

After abolition



Golden Jubilee
commemorative plate,
Gallery Oldham



Beyer-Garratt locomotive,
Museum of Science & Industry



The Cotton Industry:
A Romance of Modern Work,
Bolton Museum and
Archive Service



Henry Mayers Hyndman,
People's History Museum



Tewkesbury medal, 1834
© Bolton Museum and Archive Service

Tewkesbury medal, 1834 *Bolton Museum and Archive Service*

This medal was given to school children in Tewkesbury in 1834 to celebrate the **abolition** of slavery. One side shows a freed enslaved African standing beneath **radiant** beams of light with his arms raised to heaven. He is standing on a broken whip with broken chains around him.

Around the edge of the medal words taken from the Bible say: 'This is the Lord's doing; It is marvellous in our eyes'. The reverse says: 'In **commemoration** of the **extinction** of **colonial** slavery throughout the British **Dominions** in the **reign** of William the IV Augt 1 1834'.

In 1807 the British parliament ended the transatlantic slave trade, but it was still legal to own enslaved workers. The **abolition** campaign continued in Britain and there were many **rebellions** by enslaved people in Caribbean **colonies**.

The Act that ended slavery in British **colonies** was finally passed on 23 August 1833. On 1 August 1834, all those enslaved in the British **Empire** were finally set free, but an '**apprenticeship**' system kept many working in the same conditions until 1838.

Different countries abolished slavery at different times. Denmark abolished the trade in 1803, France in 1848 and Portugal in 1869. Slavery only ended in America in 1865.

The British celebrated the **abolition** of slavery. They justified their actions on **moral** and religious grounds, and suggested they were superior to other countries that still had slavery. In fact, there were economic reasons why slavery was becoming less profitable and the British seemed to forget they were once the most active slave traders in the world.



Cotton is King stereoscope card, 1895
© Bolton Museum and Archive Service

Cotton is King stereoscope card, 1895 *Bolton Museum and Archive Service*

This **stereoscope** card shows cotton pickers **descended** from enslaved Africans. The card is titled: Cotton is King, Plantation Scene, Georgia, U.S.A.

The American Civil War of 1861-1865 led to the end of slavery in the USA. However, this picture was published in 1895, well after the Civil War had ended, and shows that many people were still working in conditions that were little different to slavery. African Americans still had the lowest paid and hardest jobs.

After the American Civil War there were a number of laws known as 'black codes' or the 'Jim Crow Laws' that **discriminated** against former enslaved African Americans and still limited their freedom.

The laws were slightly different from state to state, but they all restricted

the ability of African Americans to own property. They also included **vagrancy** laws under which black people could be forced to work for white people if they were considered unemployed.

This inequality led to the American civil rights movement and the fight for equal legal rights took more than another 100 years. There were a number of very influential people associated with the American civil rights movement including Martin Luther King, Rosa Parks, Malcolm X and Paul Robeson.

Barack Obama, an African American, became the 44th president of the USA in 2009. For many Americans this was a sign that the civil rights movement had finally succeeded and racial equality had been achieved even if racism still continues.



Token, We Are All Brethren, 1814
© People's History Museum

Token, We Are All Brethren, 1814 *People's History Museum*

Although dated 1807, when the British transatlantic slave trade was abolished, these tokens were made in about 1814 and again in about 1830-50 to be used as coins in the **colony** of Sierra Leone in Africa.

Sierra Leone was an important centre of the transatlantic slave trade supplying enslaved Africans. In 1792, Freetown was **founded** by the Sierra Leone Company as a home for freed enslaved Africans. These men had fought for Britain in the American War of Independence and were offered their freedom. They were **repatriated** to Sierra Leone, even though they may have come from different parts of Africa.

The coins were **commissioned** by Zachary Macaulay, a former Governor of Freetown, Sierra Leone, and a member of the Society for the Abolition of the Slave Trade.

The reverse is in Arabic, and translates as 'Sale of slaves **prohibited** in 1807, Christian era, in the **reign** of George III: **verily**, we are all brothers'. The Arabic text was possibly included as the Arab slave trade continued long after British **abolition**. This token may have been seen as a way of spreading the **abolitionist** message.

Even though the British slave trade ended in 1807, many millions of Africans continued to be enslaved and **exported**. British traders carried on transporting Africans illegally and some European countries did not abolish their trade until much later.

After slavery ended, Britain imported Asian indentured labourers to its Caribbean colonies to keep up the supply of cheap workers. These indentured labourers were paid very low wages but their conditions were not much better than those of slavery.

Questions

- 1 Did slavery end with the 1807 and the 1833 laws to abolish slavery?
- 2 Did Britain abolish slavery for **moral** or religious reasons?
- 3 Where were other cheap labourers found to send to Caribbean **colonies**?
- 4 What was the American civil rights movement?
- 5 Did the end of slavery lead to equal human rights?