

How the Caribbean freed itself

From Emancipation to Independence

The first Africans were taken to Spanish America in 1502. Sugar cultivation and gold mining drove Europeans to enslave Africans in the Caribbean. Between 1580 and 1802 England established her presence in the West Indies and settled in St. Kitts, Barbados, Nevis, Montserrat, Antigua, Jamaica, Grenada, Dominica, St. Vincent, Tobago, Trinidad and Guyana. Between 1638 and 1837 there were 17 slave revolts, the most famous being the Haitian Revolution.

Slavery was abolished in 1834 after which colonialism came into existence. Many freedom fighters challenged colonialism. They included Philip Douglin, Paul Bogle, Sylvester Williams, Marcus Garvey, George Padmore, Norman Manley, Grantley Adams, C.L.R. James and Eric Williams. Most countries in the English-Speaking Caribbean gained their independence by 1965. There is more work to do. In the words of Nelson Mandela: "I can rest for only a moment, for with freedom come responsibilities and I dare not linger, for my long walk is not ended." *Dr Selwyn Cudjoe*

Timeline of Emancipation

1400 **GUANAHATABEY**
Little is known about the Guanahatbey except they were hunter and gatherers. They didn't practice warfare living in small groups. They lived in modern day Cuba. It is possible they came from Florida.

1492-1501 COLUMBUS LANDS
Christopher Columbus, a profiteer/explorer, sights, lands on, or tries to establish a Spanish colony on most of the Islands in the West Indies.

1502 **MAP OF THE CARIBBEAN 1400'S**
Map showing the Caribbean region around 1400.

1518 SPANISH AND PORTUGUESE IMPORT FIRST ENSLAVED AFRICANS
Hawkins seizes enslaved Africans from the West Coast of Africa. Later, Britain would become one of the biggest players in the Atlantic Slave Trade which led to the enforced transportation of 13 million enslaved Africans, the largest enforced migration in history.

1623 ST KITTS BECOMES THE FIRST ENGLISH COLONY
The annexing of St Kitts signals the beginning of British domination of much of the Caribbean. Many Islands changed hands in the Caribbean as European colonisers from France, England, and Spain and elsewhere fought for control of the Caribbean.

1627 DOMINATION, REVOLT, AND REVOLUTION
Four years later, Charles I puts the Earl of Carlisle in charge of Dominica but the local Caribs revolt.

1638 ST VINCENT AND GRENADINES BECOME BRITISH POSSESSIONS

1655 KILL A KING THEN SEIZE THE WORLD
The British seize Jamaica from the Spanish using its highly effective New Model Army that had recently defeated and executed the King of England, Charles I.

1672 SLAVERY LEGALISED
Royal African company is granted a charter to carry slaves to the Americas. Three years later there is an uprising of enslaved Africans in Barbados.

1677 **ST VINCENT AND GRENADINES BECOME BRITISH POSSESSIONS**

1679 MAROON VICTORY
Enslaved Africans in Jamaica call Maroons defeat the British Army. They force the British to sign a peace treaty which stipulates they would return any enslaved Africans who tried to join them.

1685 **TREATY OF HAVANA AND TREATY OF SPAIN**
A little later under these treaties, Havana goes back to Spain and Britain gains control of Dominica.

1687 AN INTERESTING STORY
The interesting narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano (pictured, right), or Gustavus Vassa published (see below).

1688 **TREATY OF VERSAILLES**
France relinquishes claims to St Lucia and Grenada to Britain.

1690 **SOCIETY FOR THE ABOLITION OF THE SLAVE TRADE ESTABLISHED IN BRITAIN**
This movement to oppose slavery in the West Indies "invents" the political poster, the consumer boycott, the petition, the flyer, the political book tour, and investigative reporting designed to move the reader to act. Leading characters included Olaudah Equiano, Thomas Clarkson, Granville Sharp, and William Wilberforce.

1691 **THE ENSLAVED AFRICANS BEGIN HAITIAN REVOLUTION...**
Enslaved Africans begin the only successful slave revolt in the history of the Caribbean. Enslaved Africans free themselves and break the back of slavery under outstanding leadership (see Toussaint L'Ouverture below). The first black republic in the new world is established under the leadership of Dessalines.

