surnamed Tucker, baptised Nayland, 26 November 1766
- Mary Hellet a negro girl servant to Jonathan Worrell Esq, baptised Ipswich St Nicholas, 23 June 1768
- William Strap a negro servant of Capt Pricke of Nacton, baptised Ipswich St Clement, 12 December 1771
- Charles Cook, a black, aged 19 years, baptised Bury St Edmunds St James, 22 December 1773
- Thomas German, a black and adult, baptised Great Saxham, 16 March 1777
- Anthrobus Morgan, a black and adult, baptised Great Saxham, 1 November 1780
- John son of – Solomon, a child brought from the East Indies and baptised at the age of 11 or 12 years, baptised Ipswich St Mary Quay, 26 January 1781
- Hebebossom a native of India baptised aged 19, Brandeston, 22 May 1784
- Harriot a native of India baptised aged 15, Brandeston, 22 May 1784
- Joseph Dian a native Congo in Africa aged about 16 years, publicly baptised Henstead, 11 June 1784
- Sigismunda Beckford, a native of Jamaica age 40 baptised Somerleyton, 28 October 1784
- John Brown, a Black and native of Jamaica, aged 35 years, baptised Great Saxham, 23 April 1786



'the above John Brown buried' Great Saxham, 20 July 1786

William Luccan a child brought from the East Indies by Capt William Bullock in the year 1786, aged about ten years, baptised Mellis, 12 August 1787

'Ben Ali a native of Morocco aged between 50 and 60 years who being found dead in this parish and on whom the coroner having taken his inquest was admitted to Christian Burial', Higham, 2 November 1789

'A pauper an African' buried, Newmarket St Mary, 19 July 1805

John Friday (a black) buried, supposed to be about 66 years of age, 15 December 1811

Thomas son of Cuffey and Amber Cross, of Silent St, negro slaves, baptised Ipswich St Nicholas, 10 December 1815

Joshua Wise, an African, buried aged 19, Holbrook, 7 January 1826

'Thomas Alert a black boy recaptured from a Brazilian Brigantine by Captain Bosanquet near the River Gabon. He says his name is 'Macarb Entcheur'. This Brigantine was sent to [ ] in the Brazils where it was boarded by the inhabitants and all Indians the rebels carried off except this boy. he was returned to England and committed by the Sec of State to Mr Hoare by whom he was given over to the care of the vicar. He was christened in the regular way with the name Thomas. His other name was that of Captain Bosanquet's ship. He is supposed to have been 7 or 8 years old.'; baptised Lowestoft, 4 October 1846

James, native servant to His Highness Prince Duleep Singh, baptised, Elveden, 26 January 1867

Mary, Indian servant of the late Maharajah Prinjit Singh, baptised, Elveden, 26 January 1867

James Hurkar and Mary Chumbalie married, Elveden, 2 February 1867

Frederick Victor, son of Duleep and Bamba Singh, baptised, Elveden, 2 May 1868

Bamba Sophia, daughter of Duleep and Bamba Singh, baptised, Elveden, 19 December 1869

Catherine Hilda, daughter of Duleep and Bamba Singh, baptised, Elveden, 31 December 1871

Sophia Alexandra, daughter of Duleep and Bamba Singh, baptised, Elveden, 31 December 1876

Albert Edward Alexander, son of Duleep and Bamba Singh, baptised, Elveden, 18 April 1880