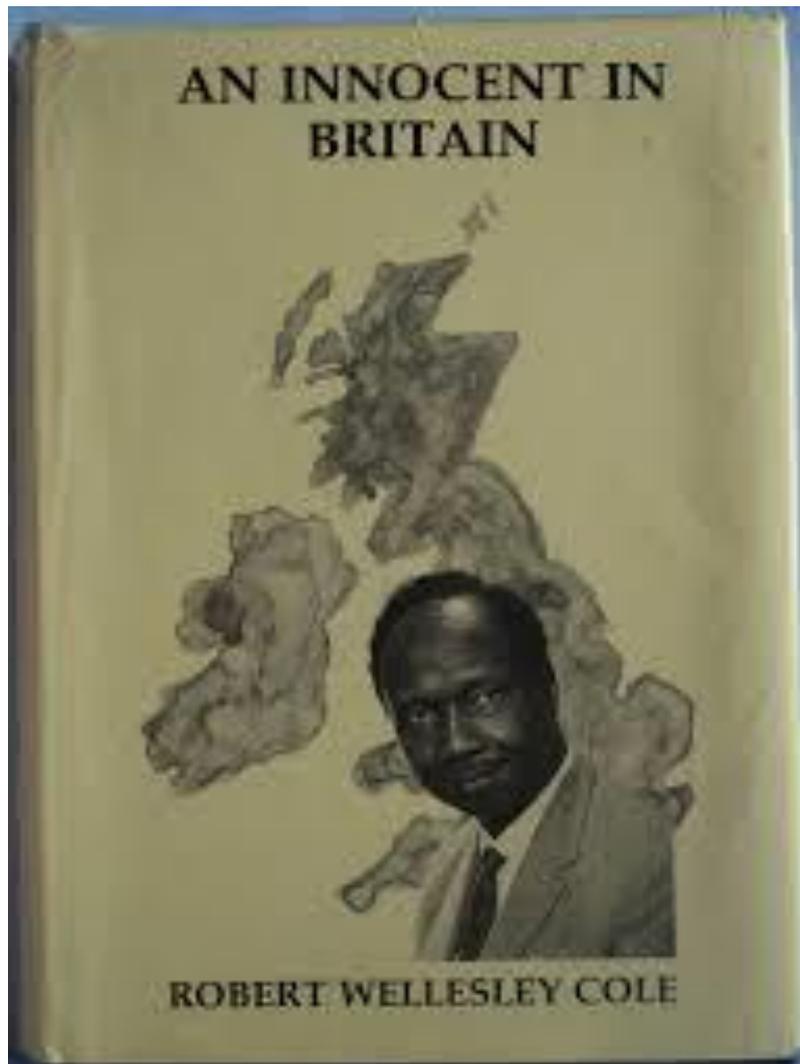


The Involvement of People of African Heritage in the North East

An Introduction



Slavery and Abolition and People of African Descent in the
North East. Part 5.

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Introduction

When the 2007 Tyne and Wear Remembering Slavery Project (see Part 1) began there was very little information available about people of African heritage in the North East before the 1860s. Africans had been coming to Britain from the late 15th Century. Their number increased as the colonies in America and the West Indies were developed exploiting the labour power of enslaved Africans. It became fashionable for the aristocracy, and even the moderately well-off, to own enslaved and free servants. Sometimes these servants were given or purchased their freedom. It is estimated that by the second half of the 1780s there were at least 20,000 Africans and people of African descent in Britain. The evidence about those visiting, living, working, marrying and having children in the North East has been growing. Many were short term visitors, while others were residents for varying lengths of time. Some of the evidence comes from the parish records of births, deaths and marriages. Virtually all free blacks were members of the working-class, labouring alongside their white co-workers including a blind miner who it is assumed was working in a North East coal pit.

Further research since the 2007 project has revealed the names of more black people in the North East up to the final emancipation of the enslaved in the West Indies in 1838. Thereafter, particularly as the British abolition movement turned towards supporting abolition in, so Afro-American refugees and campaigners from, the United States, like Dr James Pennngton, Henry Highland Garnet and his family, Charles Lennox Remond, Frederick Douglass, William Wells Brown, and the Crafts. They were welcomed by the local abolitionists. As a child Robert Spence Watson 'was already familiar at first hand with the hard lot of the American slave, for his father's roof had sheltered as honoured guests well-known fugitives' including some of the forenamed, together with well-known white abolitionists. That solidarity included the purchase of freedom for Frederick Douglass and Wells Brown organised by the Quaker Richardsons (see Part 4).

African American entertainers also came as has been shown by the historians Nigel Todd in the 1860s and Jeffrey Green in the Edwardian period. The most significant non-white group to settle were Yemenis and Arab seamen in South Shields. Then there were people like James Durham, an African member of the Durham Light Infantry who married a Darlington woman, Celestine Edwards, the Christian anti-racist who lived in Sunderland in the 1880s, and Arthur Wharton, the first black professional footballer in Darlington and later Stockport. Ida B. Wells came to campaign on the issue of lynching in the United States. There were more entertainers on the Edwardian music halls circuit. Between the two world wars entertainers continued to perform on North East stages, including Will Garland and Paul Robeson. The number of people of African heritage who came to the North East from the late 1940s was small, but many experienced racism like the historian David Olusoga growing up in Gateshead in the 1970s and 80s. Some like Chris Mullard, were involved in community relations anti-racist activities in the 1960s and 70s. The percentage of people of African heritage remained small compared with some other parts of the country, they make a significant contribution to the North's rich diversity.

This pamphlet is Part 5 of a series, the other parts being:

1. Digging Up the Hidden Chains. Researching and disseminating information about the North East's involvements in the slavery business and anti-slavery campaigning
2. The 'Black Indies': The North East Connections with the Slavery Business
3. *The Day of Jubilee is Come* - Campaigning against the Slave Trade and Slavery in the North East
4. 'In no place in the United Kingdom has the American slave warmer friends than in Newcastle' - Black Abolitionists in the North East

Because they are aimed as general introductions they are not footnoted.

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Campaigning For Black Rights - Olaudah Equiano

Having had a successful tour around Scotland in the summer of 1792 Olaudah Equiano (Gustavus Vasa) arrived in Newcastle in early September. He advertised his biography *The Interesting Narrative* in the local papers. One of his biographers writes: 'At least some of his twenty-eight thousand potential buyers in Newcastle were already familiar with his narrative because it was available to them through a local circulating library. Perhaps because he did not have to work as hard as elsewhere to make himself known, he had the pleasure of going 90 fathoms down St Anthony's Colliery at Newcastle, under the river Tyne, some hundreds of yards on the Durham side. He then went on to Durham in October and Stockton en route to Hull. His English wife accompanied him. The sixth edition of his book was published in January 1793 with letters of introduction from subscribers in Durham and Hull.

Kidnapped in West Africa and sold in the slave market on Tobago Equiano had a truly interesting and remarkable life, going on the same expedition to the Arctic as the young Horatio Nelson, and being able to buy his freedom. In the 1770s he was working closely with Granville Sharp, of the Durham family, in taking slave owners to Court to try and gain freedom for their slaves and to prevent them being taken back to the Americas. He and other Africans in London lobbied against the slave trade. He was not only the leading black abolitionist in Britain, but also a member of the London Corresponding Society, one of the early artisan working class political reform organisations, which was arguing for Parliamentary reform, the vote and the abolition of slavery. His friend Thomas Hardy, Secretary of the Society, was tried and acquitted of treason. Equiano attended the trial, as did the pro-reform and abolition Northumberland MP Charles Grey. Did Equiano and Grey speak to each other at the trial? Grey does not mention doing so in his letter to his wife Mary telling her about the trial and how easily he could be next in the dock for things he had said.