1777 **Maria Jones (c.1777)**
Born in West Africa Maria Jones book *Maria Jones: her history in Africa and in the West Indies* may be one of the first narratives by African woman. Her work had an important influence on later Trinidad intellectual development.

1778 **JJ Thomas (c.1850)**
Writer on Emancipation
Thomas was born the son of a free slave. Proficient in a number of languages he later became a schoolmaster in spite of the strong prejudice against dark skinned black people. JJ Thomas consistently opposed the idea that people of African descent were inferior and wrote a number of pamphlets attacking the racism of his time. Unfortunately he died before he could finish his book on emancipation.

1788-1813 **Mary Prince**
Abolitionist & Author
Mary Prince was the first published black woman. Born in Bermuda, her book *The History of Mary Prince, A West Indian Slave*, illustrated the full horror of what it was to be a female enslaved African in the Caribbean.

1789 **1789** **1789** **1789**
FROUDACITY
COMPLETE UNABRIDGED
JJ Thomas

1800 **1800** **1800** **1800**
1807 **ABOLITION OF THE SLAVE TRADE ACT**
The British slave trade is abolished in Parliament. However, slave traders find ways to get around the law.

1802 **1802** **1802** **1802**
1834 **SLAVERY ABOLISHED ACROSS THE BRITISH EMPIRE**
An apprenticeship has to be served by formerly enslaved Africans. The Plantation owners received £20m in compensation. The freed received nothing.

1805 **1805** **1805** **1805**
1838 **ARRIVAL OF INDENTURED LABOUR**
Indians are moved to the British Caribbean as indentured labourers (they worked for five years on plantations in exchange for wages and passage fares). Indentured labourers experienced terrible conditions as they had little rights.

1810 **1810** **1810** **1810**
1838 **INDENTURED LABOUR TO THE WEST INDIES 1838-1917**
Map showing the flow of indentured labour from India to the Caribbean.

1815 **1815** **1815** **1815**
1865 **ENSLAVED AFRICANS EMANCIPATED IN THE UNITED STATES**
The same year there is an uprising in Jamaica, Morant Bay Rebellion that is brutally suppressed.

1818 **1818** **1818** **1818**
1865 **ENSLAVED AFRICANS EMANCIPATED IN THE UNITED STATES**
Slavery abolished in Cuba. Spain withdraws from the Dominican republic.

1820 **1820** **1820** **1820**
1865 **ENSLAVED AFRICANS EMANCIPATED IN THE UNITED STATES**
Slavery abolished in Puerto Rico (1873). Just over a decade later slavery is abolished in Brazil (1888).

1830 **1830** **1830** **1830**
1914-1918 **WORLD WAR ONE**
Caribbean soldiers play an important role in the war. As many as 14,000 soldiers served in the West Indies Regiment.

1835 **1835** **1835** **1835**
1937-38 **STRIKES AND RIOTS ACROSS THE CARIBBEAN**
Harsh living conditions and the beginning of the rejection of the British Empire leads to an outbreak of riots in Barbados; a general strike in Trinidad (see below) and Jamaica.

1840 **1840** **1840** **1840**
1939-45 **WORLD WAR TWO**
1,200 soldiers served in the Caribbean regiment; 5,500 West Indians served in the RAF as ground crew; and huge quantities of food were transported to the UK from the Caribbean to maintain the war effort against the Nazis.

1845 **1845** **1845** **1845**
1959 **FIDEL CASTRO TAKES POWER IN CUBA**
A YEAR LATER A NUMBER OF AFRICAN STATES WIN INDEPENDENCE

1850 **1850** **1850** **1850**
1962 **MAJORITY OF CARIBBEAN ISLANDS GAIN INDEPENDENCE**

1855 **1855** **1855** **1855**
1962 **MAJORITY OF CARIBBEAN ISLANDS GAIN INDEPENDENCE**

1860 **1860** **1860** **1860**
1962 **MAJORITY OF CARIBBEAN ISLANDS GAIN INDEPENDENCE**

1865 **1865** **1865** **1865**
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1870 **1870** **1870** **1870**
1962 **MAJORITY OF CARIBBEAN ISLANDS GAIN INDEPENDENCE**

1875 **1875** **1875** **1875**
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1880 **1880** **1880** **1880**
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1885 **1885** **1885** **1885**
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1890 **1890** **1890** **1890**
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1895 **1895** **1895** **1895**
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1900 **1900** **1900** **1900**
1962 **MAJORITY OF CARIBBEAN ISLANDS GAIN INDEPENDENCE**

