

A STORY OF THE ILLEGAL SLAVE TRADE AND ITS GLOBAL LEGACY

Freedom in White and Black: A Lost Story of the Illegal Slave Trade and Its Global Legacy.

By Emma Christopher.

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Key Words: slave trade, slavery abolition, sources, global.

Emma Christopher tells a tale of abolition, resistance, and survival in this book that weaves together the notorious career of slave trader Robert Bostock with the fascinating story of a Kissi child caught in the slave trade after it had become illegal for British subjects to engage in it. Christopher accomplishes this task through the depiction of the lives of key protagonists, who are introduced through a list of characters that anticipate the events that unfold in the book, much like the opening credits for a play or a movie. This original approach enables Christopher to use life histories as an effective mechanism for the study of African history.

The cast of characters includes some familiar figures who are well known to those who examine the slave trade, including Robert Bostock, his son of the same name, the mixed-race Clevelands of the Banana Islands off the coast of the Sierra Leone peninsula, and the DeWolfs of Rhode Island. Christopher is attentive to the children of slavery and those enslaved men who assisted prominent merchants in the business of the slave trade.

The British efforts to squash the slave trade provides the setting for Christopher's reconstruction. The area of focus begins in Freetown, Sierra Leone, where the British suppression squadron was based, and where the Courts of Mixed Commission heard the cases against the captains of captured slave ships. Once the British declared the slave trade illegal in 1807, the trade along the coast had to shift from previous centers of activity, most notably Bunce Island in the Sierra Leone River, to barracoons to the south that offered some protection from the patrolling British navy. These locations not only included the Banana Islands, but also Sherbro Island and the mangrove swamps of the Gallinas as far as the St. Paul River, close to Cape Mesurado in what became Liberia. As Christopher notes, Bostock and his partners were engaged in a trade that was only a few years earlier considered to be legal. Yet they did not stop their business when British law banned the overseas slave trade and British officials started to prosecute those who persisted in engaging in the trade. The tortured story of the enslaved who were being sent into a world of servitude after a dangerous Middle Passage across the Atlantic now shifted focus to the perpetrators of that trade, as revenge for the crimes that had been committed against the enslaved. As for Bostock, he ended up being punished for his involvement by being sent to the penal colony in Australia. Yet, unlike those who were enslaved, Bostock recreated his new world to become more successful than he had been on the West African coast. Because he was white and not African, he and his sons used their privileged position to open up the territory west of Melbourne. His grandson became involved in the slavery of indigenous inhabitants, fathering children with aboriginal women as he expanded the family fortune. A mansion in Tasmania attested to the path of shady business that had begun in West Africa and was recreated in Australia.

The book is heavily documented, revealing a mastery of archives from Sierra Leone to the United States, Australia, Cuba, and the United Kingdom, as well as contemporary newspapers in almost as many countries. Moreover, the excellent annotations unveil Christopher as a scholar of the highest credentials. When Christopher began her enquiry, she could hardly have known where her research would take her. To her credit, she has achieved a masterful reconstruction of how the lives of many people were intertwined, and she has done so with a commendable degree of sensitivity.

Christopher uses illustrations to good effect, including images of Freetown in the middle of the nineteenth century, the church at Regent inland from Freetown, Havana, in 1839, Sydney on Botany Bay in Australia, but unfortunately none of a barracoon, the Banana Islands, the Gallinas, or Bostock's mansion in Tasmania. Her maps of the African coast from the Sierra Leone River to Cape Mesurado are well designed for those readers not familiar with this part of Africa.

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GLOBAL GARVEYSIM

Global Garveyism.

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For students and scholars of Africa and its diaspora, it is an oft-repeated fact that Marcus Garvey's Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) was the largest black mass movement of the twentieth century. Yet despite the pioneering work of Robert Hill, who over decades has produced thirteen volumes of the *Marcus Garvey and the Universal Negro Improvement Association Papers*, as well as the early interventions of Amy Jacques Garvey, Tony Martin, Rupert Lewis, and other scholars, Garveyism has remained at the margins of mainstream historiography.¹ Partly as a result, this global movement continues to be wedded to the figure of Marcus Garvey and the iconography associated with Liberty Hall in Harlem where the UNIA had its headquarters in the decade after World War I.

1 R. Hill (ed.), *The Marcus Garvey and Universal Negro Improvement Association Papers*, Vols. 1–13 (Berkeley: 1985–2006); A. J. Garvey, *Garvey and Garveyism* (New York, 1970); T. Martin, *Race First: The Ideological and Organizational Struggles of Marcus Garvey and the Universal Negro Improvement Association* (Westport, CT, 1976); R. Lewis, *Marcus Garvey: Anti-Colonial Champion* (Trenton, NJ, 1988); and R. Lewis and M. Warner-Lewis (eds.), *Garvey: Africa, Europe, the Americas* (Kingston, Jamaica, 1986).