By the time Equiano visited Newcastle, the town already had a very active Abolition Society. It had been set up in 1791. It had organised a large petition and helped to encourage other petitions in the towns and villages in Northumberland and County Durham. It had published its own version of the summary of the Parliamentary report on the trade using an engraving by its supporter Thomas Bewick showing a kneeling slave with a plantation background. We do not know who Equiano met, but it is likely to have included Rev. William Turner, and leading Committee members, especially the Quakers given his links with the Society of Friends in London, and supporters of the Corresponding Society movement. Would Turner have introduced him to the pupils at his school? They included two Anglo-Indians: William Robert Bulman, the natural son of Job Bulman, an East India Company official, described as, 'A young man of colour' who went on to study medicine and died in the East Indies, and Francis Prinsep Scott, from the East Indies the 'slightly coloured' son of Major Scott, who became a major himself.

As a Methodist Equiano may have visited Methodist chapels or at least met some of the clergy. We have no evidence of him addressing a public meeting, but he could have addressed private meetings. He based himself at Robert Denton's bookshop, opposite the Turk's Head in Bigge Market. Could he have stayed as the guest in the home of one of the abolitionists or a Corresponding Society supporter? When he left he wrote to the local newspapers offering his 'warmest thanks of a heart growing with gratitude to you, for your fellow-feeling for the Africans and their cause. Having received marks of kindness, from you who have purchased my interesting narrative, particularly from George Johnson, Esq. of Byker, I am therefore happy that my narrative has afforded pleasure in the perusal; and heartily will all of you every blessing that this world can afford, and every fullness of joy which divine revelation has promised us in the next.' Johnson had subscribed for 100 copies. He was a colliery viewer (d. 1801) who bought steam engines for collieries from James Watt in 1796 and 1797 and Boulton & Watt in 1798.

Equiano's visit probably contributed to the growth in support for the movement against the slave trade.

Enslaved And Free Africans In Britain 1613 To 1740s

The earliest African identified so far in parish records is Anthonie, 'a blacke moore', whose death was recorded in Sunderland in 1613. There is also a record later in the century of Joseph Wells 'a Tawnie Moore' brought into England by Thomas Clarke' being baptised in Gateshead. In Bishopswearmouth on 27 March 1695 'A person aged about twenty years, a Tawny, borne at the Bay of Bengall in the East Indies, and being taken captive by the English, in his minoritie; was (after due examination of himself and wittnesses) Baptised, and named John Weremouth' at St Michael's, by me T[homas] O[gle] curate.' Because Africans were enslaved into India it is possible they were Africans.

In March 1715 a 'negro' named Wandoe was baptised at Hexham. The parish entry states he had been brought into the country by Captain Roger Carnaby. In his will dated 31 March 1713 Carnaby had a mortgage of a house called Green Harbour Court, Newgate, London, and left 10/- 'to my black boy Wandoe, my present man servant.' He also left money due to him on his 'South Sea bill' to relatives. He died and was buried on 7 April 1713. A Roger Carnaby was involved in importing enslaved Africans into America in 1703 or 1704. On 2 March 1704 as Master of *The Dolphin* he signed an affidavit in Bristol about having been detained in Virginia because of a trade embargo. In either 1703 or 1704 he experienced a revolt by the enslaved he was transporting on the ship *Maidmaid*.

On 10 November 1723 Elizabeth, the daughter of Francis Sellar, Mr Chilton's 'moor' was baptised. A Francis Sellar is buried in the churchyard of St Michael & All Angels Church in Houghton-le-Spring. Given there are several Chiltons who could have been alive at the time it is difficult to work out which it might be.

In the 1740s Thomas Bardwell painted the Northumberland landowner Captain Robert Fenwick with his bride, Isabella Orde and her sister, with Norham Castle in the background. Isabella's father William gave the Castle as her dowry. Its significance is the portrayal of a black servant.

The Duke of Northumberland had a black servant called Psyche. A bust of him carved by Francis Harwood, signed and dated on the side as 'Fecit 1758', was sold at Christie's on 9 April 1987 to the Paul Getty Museum. The catalogue described it as 'This unusual and impressive bust reputedly depicts 'Psyche', a black athlete in the employ of the Duke of Northumberland. It was presumably carved in Florence and the portrait quality indicates that it is from the life.' The asking price was from £7,000 to £10,000. As Harwood visited Italy the fact that it was carved in Florence suggests that Psyche must have gone with him or they met in Italy. The historian Marika Sherwood was informed by the Collections Manager at Alnwick Castle that the bust had first been sold in 1922 for £2. 10s. There was no information as to the identity of the sitter.

The 1760s and 1770s

On April 21 1762 'A black boy from the Malabar coast, who was brought over in Admiral Pocock's fleet was baptised at St. Nicholas' Church in Newcastle, by the name of Thomas Gateshead.' On 16 August 1770 the Tweedmouth Parish Register records the baptism of Charles August, 'a black' born at Malabar in the East Indies. Malabar was in India, so he could have been either Indian or African.

John London was 'a negro boy' aged about 8 belonging to John Craster of Shoreswood baptised at Norham Church on 15 September 1763. Craster may have been the landowner in the area

whose daughter Elizabeth, the widow of Christopher Blackett of Newham, married John Watson the Newcastle merchant in 1743. Their daughter Bridget would marry John Askew of Pallinsburn in 1770.

George Sylla was 'an African and servant to Mr Ralph Foster, a merchant of Berwick. Baptised 1/3/1767'. John Crow was an 'adult black near 16 years old. Baptised 28/3/1768' James Crow, servant of John Reavley, Chatton, was baptised on 17 January 1770. It is not clear whether the two Crows are related. Holy Trinity Church in Sunderland record: Jacob Clark 'a negro man aged 26 yrs' on 26 July 1771, and George Gooch, 'a negro boy aged approx. 17 yrs' in 1773.

Charles Reed was the 15 year old 'negro' son of Francis Reed of Virginia, a servant to Captain Charles Ogle. Charles was baptised on 17 April 1778 in Eglington's St. Maurice Church. Charles Ogle may have been visiting his relatives in Eglington from America. John Ogle (1649-1687) a Parliamentary supporter had gone there aged 15 with Col. Richard Nicolls' force to capture New York and New Amstel from the Dutch in 1664. As deputy governor for the Duke of York, Nicolls renamed New Amstel as New-Castle after Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

Blackett Shafto, servant to William Shafto of Jamaica, was baptised in 1778. There will be others who did not get baptised, marry or die in the region, but might have done so elsewhere in the country as they travelled around with their owners and employers. Even when we can identify a black person, there is sometimes virtually no information that can be followed up about their master or employer, even if the name of the latter is also included in the entry.

American Independence and Bill Richmond

As with Equiano there are some Africans and African-Americans about whom a lot is known about. One of these is Bill Richmond, who came to Britain, as did thousands of black loyalists, after the British defeat in the American War of Independence in 1782. The loyalists were those who escaped enslavement, were given their freedom by the British, and many of whom fought with the British. During 1777, while New York was held by British troops, the 14/15 year old Richmond out boxed three British soldiers in succession in a tavern. He came under the patronage of General Earl Percy, the son of the Duke of Northumberland, either as a result of these victories or because he was the son of a washerman slave of Percy's. We do not know whether Richmond visited Alwick Castle, but it may be safe to assume that he did. Percy sent him to school in Yorkshire and then into apprenticeship to a cabinet maker in York. He went on to be a bare-knuckle boxer. He ran a boxing academy for London society's elite, marrying an English woman. They ran the Horse and Dolphin pub in Leicester Square. He trained Tom Molineaux, another black American, who was defeated by the English champion Cribb in 1810 and 1811. Richmond 'was described as intelligent, communicative, humorous, and an excellent cricketer'. He died at his home in Haymarket on 28 December 1829.