1905 **1905** **1905** **1905**
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1910 **1910** **1910** **1910**
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1915 **1915** **1915** **1915**
1962 **MAJORITY OF CARIBBEAN ISLANDS GAIN INDEPENDENCE**

1920 **1920** **1920** **1920**
1962 **MAJORITY OF CARIBBEAN ISLANDS GAIN INDEPENDENCE**

1925 **1925** **1925** **1925**
1962 **MAJORITY OF CARIBBEAN ISLANDS GAIN INDEPENDENCE**

1930 **1930** **1930** **1930**
1962 **MAJORITY OF CARIBBEAN ISLANDS GAIN INDEPENDENCE**

1935 **1935** **1935** **1935**
1962 **MAJORITY OF CARIBBEAN ISLANDS GAIN INDEPENDENCE**

1940 **1940** **1940** **1940**
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1945 **1945** **1945** **1945**
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1950 **1950** **1950** **1950**
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1955 **1955** **1955** **1955**
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1995 **1995** **1995** **1995**
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2000 **2000** **2000** **2000**
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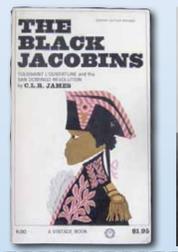
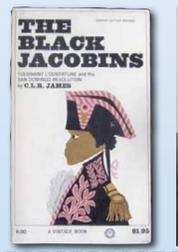
2005 **2005** **2005** **2005**
1962 **MAJORITY OF CARIBBEAN ISLANDS GAIN INDEPENDENCE**

2010 **2010** **2010** **2010**
1962 **MAJORITY OF CARIBBEAN ISLANDS GAIN INDEPENDENCE**

2015 **2015** **2015** **2015**
1962 **MAJORITY OF CARIBBEAN ISLANDS GAIN INDEPENDENCE**

2020 **2020** **2020** **2020**
1962 **MAJORITY OF CARIBBEAN ISLANDS GAIN INDEPENDENCE**

Caribbean Intellectuals

<p>1777 Maria Jones (c.1777) Born in West Africa Maria Jones book <i>Maria Jones: her history in Africa and in the West Indies</i> may be one of the first narratives by African woman. Her work had an important influence on later Trinidad intellectual development.</p> <p>1788-1813 Mary Prince Abolitionist & Author Mary Prince was the first published black woman. Born in Bermuda, her book <i>The History of Mary Prince, A West Indian Slave</i>, illustrated the full horror of what it was to be a female enslaved African in the Caribbean.</p> 	<p>1778 JJ Thomas (c.1850) Writer on Emancipation Thomas was born the son of a free slave. Proficient in a number of languages he later became a schoolmaster in spite of the strong prejudice against dark skinned black people. JJ Thomas consistently opposed the idea that people of African descent were inferior and wrote a number of pamphlets attacking the racism of his time. Unfortunately he died before he could finish his book on emancipation.</p> 	<p>1800's Philip Douglin (1845-1902) Intellectual Pioneer In his varied life Philip Douglin qualified for Holy Orders in the Anglican Church. Born in Barbados he went to West Africa as a missionary. Douglin was one of the first thinkers to draw attention to the psychological damage done to black people by the Atlantic slave trade. He settled in Trinidad in 1887 and participated in the Pan African movement until died in 1902.</p> 	<p>1845 Sylvester Williams (1869-1911) Pan African Pioneer Born in Trinidad, Sylvester Williams help to organise the first Pan African congress in London in 1900. The Pan African movement would have a massive impact on both the emancipation of Africa and the West Indies. During speaking tours of Trinidad he was one of the first thinkers to show how the struggle for emancipation in the United States, Africa, and West Indies could aid each other.</p> 	<p>1869 Marcus Mosiah Garvey (1887-1940) Father of West Indian Nationalism Marcus Garvey is a hero to many across the world. Born in Jamaica, he spent most of his life in America and the UK. His achievement was to bring black consciousness and help foster a sense of self worth among black people with his international organisation the United Negro Improvement Association. His influence reaches from Rastafarianism to Malcolm X and beyond.</p> 	<p>1887 CLR James (1901-1989) Literary Giant Born in Trinidad James was a committed activist and Marxist. He worked alongside other giants like George Padmore and Eric Williams. He played a central role in struggles in both the Americas and in Africa. His masterpiece, <i>The Black Jacobins</i>, enriched the Caribbean intellectual tradition giving it greater self confidence.</p> 	<p>1901 George Padmore (1902-1959) Father of Pan African Independence George Padmore (pictured below) helped form the International African Service Bureau in 1937, later known as the Pan African Federation. He played a central role in the successful 5th Pan African Federation conference in 1945 that brought together a significant number of future African leaders. CLR James referred to him as the father of Pan African emancipation.</p> 	<p>1911 Eric Williams (1911-) Politician and Polemicist Eric Williams was the first prime minister of newly independent Trinidad (see Trinidad timeline below). He led his party to victory many times. His most important intellectual contribution was <i>Capitalism and Slavery</i>. This pathbreaking book shows the centrality of the Atlantic slave trade in building the modern world.</p> 	<p>1915 Walter Rodney (1942-1980) Theorist of Underdevelopment Born in Grenada, Walter Rodney (pictured below) was a political activist who died in Guyana. His greatest contribution to the West Indian intellectual tradition was his book <i>How Europe Underdeveloped Africa</i>. This work influenced many of the struggles in the 1970s and is considered a masterpiece.</p> 
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Caribbean Freedom fighters

