

**Panel 7 Black and Ethnic Minorities living and working in the
Medway Towns during the 18th Century**

During the 18th Century, many ex-slaves came to live in Britain. Some naval officers even employed servants who were ex-slaves.

Amongst the ex-slaves who lived in Chatham during the late eighteenth century was Chatham Cuffay. He was the father of William Cuffay. Chatham Cuffay was born in St. Kitts, West Indies where he worked as a slave on a sugar plantation. He may have volunteered for naval service and by 1779 he was working as a cook on a hulk at Chatham Dockyard. The hulk was called *Chatham*, hence Cuffay's name. In 1788, his son, William, was baptised at St. Mary's parish church, Chatham. William Cuffay became an important figure in the Chartist movement in London but in 1848, he was convicted of organising an armed uprising in London and was transported to Tasmania where he died in poverty in 1870.

Other notable local baptisms from this time include one for a negro boy named Alexander, who was baptised and entered on the Chatham parish register of 18 September 1814. His father was named as William but his mother was unknown. It is possible that his name Alexander was given to him by his master.

1.

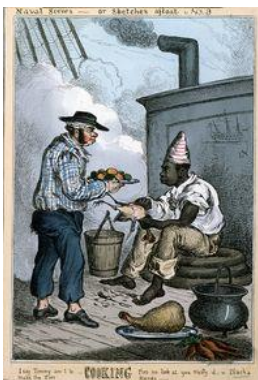


William Cuffay

After William Dowling, 1848

Courtesy: © National Portrait Gallery

2.



Naval Scenes or sketches afloat (No.3 Cooking –Caricature), 1831

Thomas McLean (publisher)

Courtesy: © National Maritime Museum, London

Panel 8 Black and Ethnic Minorities and the Royal Navy during the late 18th and early 19th Centuries

During the late 18th and early 19th Centuries between 15-25% of sailors serving in the Royal Navy were black. At the Battle of Trafalgar in 1805, 167 sailors were of Caribbean origin and 28 sailors were of African origin. These sailors were shown in contemporary paintings.

Amongst the sailors listed as being of Caribbean origin aboard HMS *Victory* at the Battle of Trafalgar were John Summers, a 20 year old ordinary seaman from Guadeloupe, West Indies and Thomas John Thomas, a 21 year old landsman from Port Royal, Jamaica.

I.



The Battle of the Glorious First of June, 1794

Phillippe-Jacques de Loutherbourg

Courtesy: © National Maritime Museum, London, Greenwich Hospital Collection