The Barretts of Jamaica

Slave owners in America and the West Indies often had children by slave women, producing mixed race children. One of the most powerful plantation owning families in Jamaica was the Barretts. In 1794 or 1795 Edward Barrett and members of his family came for a visit to England, with the intention of leaving his granddaughter, wife and her mixed-race ward Mary Trepsack in England after his return to Jamaica. In 1795 six black children of Godin Barrett and Elissa Peters, one of the family's slaves, were sent over to be looked after as their guardian by John Graham-Clarke, the Newcastle businessman and Jamaica plantation owner. Godin also gave them their freedom. He left each of them two thousand pounds Jamaican sterling. He wanted them to be educated in England in 'a moral manner at the charge of his Estate and at the discretion of their Guardians'. He also expressed his earnest wish that they should 'Not fix their abode in Jamaica

but do settle and reside in such countries where those distinctions respecting colour (which the policy of the West Indies renders necessary) are not maintained.'

In addition to looking after these mixed-race children, John Graham-Clarke took under his wing Edward Moulton Barrett from 1788 when he came from Jamaica while he waited to go to Trinity College University at the age of 18. Later he married Graham-Clarke's daughter Mary. They lived at Coxhoe Hall, Kelloe, in County Durham. Their daughter, the poetess Elizabeth Barrett (Browning), was born there in 1806. They moved to Hope End in Hertfordshire in 1809. Mary Trespack became a close friend of the young Elizabeth. She financed the publication of Elizabeth's second work, *The Essay on Mind*, in 1826. Later it appears that Mary 'had her life savings conned from her and lost in a bankruptcy by' the Cottrells, a family known to the Barretts.

Black Soldiers In The Wars With France

There were many soldiers from the Caribbean in the different regiments of the British Army. Many were musicians whose job was playing music on formal occasions, as soldiers marched and went into battle, as well as sounding instructions in battle. Not all regiments served abroad as their role was to deal with any unrest, any revolt in Ireland and be prepared for French invasion. A group played at Alnwick in 1795. One of those who was based in Britain was the Bajan Loveless Overton who would be stationed in Newcastle in 1825 and be included in a painting of his regiment's baggage. Others, like Newcastle's William Fifefield, joined the Volunteers established to also resist any French invasion. Tommy Crawford settled in Darlington after the wars.

In 1795 there were black military musicians in Alnwick described by Rev. William Macritchie, Minister of the Parish of Clunie, Perthshire. 'In the evening, on the parade before the gates of the Castle, see Colonel Blake's Regiment drawn up. They have a tolerable Band of music performed by blacks and Indians but as for the soldiers they make but a sorry appearance, consisting for the most part of mere boys and old men, the outcasts of the London jails, &c., poor, decrepit, nerveless, worn-out debauchies. How exceedingly unlike those old Northumbrian heroes whose very statues now look down from these walls upon them with pity and contempt!'

William Fifefield

About two years after Equiano's visit William Fifefield arrived in Newcastle. He is one of the few people of African heritage who lived in the area for a long time and about whom we have a reasonable amount of information, thanks to research by Peter Livesey. Fifefield lived in Newcastle for about 40 years dying on 18 January 1834, aged 65. He had come from St. Kitts. a small island with 26,000 enslaved people, 1,900 whites and a free black population of about 300. In Newcastle William gave his trade as a millwright, making him a skilled worker, valuable both on sugar plantations and in the agriculture and industry of the North-East. He seems to have quickly joined the Newcastle Volunteers, formed in 1795 under the command of Col. Blakeney to protect the locality against invasion by the forces of the French Revolution. Later he was in the Usworth Legion, and after the peace of 1802 in the Newcastle Volunteers. He was a volunteer drummer in 1810 when he was 46 years old. He was a private on the rolls of the South Tyne Yeomanry from at least 1819 to at least 1825, when he was 56. He ran a 'comfortable' sailing boat taking people from Newcastle to Shields for many years, the job increasingly being taken over by steam boats from 1814 growing to over 30 in 1831. William married Margaret Wintrup, a Northumberland farmer's daughter, at St. Mary's, Gateshead in 1803. They had two children, both baptised at St. Nicholas, Newcastle, and lived in Bailiffgate, near the Castle. His son, William Thomas Fifefield, became a hairdresser, and by the time of his father's death had a shop

in the Groat Market. He married Mary Ann Sessford whose father was a watchmaker, born in Cumberland, who also had a business in the Groat Market. We do not know who put the notice of William's death in all the Newcastle papers, but it may have been either his son, or an old military comrade. He was buried at St. John's Church, Newcastle. Fifield would have been a well known figure on Tyneside.

More Individuals

Another freed 'negro', William, who had been baptised in America, lived for a while as a servant of a naval Captain in a seaside parish in the North East. He told his story to Rev. Legh Richmond in a pamphlet published in Newcastle in either 1800 or 1809 called *The Negro Servant*. "Me left father and mother one day at home to go and get shells by the seashore, and as I was stooping down to gather them up, some white sailors came out of a boat and took me away. Me never saw Father or Mother again—me was put into ship and brought to Jamaica and sold to a master who kept me in his house to serve him some years: when about three years ago, Captain W--- my master that spoke to you, bought me to be his servant on board his ship and he be good master: he gave me my liberty, and made me free, and me live with him ever since." The Captain took him to America where he was baptised.

'William Johnson, a 'Negro' was born a slave in 1743. When he was seven his freedom was purchased by Captain Young in Philadelphia. He became a servant to Colonel Campbell and came to England with him. He learned to play the French Horn and played it in Campbell's Regiment. In 1759 he became a footman to John Bowes, the 10th Earl of Strathmore at Gibside for about 14 years, and then to the Sir Wm Nairn of Densannan. He then ran a grocer's shop for eight years in Edinburgh. He taught young men to play upon the French horn. He left Edinburgh and three weeks later he appears to have been at the end of 1810 in the North East seeking charitable support.

In 1821 Snowball Havers 'a negro boy about 16 years old was baptised in Woodhurn Parish Church.

Loveless Overton

Many black West Indians joined the British armed forces. Loveless Overton was free born in St. Thomas, Bridge Town, in Barbados. He came to Britain and served as a Trumpeter in the Ayrshires in 1799, and then enlisted for unlimited service in the 1st King's Dragoon Guards in Manchester on 25 March 1800 aged 20. In 1805 he joined the freemasons as a member of the Royal Clarence Lodge, No. 452 (Moderns). For a while he was behind in his subscriptions amounting to 4s. 7d, though there are subsequent payments by him up to Midsummer 1808. He returned to Barbados in 1817. After intervening to stop a slave being beaten he was charged with having landed on the island of St. Domingo. On the intervention of a British soldier he knew he was released and then arrested for inciting slaves to rebel. He was eventually put back on the ship that he had come to the island on.

He seems to have returned again to Barbados in 1823, and tried to visit various freemason lodges but was refused. He considered attempting to form a lodge for black men but was unsuccessful. He returned again to England and is portrayed in an 1825 painting of the King's Dragoon Guards Baggage Train in Newcastle. By now he was the Commanding Officer's Teesdale's personal servant. He was discharged as a Trumpeter on a pension of 9d per day on 27 December 1828 due to a shortness of breath. On discharge he was said to be illiterate, of good character, 38 years old, 6' tall, had black hair, black eyes a black complexion and a joiner by trade. He settled in Ireland and was a speaker at abolition meetings.

