

GLOSSARY

Please note that the terms used in the records reflect people's attitudes and language at the time and may now be considered derogatory or offensive.

Abolition - this refers to the popular campaign against the Slave Trade until 1807. The abolition of slavery itself, sometimes referred to as 'Emancipation', was an aim of the Anti-Slavery Society from 1823. There were divisions between advocates of gradual and immediate abolition of slavery.

Amelioration - prior to the abolition of the slave trade and emancipation, Parliament introduced a series of amelioration laws in order to 'improve' the situation of the slaves, such as the Dolben Act 1788, which increased head-room and living space for slaves during the Middle Passage. Amelioration measures introduced in 1823 in the Caribbean prohibited the flogging of pregnant women and attempted to prevent families from being split up.

Apprenticeship - traditionally apprenticeship was the term used where someone was bound to a master craftsman to learn a trade. In the Caribbean it was used to describe the intermediate status between slavery and freedom imposed by the 1833 British Emancipation Act. Under the Act, on emancipation on 1 August 1834 former slaves were formally bound to their former master for a set number of years. Antigua and the Bahamas passed local laws to abolish the apprenticeship clause, and so their slaves were all freed on 1 August 1834. Owing to its unpopularity, apprenticeship was ended on 1 August 1838. The term is often used interchangeably with indentured servitude since an apprentice traditionally signed an indenture.

Asiento - the licence to supply slaves to the Spanish colonies in the Americas given by the Spanish crown.

Berbice - former Dutch colony in modern day Guyana.

Black - commonly used in the records to describe someone who was, or was believed to be, of pure African descent. The terms 'coloured' or 'mulatto' were usually used to describe people of mixed African and European ancestry. Black was also used more generically to refer to all people with African ancestry.

Chattel slavery - this term is used to describe the situation where people were treated as goods or property for the term of their life. In American slavery the children of slaves were also enslaved.

Coloured - a term used in the records usually to describe someone who was, or was believed to be, of mixed African and European (or Amerindian) descent. The term was often used interchangeably with mulatto.

Creole - in the British Caribbean this term was used to describe anyone born or raised in the region, regardless of race or ethnicity. In some other countries the term could also be used to describe someone with mixed African and European ancestry.

Demerara - coastal region of modern day Guyana with extensive sugar plantations operated by slaves.

Emancipation - the action or process of setting free or delivering from slavery. The British Act of Parliament of 1833 abolishing slavery was known as The Emancipation Act.

Essequibo - former Dutch colony in modern day Guyana.

Factory - establishment for traders carrying on business in a foreign country; a merchant company trading station.

Factor - an agent; one who acts for another (used very rarely in this way today); title given to the employee conducting trade during slave trading voyages.

Indentured servitude - a contract of labour for a set period of time that allows no control over terms or conditions of their labour to the Indentured party. Unlike chattel slavery, this form of unfree labour is not passed on to children. This term is often used interchangeably with apprenticeship.

Interloper - an unauthorised trader; one who trespasses on a trade monopoly. Refers to slave traders who operated outside the monopoly of the Royal Africa Company, often from Liverpool and Bristol.

Guinea - An area of the West African coast originally famous for its gold. Hence the name of the British gold coin.

Hogshead - a large cask of liquid, more specifically it refers to a specified volume measured in imperial units, primarily applied to alcohol. A very large wooden barrel, a hogshead was used for transportation and storage, for example, tobacco, rum and sugar/molasses.

Liberated African - 'Liberated Africans' were people freed from illegal slave trading vessels after the abolition of the British slave trade in 1807. They were often sent by the British authorities to St Helena and then transported to places such as Sierra Leone, or indentured on islands in the Caribbean.

Loyalists - those who sided with the British crown in the American War of Independence. This included many slaves who were offered freedom in return for their support.

Malaguetta - a pepper spice grown in West Africa and used as a medicine. Sometimes recorded as being given to slaves on board ship.

Manillas - bronze rings used to barter for slaves in West Africa.

Manumission - formal release from slavery or servitude.

Middle passage - the journey taken by slave trading ships carrying enslaved Africans from West Africa to the Caribbean. The second stage of the Triangular Trade.

Mixed Commission Courts - courts established in Africa and the Caribbean under treaties between Britain and Portugal, the Netherlands and Spain to conduct trials against suspected illegal slave trades from these nations.

Mulatto - a term of Spanish or Portuguese origin, describing the child of an African and European, or of two mulatto parents.

Muster - a list of a ship's crew.

Negro - from the 18th to mid 20th century *Negro*, meaning 'dark', was commonly used to describe Africans, and African slaves and freed slaves. In the records it is usually used to refer to someone with pure African ancestry, and authors would use the terms coloured or mulatto to describe people who were, or believed to be, of mixed African and European descent.

Saint Domingue - the island was originally named La Isla Española (anglicised as Hispaniola) by Christopher Columbus. It was renamed by the Spanish as Santo Domingo (now the Dominican Republic) and the French section, ceded by the Treaty of Ryswick in 1697, became known as Saint Domingue (now Haiti). In Colonial Office records, the British did not seem to differentiate between the two parts and usually referred to the whole island as Santo Domingo, even after the successful slave revolt that led to the founding of Hayti in 1804. Hayti is sometimes used in records to refer to the whole island as, for certain periods, the French and Haytian forces also conquered the Spanish colony.

Tooth - word for ivory, another commodity that slave traders bought in West Africa.