Toussaint L'Ouverture (1743-1803) Great Emancipator
Toussaint L'Ouverture was the leader of the only successful slave revolt in the Caribbean. With an army of formerly enslaved Africans he defeated the greatest armies of the day including the forces of the French, the English, and the Spanish when they tried to reimpose slavery.

Daaga (pictured left) (d.1837)
Enslaved African uprising leader
Daaga led one of the biggest revolts of enslaved Africans in Trinidad. In June 1837 he led 280 enslaved Africans in an attempt to challenge their slave system. His plan was to return to Guinea in Africa.

Nanny (c.1734)
Freedom fighter
Nanny was the feared leader of the Maroon community in Jamaica. She and others managed to force a British general to sign a peace treaty in 1739 establishing the autonomy of the escaped enslaved Africans in the Maroon community.

Cuffy (d.1763)
Rebellion leader
Revered in Guyana today, Cuffy led a slave revolt in Berbice in 1763. He killed himself when the revolt failed rather than be caught.

Cespedes, Carlos Manuel de (1819-1873)
El Padre de la Patria
A Creole landowner who raised the flag of rebellion against the Spanish in the West Indies starting a long war. He freed all the enslaved Africans on his plantation and was committed to abolition thereafter. He was murdered by the Spanish.

Fedon (d.1796)
Led the bloodiest revolt of enslaved Africans in Grenada. The rebellion began in 1795 being influenced by events in Haiti. Fedon led an army of 7,000 enslaved Africans and nearly 200 whites and freeing people of colour. The rebellion was crushed but it cost three million pounds and demoralised the slavers.

Sam Sharpe (d.1832)
Fearless Freedom fighter
Sam Sharpe (pictured on the \$50 note, right) led the slave revolt that helped give slavery in the British Empire its final deathblow. He led a revolt in December 1831 for which he was executed. This uprising help accelerate moves towards the abolition act a few years later (see timeline above).

Other leaders of revolts by Enslaved Africans
Bussa (d.1816)
Bussa led the so called Easter Rebellion that lasted 3 days leading to the slaughter of 500 to 1,000 enslaved Africans. The uprising led to the passing of laws that improved the lives of enslaved Africans.

Timeline of Trinidad & Tobago

1498 TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO ARE NAMED
Columbus arrives in Trinidad. Names island after 3 peaks he sees on the south Eastern section of the island. He names Tobago after a form of local tobacco found there.

1500 **1500** **1500** **1500**
1532 **SPANISH TAKEOVER**
Trinidad becomes a Spanish colony.

1532 **1532** **1532** **1532**
1630 **DUTCH SEIZURE**
Tobago taken over by the Dutch.

1532 **1532** **1532** **1532**
1781 **SUGAR SUPER PROFITS**
French transform Tobago into a sugar colony after seizing it.

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1781 **SUGAR SUPER PROFITS**
Trinidad becomes a British colony. Later Spain formally gives up Trinidad (see Treaty of Amiens above). France would later give Tobago to the British too.

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