Tommy Crawford

Thomas Crawford was a soldier in the Queen's Bays (2nd Queen's Dragoon Guards). He was discharged on pension while his troop was stationed in Darlington. He was generally known as 'Black Tommy'. 'Tommy was an inoffensive, industrious man, and increased his means of maintenance by hard work as a bricklayer's labourer. The death of his son, a fine tawny boy, at the age of thirteen years, in 1830 sadly distressed the old soldier, and he did not long service his loss.' He was so grief stricken by the death of his thirteen year old son, that he died a few months later.

The Period 1818 To 1832

On 25 March 1818 John Conway 'a native of Sierra Leone Africa was baptised & christened' by the Vicar J. Stephenson at St Michael's Church Bishopswearmouth. He was thought to be 16 years old.

Theatre flourished in Newcastle and Sunderland. The Newcastle Theatre, for example, had staged plays on themes of slavery and the West Indies in 1792. In 1827 Ira Aldridge, the African-American black actor, who specialised in playing Shakespeare's *Othello*, came to Newcastle and Sunderland to perform. Wherever he went he played to packed houses, was well received and received high praise.

Because of its role as a major port area people living close to the Tyne would have regularly seen black sailors, sometimes from Royal Navy ships, but mostly from merchant ships. In July 1831 a black Royal Navy sailor, Africanus Maxwell, died after falling or being thrown from a quay in North Shields, while out drinking with two fellow sailors from his ship the *HMS Orestes*. The inquest and their trial for murder were fully covered in the *Tyne Mercury*. The men were acquitted.

It is not known whether he was from Africa, the Caribbean or the United States, on May 28 1832 'A man of colour, named Edwards, performed a somewhat novel and arduous feat on the north turnpike, near Newcastle. Holding the nath of a carriage wheel in his left hand, he rolled it along the turnpike with the utmost ease, and in this manner though the ground was very slippery, ran sixteen miles in two hours. A great number of people collected to witness the performance.'

Mary Ann Macham

Mary Ann Machedem arrived in North Shields via Grimsby in 1831 or 1832, having escaped from slavery in Richmond, Virginia. She was baptised in the North Shields Baptist Church. She became servant to various members of the Spence family until she married a local man, James Blyth, in 1841 when she was aged about 35. They lived in various houses on Howard Street. He was a ropemaker, then a banker's porter (possibly for the Spence family's bank). They appear not to have had any children. By 1881 aged 79 she was a widow living in Nelson Street, North Shields. In 1891 she was living with what appear to be relatives of James's in South Benwell. She died in 1893 and was buried in Preston Cemetery.

Mary's long life spanned across the period from the emancipation of the enslaved in the British Caribbean in 1838, across the period of the campaign for and final emancipation of American slaves at the end of the Civil War in 1865, through the period of the growth in the British Empire especially the conquest of large parts of Africa. For black American abolitionists the fight was not just for emancipation but also against racism and for civil rights. Racism sat uncomfortably

alongside abolition solidarity in Britain.

Mary may well have met the many Afro-American abolition campaigners who received a welcome on Tyneside, like Dr James Pennington, Henry Highland Garnet and his family, Charles Lennox Remond, Frederick Douglass, William Wells Brown, and the Crafts. As a child Robert Spence Watson 'was already familiar at first hand with the hard lot of the American slave, for his father's roof had sheltered as honoured guests well-known fugitives' including some of the forenamed, together with well-known white abolitionists. That solidarity included the purchase of freedom for Frederick Douglass and Wells Brown organised by the Quaker Richardsons. (See Part 4)

Mary may have been in the audience watching black entertainers on the area's stages, like Ira Aldridge playing *Othello*, *Richard III* and *Robinson Crusoe* at North Shields Theatre on 5 February 1849, or at The Theatre Royal in Newcastle in 1859, as well as the entertainers who came in the 1860s. She will have witnessed the growth in the settlement of Yemenis and Arabs in South Shields. In the 1880s she may have heard about Celestine Edwards, the black Christian anti-racist who lived in Sunderland, and Arthur Wharton, the black professional footballer with Darlington.

Black Entertainers 1860s

As the historian Nigel Todd has shown the 1860s saw a constant procession of black music hall performers, sailors, and religious ministers coming to Tyneside. Some settled permanently There were also the African-American emancipation campaigners. (See Part 4)

The Tyne Concert Hall in Nelson Street, Newcastle, was a principle centre for working-class entertainment, and the usual venue for black artists.' 'The Female Christi Minstrels were seven young black women who came to Newcastle in 1860, spicing their act with political jokes.' In 1861, The Original African Opera Troupe, raised funds for Newcastle Infirmary at a charity benefit, returning in 1862 and sang extracts from Italian operas.' 'The Ohio Minstrels, a group of ex slaves, caused much concern with the local Tories and Whigs who could not stand the Hall's 'radical proprietor'.'

In 1862, an American touring concert party, The Real Blacks, challenged local cricketers to a match on Newcastle's Town Moor, and won. In 1868 very first Australian cricket team to visit England was Aboriginal. They played a match at North Shields, enthralling crowds with displays of boomerang throwing as well as cricket.

In the mid to late 19thC there were several black boxers entertaining the North East public. There has been confusion about a bare knuckle boxer based in Winlaton, named Coffee John. He earned the nickname Coffee because of his passion for drinking it. There was a boxer called the Black Diamond of Seaton Burn. It has been thought that he is the black boxer painted in W. C. Irving's 1903 painting of the Blaydon Races. Some white boxers were referred to as being 'Black Diamond' like Tom Cribb and Jem Ward. It is possible that Irving had rolled together several boxers into one character, and that there therefore was not necessarily a black man who was a boxer living at Seaton Burn. It is also possible that Irving got the idea from a white boxer black from working down the pit or from loading coal onto ships.

Pablo Fanque And The Circus

He began as a circus performer as a young child. In 1838 he was in Newcastle performing on the ropes and on a horse. He developed his skills working for circus owners, becoming one himself by 1858. That year he planned to tour the North East at Northallerton, Stokesly, Guisborough, Redcar, Middlesbrough, Stockton and Darlington, but was unable to having been declared

bankrupt. In April and May 1863 he is Director of the Alhambra Circus, performing at the Newcastle's Tyne Concert Hall. The circus moved on to Sunderland and the Shields, and from 19 June it was in Durham, at which the highlight for the local press were the equestrian riding. Then on to Darlington in July at which he added boxing. Then Stockton where as a freemason he had the patronage of Tees Lodge and the Lodge of Philanthropy. Then to Middlesbrough in August where his North East tour ended. For the winter of 1865-1866 he was with Pinder's circus in South Shields. In May 1866 he was at Barnard Castle, Stockton and Seaham Harbour, North Shields, Rothbury, Alnwick, Berwick and on into Scotland. In 1868 his circus was on Parsons Fields in Durham. He died in 1871.

Arthur Wharton - Black Footballer

Arthur Wharton was born on the Gold Coast in 1865. His father Henry Wharton was the son of a freeborn African-Grenadian woman and a Scottish merchant and sea captain, and a Methodist preacher. He died in 1873. His mother Annie Florence Grant was the daughter of the Scots trader John C. Grant and Ama Egyiriba, of one of the Fante royal families. The Grants were wealthy and influential. Arthur's uncle Francis owned *The Gold Coast Times*, and was an import/export trader. Arthur lived there until 1875 and then again from 1879 to 1882. These were periods of the Ashante uprising (1869-72), and the Anglo-Ashante war (1873-4), and war scare (1881), with refugees and epidemic disease. From 1875-9 his uncle and mother sent Arthur to Dr Cheyne's Burlington Rd School in London. He was back in England from 1882 at the Methodist Shoal Hill College at Cannock in Staffordshire to train as a Wesleyan missionary teacher. His cousins had been taught there. He transferred in July 1884 to Cleveland College in Darlington.

As a member of the Darlington Cricket and Football Club (DCFC) from the 1885-6 to 1887-8 seasons he gained a formidable reputation as a goalkeeper, especially for his ability to 'fist out' the ball over a long distance. In addition to playing for DCFC he played for the representative sides of Newcastle and District, Northumberland and Durham, Durham, and Cleveland, and occasionally for Preston North End and Middlesbrough. He played for Preston in an exhibition game in the Festival of Football in March 1887 to celebrate Queen Victoria's 50 years on the throne, played at Kennington Oval, with the Prince of Wales as guest of honour. A sports journalist suggested that he should be picked to play for England, though this was not to be, probably because of racism. Arthur Wharton also developed as an athlete for DCFC becoming the Athletic Amateur Association 100 yards champion of England in July 1886 at the Stamford Bridge Championships, and retaining the title a year later. A song *Wharton of Darlington* was composed in 1886 in Darlington.

In 1888 he moved to Sheffield to develop his running and take part in the popular sport of 'pedestrianism'. He then signed for Rotherham Town Football Club in August 1889. He married a local woman Emma Lister in September 1890, but they had no children. The period 1890 to 1894 was one of class conflict in Rotherham as a result of iron and coal disputes. This adversely affected the Club's finances, and players found their pay reduced. In dispute over this Wharton left to join Sheffield United for the 1894-5 season, which included a game in Sunderland in February 1895. He returned to Rotherham for 1895-6.

In 1893 he applied to work for the Gold Coast Government Service but was turned down. In 1896 he went to play for Stalybridge Rovers in Lancashire, and then Ashton North End in 1897. When the latter financially collapsed, he went back to Stalybridge until the end of 1900. During the summer months he often signed to play cricket in Darlington, Rotherham and Stalybridge. He joined Stockport County in August 1901. Now in his mid-30s his footballing abilities were declining and he dropped from the first to the reserve team. In the face of a pay cut the players revolted for one week, choosing the team themselves and keeping the gate money. His

professional football career ended in 1902. He returned to Rotherham continuing to play cricket, including for Rotherham Town in 1907.

He worked for 15 years as a colliery haulage hand at Yorkshire Main Colliery, Edlington, nr. Doncaster. He died on 12 December 1930 at Springwell Sanatorium near Edlington, after a long and painful illness. He is buried in the municipal cemetery. In 1997 a headstone was placed on his grave.

James Durham - Durham Light Infantry

James Durham was born Mustapha in the Sudan. He was taken as a child to Egypt by Sergeant Stuart of the Durham Light Infantry. He looked after the horses and acted as an interpreter. He was renamed James Frances Durham and became the First Battalion sergeants' mascot. He joined the Durham Light Infantry in Burma in 1899 becoming a bandsman. He served in India and Ireland, in the latter running the Battalion's branch of the Royal Army Temperance Association. In July 1908 he was in Newcastle, the regiment's Tyneside depot. Many recruits to the regiment came from Darlington and he married Jane Green, a Darlington woman. He died in Ireland Fermoy of pneumonia in 1910. His daughter Frances was born a few weeks after his death.

Albert Lewis

Albert Lewis, 'a coloured man' was admitted to Belford Workhouse in 1889, after suffering an epileptic fit but was quickly discharged in order to attend the Hiring Fair at Berwick. The Medical Officer who examined Lewis and ordered hospital supervision within the Workhouse went on to make a formal complaint against the Master of the Workhouse for discharging him without authorisation. The matter was considered by the Government's Local Government Board. The Master, Mr Treble, calling Lewis 'a Vagrant' however, told the Board that he had been informed by a tramp that Lewis was well known locally as a quack who regularly sold medicines at fairs and had recently been turned out of Wooler Workhouse. As suggested by the researcher Val Glass he is probably the Albert Lewis who had been recorded in the Census in Workhouses in Manchester in 1871 and Poplar in 1891. There are references that he was from the East Indies, which may have meant he was either Indian or African.

Charles Duncan O'Neal

Charles Duncan O'Neal was a Bajan who trained as a doctor at Edinburgh University, practised in Newcastle, and for a short while was an elected Councillor in the Sunderland area before he went back to Barbados in 1910. He is said to have known Keir Hardie. He was born on 30 November 1879 at St Lucy, Barbados. He was schooled at the island's Harrison College. He studied medicine at Edinburgh from 1899 qualifying in 1904. He was a member of the University's cricket team. He spoke in a Student Union debate in November 1903 seemingly in support of the motion 'That this House regrets the admission of women to the University', which was lost. The University had an Afro-West Indian Literary Society. He may have seconded the motion 'That the Action of the British Government in interfering in the Internal Affairs of the Transvaal is unjustifiable', which was passed with a one vote majority.

By 1905 O'Neal was living at Whitburn in Sunderland. In 1906 he is recorded as living at 8 Sea Rd in Fulwell. It is possible that he took over the practice of C. H. Gilson, who is listed on Sea Rd. In late 1908 he is listed as being at 43 Sea Rd, since the Terraces had been renumbered, and in 1910 in an unnumbered house between the Council schools and No 42. Although he is said to have been a member of Sunderland Council there is no record of him, so he may have been a member of Sunderland Rural District Council in which Fulwell was located. He is not mentioned as an Independent Labour Party activist in the ILP's *Northern Democrat* newspaper.

O'Neal is thought to have returned to Barbados in 1910, then worked in Trinidad and Dominica, returning to Barbados in 1924 where he helped form the Democratic League. He died in November 1936. A bridge in Bridgetown is named after him and his portrait appears on a Bajan \$10 dollar note. He is regarded as a national hero of Barbados.

Samuel Celestine Edwards

Samuel Jules Celestine Edwards was born in Dominica, the youngest of 9 children to a poor French speaking couple, on 28 December 1858/9. Aged 12 he stowed away on a French ship, and became a seaman. He settled in Britain in the 1870s, became a temperance activist in Edinburgh, before moving to Sunderland in 1880. Later in the 1880s he settled in London's East End, working as a casual building worker, and being a public speaker at Victoria Park. He wrote penny pamphlets on religious questions, and a biography of Walter Hawkins, a former slave who had become bishop of a Canadian Church. He obtained a theology degree at King's College in 1891.

He edited *LUX*, a Christian Evidence newspaper (1892-5), and *Fraternity* (1893-7) of the Society for the Recognition of the Brotherhood of Man, of which he was Secretary. In 1893 he spoke on 'Lynch Law, American atrocities' in Bristol and to 1,200 people in London. In 1893 he lectured on blacks and whites in America. August - in Liverpool; September - Plymouth, Aberdeen, Edinburgh, Glasgow and Liverpool; November - Aston-under Lyme, Huddersfield. Having become ill in 1894 he returned to Dominica and died on 25 July 1895.

In a speech in Newcastle he said: 'My ancestors proudly trod the sands of the African continent; but from their home and friends were dragged into the slave mart and sold to the planters of the West Indies... The very thought that my race should have been so grievously wronged is almost more than I can bear ... Of the condition of my people today I but tarry to say that by diligence, thought, and care they have given the lie to many a false prophet who, prior to their Emancipation, sought to convince the world that the black man was in all respects unfit for freedom... Their position ... today is one over which I proudly rejoice. To their future I look with confidence.'

In a *LUX* editorial on the imminent British seizure of Uganda in 1892 he wrote: 'As long as such unrighteous deeds as cold-blooded murders are permitted under the British flag, as long as avarice and cupidity prompt the actions of a missionary nation ... so long we shall protest against public money being spent in the interest of land-grabbers...

The injustice under which [the black man] is smarting will come home to his oppressors' children's children ... He will surprise and disappoint those whom ever dreamt that the quiet, happy-go lucky black would turn like the worm upon those who wronged them... If the British nation stole no more, they have stolen enough and have sufficient responsibility at home and abroad to occupy her maternal attention for the next hundred years. If the British nation has not murdered enough, no nation on God's earth has.'

In 1893 he wrote in the *LUX*: 'The day is coming when Africans will speak for themselves... The day is breaking, and the despised African whose only crime is his colour, will give an account of himself. We think it no crime for Africans to look with suspicion upon the European, who has stolen a part of [their] country, and deluged it with rum and powder, under the cover of civilisation.'

Ida B. Wells - Anti-lynching Campaigner

Ida B. Wells came to Britain to campaign about the lynchings of African-Americans in the United States and to raise money for her campaign back in the States. She came to Newcastle. On 19 May 1893 *The Newcastle Leader* reported: 'Yesterday Miss Wells addressed public meetings held afternoon and evening in the Society of Friends Meeting House, Pilgrim Street, Newcastle. Miss Wells is a young lady with a strong American accent, and who speaks with an educated and forceful style, gave some harrowing instances of the injustice to the members of her race, of their being socially ostracized and frequently lynched in the most barbarous fashion by mobs on mere suspicion, and without any trial whatever. These lynchings are on the increase, and have risen from 52 in 1882 to 169 in 1891, and 159 in 1892. Her object in coming to England, she said, was to arouse public sentiment on this subject. England has often shown America her duty in the past, and she has no doubt that England will do so again.'

Samuel Coleridge-Taylor's North East Links

Samuel Coleridge-Taylor, the Black British composer, was a student at the Royal College of Music in London in 1898 when he finished composing his choral work *Hiawatha's Wedding Feast*. It was supposed to have been premiered in Sunderland but his Professor insisted that it first be played at the College. The first commercial performance did take place in Sunderland with him conducting on 16 November 1898. The person instrumental in arranging this was Nicolas Kilburn, a pump manufacturer in Bishop Auckland and iron merchant in Sunderland. He was conductor of the Bishop Auckland Musical Society from 1875, the Middlesbrough Musical Union from 1882, and the Sunderland Philharmonic Society from 1886. He was organist at St Peter's Parish Church in Bishop Auckland, and also played the cello and the piano and composed. Kilburn directed the choir in the performance. He received a standing ovation.

Kilburn's son Paul was an aspiring composer, and Coleridge-Taylor took his composition seriously. In late December/early January 1899/1900 Coleridge was due to perform *The Wedding Feast* in Newcastle, and hoped to attend a concert by the Sunderland Philharmonic Society playing his *Death of Minnehaha*. He cancelled all his engagements as he was getting married on 1 January 1900. In March he wrote to Kilburn bemoaning the Royal Choral Society's rehearsal of *Hiawatha's Departure* for performance at the Albert Hall. 'Heavens! How I long for Sunderland and Middlesborough!' 'I'm glad you live in Bishop Auckland or you might feel inclined to sever friendship.' In December 1901 it performed his *Blind Girl of Castel Cuille*. In February 1904 he hoped that Kilburn would perform *The Atonement* at Sunderland or Middlesbrough, and in September 1905 the *Choral Ballads* in either town or Bishop Auckland. In November 1910 *Minnehaha* was performed in Durham City, and in 1911 *A Tale of Old Japan* was performed by the Jarrow Philharmonic Society.

Coleridge, as he was known, died in 1912. The *Newcastle Daily News's* regular column *Music and Musicians* by *Counterpoint* headed *The Passing of the Composer of "Hiawatha"* stated: 'British music is vastly the poorer by the death of Samuel Coleridge-Taylor who had been cut off at the height of his artistic power. News of his removal, which came with almost tragic suddenness, would be received with genuine regret by every music lover, for there is not one who has not felt admiration for his expressive compositions. It is true that he owed his popularity chiefly to his "Hiawatha" trilogy, yet he wrote other works distinguished for their beauty and sincerity. Of these his most recent cantata, "A Tale of Old Japan," which owed its introduction to the north last seasons through the enterprise of Mr George Dodds and the Jarrow Philharmonic Society, will probably take the highest place in the estimation of the musical public, for it is a charming work, at once picturesque and dignified in sentiment and style.'

Mr Coleridge-Taylor had a varied musical career before he found his metier as a composer. Displaying a high order of musical talent as a boy, he learned to play the violin, and at the age of 10 joined the choir of St. George's, Croydon. Later as an alto he sang in the choir of St. Mary Magdalene, Croydon. In 1891 he entered the Royal College of Music, Kensington, with the intention of becoming a violin. Finding, however, that he was more attracted by composition, he gave up the violin and devoted himself to creative work. He won a scholarship in composition in 1893, and then studied the art for five years under Sir Charles Stanford, and in 1896, one of them, a symphony, was given in the St. James' Hall, under Sir Charles Stanford's direction. A work for clarinet and strings which had been played at the Royal College in 1895, was also given in Berlin by the Joachim Quartet. Another composition was performed at the Gloucester Festival in 1898. Shortly afterwards he wrote the first part of the composition which set the seal of fame to his name.

The deceased composer's works reached the opus number of 59. He was commissioned to write for several of the great provincial festivals, and his work was distinguished by his masterly handling of strong individual themes, this quality being particularly effective in illustrating the barbaric splendours of "Herod," "Ulysses," and "Nero." The use of orchestral colouring was, perhaps, the greatest feature of his art, and in this respect he closely resembled the Bohemian, Dvorak. It may be recalled that in 1904 Mr Coleridge-Taylor crossed the Atlantic to conduct a performance of the choir that bears his name, and its members greeted him with an ode beginning, "Oh, thou illustrious one, whose genius, as the sun, illumines our race." For the Norfolk (Connecticut) Festival in 1910 he wrote an orchestral rhapsody on negro melodies. Undoubtedly he was the first person of negro birth to achieve fame as a creative musician, and the musical world to-day mourns the loss of one whose career was full of noble endeavour and rich in splendid achievement.'

Visitors And Residents 1900-1919

In 1900 Newcastle born actor Charles James Harrington was touring the country with a production of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* involving 'The largest Troupe of REAL NEGROES now travelling this country.' He also specialised in performing the play *Orinoco*.

During their visit to Britain for the Coronation of Edward VII in 1902, the Ugandans Ham Mukasa and Apolo Kagwa visited Newcastle, and were shown around an armaments factory employing 12,000 workers, a gunship and a pottery. Kagwa's son was being educated in Cambridgeshire.

Entertainers performing on the national music hall circuits included Belle Davis from 11 to 24 November 1901 and The Black Troubadours from 24 February to 2 March 1902 at the Newcastle Empire. The (Seth) Weeks and Jones Trio performed their 'Their Original Dance, Coon Songs and Instrumental Solos' at the Sunderland People's Palace from 10 May to 1 June 1902. Belle Davis returned to perform at the South Shields Empire from 10 to 16 November 1902 with the child entertainers Irving Williams and Fernandes Jones ('The Picanninnies').

An important group of entertainers in Britain were the Canadian born The Bohee Brothers: George and James Douglass, song and dance artists specialising in the banjo. From July 1881 they were in England with Haverley's Genuine Coloured Minstrels, staying on after the end of the tour. They organised their own troupe, played at society functions and private entertainments and set up a banjo instruction studio in Coventry St, pupils including the Prince of Wales. They did 6 month tours round Britain with their The Bohee Brothers Coloured Minstrel Company of about 30 white and black performers. James died in 1897. George continued becoming a soloist. His last performance appears to have been at the Newcastle Empire on 2 January 1904. The brothers were key to the growing popularity of the banjo in Britain.

The American black dance-song duo Pete and Juno were both married to English women, Juno living in Newcastle and Pete in Huddersfield. The black American *hit show In Dahomey* toured Britain in 1904, including Newcastle. Belle Davies was at the Middlesbrough Empire from 10 to 16 September 1905, and then at the Newcastle Pavilion in January 1906. The Black Troubadours were in Newcastle 15 to 24 January 1906 as 'Dave's Coloured Meisters'. Belle Davies would perform again at the Newcastle Empire from 11 to 17 March 1912.

The West Indies cricket team beat a combined Durham and Northumberland side in Sunderland during their 1906 tour. The team included the black players Lebrun Constantine, W. Burton, H. Layne and C.P. Cumberbatch.

Living in Low St in North Shields' dock area was 'a Kroo boy from West Africa, with blue tattoo marks down the centre of his forehead, who on the strength of having worked a passage to England by chipping paint and keeping the winches clean, calls himself a fitter, and hopes for employment as such in one of the shipyards.' A Black American sailor with 'a red tie, and a large white collar' was reported 'ogling the girls from the biscuit factory beside New Quay.'

In October 1912 a Jamaican named Ramsay was living in the Seamen's Hospital in London. The authorities decided to send him to South Shields where he would be a charge on the local poor law. He had to have previous connections with the area for this to be the case.

Dr Ismael Cummings from Sierra Leone worked at Newcastle's Royal Victoria Infirmary in 1913. He married Joanna Archer, a junior matron, with whom he had a son, Ivor Gustavus, who was born in West Hartlepool in December 1913. Ivor grew up in Addiscombe in Croydon. The family was friends with the composer Samuel Coleridge-Taylor, and was also linked with the Taylor family in Sierra Leone (see below). In the 1930s Ivor worked at a hostel for black students. He was a supporter of the League of Coloured People's campaigning for black rights and against racism. During the war he worked for the Colonial Office as a welfare officer with Africans and Caribbeans. He was assigned to welcome the Windrush arrivals in 1948, make sure the Deep Shelter on Clapham Common was suitable and equipped as temporary accommodation, and supporting those there to get housing and jobs.

After his graduation at Durham as a doctor the African C. E. Reindorf worked at Edinburgh's Royal Infirmary, married Emma Evans in 1914 and returned to Africa.

The singer, dancer and choreographer Louis Douglas had probably arrived in Britain as a child performer in 1903. He performed at the Newcastle Empire from 26 to 31 January 1914.

The First World War

During the First World War, Britain turned to the Colonies to provide soldiers and sailors. West Indian and African troops fought in France, Africa and elsewhere. The 3rd and 4th battalions of the West Indies Regiment were used as ammunition-carriers and labourers in France. It lost 185 killed, 1,071 through sickness, and had 695 wounded. Many of the wounded were treated in Britain. A tribute to their role was made by Sir Harry Johnstone in his *The Black Man's Part in the War* published in 1917. India contributed £100m at the beginning, and £20-30m each year, of the war. By 1919 India had sent 1,096,013 men overseas, including to France. Over half fought in Mesopotamia against the Turks. 53,486 Indians died and 64,350 were wounded. 14,500 Indian soldiers were admitted to British hospitals. West African and West Indian seamen came to North Shields during the War.

On the home front the music halls kept spirits up. The most significant African American performer Will Garland, who had brought the show *In Dahomey* to Britain, organised a number of troupes. He was at the Newcastle Pavilion from 31 July to 5 August 1916. In 1917 he was in the at Houghton Le Spring (25 January to 4 February), Bishop Auckland Hippodrome (26 March to 1 April), Ashington Pavilion (7 to 15 May), North Shields Royal (14 to 20 May), Gateshead Metropole (21 to 27 May), and Stockton (25 June to 1 July).

The Attacks On The South Shield Arabs 1919

Not long after the end of the First World War there were racist attacks against people of African and Arab heritage in South Shields, Liverpool, Cardiff, Tyneside, Glasgow and the East End of London. The Seamen's Union was particularly implicated in inciting some of the attacks, and continued to take a racist view towards black and Indian lascar seamen. The Union's racism was shared by some other sections of the labour movement. In January 1917 the *African Times & Orient Review*, edited by the African black rights Muslim Duse Mohammed Ali, had reported the objection of the Parliamentary Labour Party to the introduction of 'coloured' labour into the country.

In response to growing racism London's black activists sought to strengthen their organisational capabilities. There was the Society of Peoples of African Origin, and its associated journal *The African Telegraph*. The African Progress Union was set up in 1918, involving John Archer, the black Liverpoolian, who had been Mayor of Battersea in 1913/14. The two organisations merged together by mid-1919.

While the 1919 riots elsewhere in the country were directed at West Indian and African seamen and ex-servicemen, the South Shields riot was against the Arab and Yemeni seamen who lived there. This group also included some from Egypt and Somalia. Despite their role in manning ships during the First World War, in February 1919 Arab seamen were refused work. Officials of the stewards and cooks' union incited a crowd of foreign white seamen against them, for which they were found guilty of a breach of the peace. The Arabs were chased to the Holborn area where they lived. They fought back. Army and navy patrols were brought in. Of the 12 Arabs arrested, some were acquitted and others imprisoned. The London based Islamic Society called for reconciliation and understanding rather than resistance. The story of the Arab community has been told by Richard Robert Lawless in his book *From Taizz to Tyneside*, and is also part of the complex story of racism and anti-racism discussed by Dave Renton in his book *Colour Blind*. Descendants still live in South Shields.

Entertainers In The 1920s And 1930s

Louis Douglas returned to the North East in the summer of 1920: Sunderland Empire (7 to 13 June), Newcastle Empire (28 June to 4 July) and Gateshead Empire (9 to 15 August). In 1929 the Musical Spillers were at Newcastle Hippodrome (14 to 20 January), and Sunderland Kings (13 to 19 May).

Paul Robeson visited the North East at least 3 times in 1930, 1935 and 1939. An African American actor and singer whose father had been born into slavery, Robeson made Britain his base between 1928 and 1939. His development as a political activist started when he met unemployed miners from South Wales in the 1920s. In 1935 he was trapped in his Newcastle hotel 'lift for sometime when it stuck between two floors.' When he was finally released he told local journalist Richard Martin: "Civilisation at last. "When he played Othello in 1930 in London he was voice-trained and encouraged by Amanda Aldridge, the composer daughter of Ira Aldridge.

Robeson allied culture and politics on the left in Britain. He supported a wide range of left-wing and humanitarian causes, including the Republicans fighting the fascist uprising in the Spanish Civil War, the campaigns for Indian freedom and against the Japanese invasion of China. He performed in the Trinidadian C.L.R. James play about Touissant L'Overture and the Black Jacobins of the Haitian Revolution.

Robeson made a number of films in the Britain, including *Sanders of the River*, *King Solomon's Mines*, *Jericho*, *Big Fella* and *The Proud Valley*. Although most are very controversial in respect of their portrayal of black people, and he disowned several of them, they did provide employment for many black Britons, and led to the formation of a short-lived trade union to look after their interests. He was the most popular radio singer in the UK before the War. After his return to the United States in 1939 he actively campaigned on negro civil rights and for colonial freedom.

Dr. Wellesley Cole

Born in Sierra Leone in 10-7 Dr. Robert Wellesley Cole obtained a London University degree at Fourah Bay College, and then studied medicine graduating with first class honours from Durham University in 1934. His marriage to Anna Brodie, his former landlady, was dissolved in 1932. After graduation he worked at the Royal Victoria Infirmary in Newcastle. Because of racism he had to abandon his wish to be a surgeon and became a general practitioner in Newcastle.

The Experience Of People Of African Heritage From The Late 1940s

The story of the experiences of people of African heritage in the North East since the later 1940s has yet to be fully researched and written about. Dave Renton produces the framework in his book *Colour Blind*.

There were 56 African and West Indian seafarers in North Tyneside interviewed by Sydney Collins in his book *Coloured Minorities in Britain* published in 1957 whose names we do not know. One was a West Indian ex-serviceman living with his English wife. Another was from Somalia. There was a Coloured People's Mutual Aid Society. Dr Wellesley Cole continued to practise as a doctor in Newcastle until 1950. Paul Robeson performed in Newcastle in 1958.

George (Coleridge)-Taylor came from Sierra Leone to Durham University in 1958. Orville Byron came from Trinidad in 1960 starting off as a dancer in the region's clubs but then becoming a foundry worker. Lionel Wilson from Sierra Leone who proposed opening a club for seamen, The African-British-Asian Socialist Fellowship, which was later renamed the International Club, of which there were many around the country. In 1965 a Nigerian wrote in the *Newcastle Journal* about racism in the area, but added that Newcastle was more welcoming than London. Jamaicans worked on the Newcastle buses. There was the work of the Campaign Against Racial Discrimination from 1966, in which Chris Mullard was active. Neville Preston was a West Indian member of the Newcastle Commonwealth Immigrants Working Group which met between September 1966 and May 1968. In 1967 Newcastle University awarded an honorary degree to Dr Martin Luther King in 1967. Muhammed Ali stayed at the Holiday Inn in Seaton Burn during his visit to the North East. There is the complex story of the Newcastle Community Relations Council and the work of Chris Mullard as its officer from 1970 to 1973, which he wrote about in his book *On Being Black in Britain* (1975). There are also the activities of various anti-racist organisations including the Anti-Nazi League in the 1960s and 1970s. There were the traumatic experiences of David Olusoga in Gateshead when he was growing up in the 1970s and 1980s. Even by 1991 the population of those of African heritage was small, making up 12% of the 2% non-white population.

Dr Robert Wellesley Cole

As well as being a general practitioner in Newcastle, Wellesley Cole was a member of Colonial Office advisory committees on the medical education and social services in West Africa. He helped set up a British Council hostel for Africa students in Newcastle. With the founding of the NHS in 1948 he was able to become a surgeon and moved to Nottingham in 1950. He helped the setup a scheme to train as nurses women from Sierra Leone. While in Nottingham he married Amy Hotobah-During, a nurse from Sierra Leone. They had four children. Although he was invited to become a Justice of the Peace in 1961 he was refused a British passport until 1982. In 1961 he returned to Africa as senior surgeon in Western Nigeria, and the in 1971 consultant surgeon and director of clinical studies in Sierra Leone.

Paul Robeson In Newcastle 1958

On Thursday 13 November 1958 a capacity audience filled the City Hall in Northumberland Rd, at 10/- per seat at 7.30pm to hear Paul Robeson. A local newspaper reported it 'was a triumph before an 'enthralled' audience.'

'Neither his voice nor his personality seem to have changed during the ten years since he last performed in this country. His deep, resonant voice is intense and compelling whether he speaks or sings, and his smile is infectious.

He dominates the evening with artistry and sincerity as few others could.

His audience was completely captivated - he even managed to get them to talk Chinese. He sang in English, German, Russian, Yiddish and African.'

His repertoire varied from a transcription of from the last movement of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony to "Old Man River," plantation song chants and religious songs. He recited an extract from *Othello*, joked and told of his pleasure of being back on Tyneside."

Often his performance was very moving, as when he sang "Just a 'wearying' for you", where the combination of simplicity of melody and his magnificent voice brought his listeners to applause before the song had finished."

Scores of people had to be turned away because the hall was full. Let us hope that he will be back again soon so that others too, can hear that voice which since 1922, has thrilled British audiences. He was brilliantly accompanied by Lawrence Brown. - T.E.B.'

One of those in the audience wrote on their programme 'Thanks to God for sight and hearing. Grateful for return of so talented an artist. 7.30pm, 13th Nov. 1958'

While in Newcastle he was entertained at the Mansion House. He told local journalist Richard Martin: "I don't consider that I sing. Singing to me is just an extension of speaking."

The 1958 visit was recalled 18 years later by George Woodhouse:

'Paul Robeson was one of the most charming men I ever met.

On the first occasion we talked in a Preston hotel for more than two hours on a wide range of subjects including soccer and the English First Division, the stage, politics and music.

He gave me a private music lesson in that he sat beside me and traced out in detail the link between the tribal music of West Africa and the spirituals on the American deep south.

He was courtesy itself and, although holding deep convictions on the subject of political philosophies, he refused to attack his native America for withholding his passport, although obviously distressed by the experience....’

George Coleridge-Taylor

George was born in Freetown, Sierra Leone, in 1932. He was descended from Dr David Taylor, the father of the composer Samuel Coleridge-Taylor, who had returned to Africa not knowing his English girlfriend was pregnant. The Taylor family in Sierra Leone added their Coleridge to their name when they discovered their family connection. He was a student at Durham University in from 1958 to 1960. After Durham he continued his studies in France, Australia and the USA.

He became a diplomat for Sierra Leone, being appointed Permanent Secretary for Foreign Affairs in 1970. From 1977 he was the Administrative Head of the Foreign Service representing Sierra Leone at international bodies and gatherings including the UN General Assembly. In 1987 he became a teaching Fellow at the University of Sierra Leone specialising in Human Rights, Bio-Ethics, Business Ethics and African Philosophy. From 1998 he was the Chairman of the National Commission for Democracy and Human Rights. He died in 2016.

Fourah Bay College

African students came to Durham because of its link with Fourah Bay College. This has been established in Freetown in 1827 as an Anglican missionary school by the Church Missionary Society. The first student to enrol was Samuel Ajayi Crowther who became the first African Anglican Bishop. A letter written in 1938 by Bertram Lasbrey, the Bishop of Niger, was displayed by the Durham County Record Office in its 2007 Remembering Slavery exhibition in which he tells the story of Crowther. Lasbrey had been Vicar of St Gabriel in Bishopswearmouth, Sunderland, from 1911 until 1922.

Benjamin Quartey-Papafio studied at the College, and then came to Durham and was awarded a B.A. degree. Then he studied to be a doctor from 1882 qualifying in 1886, and becoming a member of the [Royal College of Surgeons](#). In 1888 he was appointed as a medical officer for the Gold Coast Government Service retiring in 1905, and was also in private practice. He was a member of the Accra Town Council from 1909 to 1912, coming to London in 1911 with a deputation to [London](#) that protest at a proposed piece of legislation.

Durham Music Graduates and Coleridge

A great fan of *The Song of Hiawatha* the conductor Sir Michael Sargent was awarded his Bachelor of Music at the University when he was 18.

John Peace was the pianist for the first-ever known recording of the Coleridge’s *Piano Quintet*, based on the original handwritten score by his colleague copied out by Peace’s colleague Martin Anthony Burrage. Peace had studied music at the University, and held organ appointments and choral directorships in Durham, and he was Director of Music in Durham schools.

Catherine Carr received her doctorate at the University in 2005 for her thesis *The music of Samuel Coleridge-Taylor (1875-1912): a critical and analytical study*. She found the libretto and score of his only opera *Thelma*, which was premiered in Croydon’s Fairfield Halls in the year long Festival in 2012 in remembrance of the 100th anniversary of the composer’s death.