William Wilberforce and His Legacy of Freedom

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The ship was off course, drinking water supplies would not support the lives of the crew and all its cargo, and something had to be done. From the decks of the slave ship Zong, 132 Africans, some chained together as they had been for weeks in the hellish pestilence of the ship’s hull, were mercilessly thrown overboard to drown. They died, in the eyes of the ship’s captain, less valuable than insurance proceeds from a policy underwriting a commodity like lumber or livestock. A legal dispute arose between insurance underwriters and the ship’s owners. The court declared, “The truth was, that finding they should have a bad market for their slaves, they took these means of transferring the loss from the owners to the underwriters.”

Horror stories like that of the Zong and the influence of Quakers drew William Wilberforce into a life-long struggle to abolish the British slave trade.

Beginning in 1787, William Wilberforce, a member of British Parliament, led a movement to outlaw the transatlantic slave trade. Historian W.E. H. Lecky observed in 1892 that Wilberforce “seemed the frailest and feeblest of mortals; standing just five feet with frequent bouts of sickness, loss of hearing and eyesight, intestinal attacks and curvature of the spine.”

Wilberforce believed the slave trade was morally wrong. Although small in stature, he determined to act mightily and lead, ultimately committing the better part of his life and health, to end the horrific practice. In Parliament, he led a 20 year fight against the slave trade, ultimately achieving passage of The Slave Trade Act of 1807 and a legacy as the father of the worldwide abolition movement.

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In the late 1700s, the primary driving force behind the transatlantic slave trade was the profits of industry. The allure of free labor drove a machine binding together the economies of Europe, Africa, and the developing Americas. Between 1500 and 1860 approximately 12 million African men, women, and children were forcibly uprooted from Africa and hauled in squalid bondage to the Americas to work in horrid conditions for the remainder of their unnaturally short lives. The slaves often originated in Africa as prisoners of tribal wars and convicted criminals as well as able-bodied Africans who were kidnapped, branded and flogged into submission, many necessary to support the sugarcane industry. Author William Hague writes, “With Europeans unwilling to perform the backbreaking drudgery involved in tending and growing sugarcane, and the native population still reeling from disease and in any case less physically strong than their African counterparts, the solution was obvious.” The solution was African slaves.

The slave trade funded the Industrial Revolution in Britain giving purpose and rise to huge port cities such as Manchester and Liverpool as well as entire economies sustained by manufacturing fed by the raw materials obtained in the Americas. British ship owners and investors reaped huge profits -- sometimes as much as 20-50%. Merchants and ship owners traded English goods in high demand in Africa, such as guns, gunpowder and textiles, for slaves forcibly delivered to the shores of West Africa by traders who built an empire upon a foundation of bondage, human suffering and death. The slaves were packed inhumanely and shipped as a commodity. These ships sailed to the Americas feeding an insatiable appetite for free labor in

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6 Appendix I.
practices unrestrained by law, a moral compass or basic human dignity. Slaves were delivered to the West Indies at places like what is now the Bahamas. Ships then filled their holds full of raw materials, such as hides, ginger, pearls and sugar, and sailed back to Britain primed to feed and recycle this despicable machine. Wilberforce wrote extensively about the evils of the slave trade and the evil linking these transatlantic economies, “Now for many many [sic] years, I have been longing to bring forward that great Subject, the condition of the Negro Slaves in our Trans-Atlantic colonies.”

Those involved in the slave trade sought to justify the practice with myriad rationalizations based in economics, perceived necessity and base prejudice. Supporters, like the political and economic powerhouse, the Royal African Company, and planter-politician Bryan Edwards, advocated that if British traders did not engage in the practice, the French or the Dutch would do so anyway leaving Britain disadvantaged. For example in a 1777 speech to Parliament, Temple Luttrell MP, argued, “Some gentlemen may, indeed, object to the slave trade as inhuman and evil; but let us consider that, if our colonies are to be cultivated, which can only be done by African negroes, it is surely better to supply ourselves with those labourers in British ships, than buy them from French, Dutch or Danish traders.”

Accounts directed to Parliament, such as that delivered by John Whateley, MP to the Committee of Council for Trade, argued that without slave labor, some businesses could not function, “The more I look into it the more I am convinced of the absurdity and impossibility of abolishing Slavery; and if we do not avail

7 Rice, 1.
ourselves of the labour of slaves, our enemies will to our certain undoing.”

Remarkably, pro-slavers justified the trade, claiming slaves would be traded in Africa anyway and were better off enslaved in the Americas. Liverpool merchant Michael Sergant, once claimed: “We ought to consider whether the negroes in a well regulated plantation, under the protection of a kind master, do not enjoy as great, nay even greater advantages than when under their own despotic governments.”

Today these arguments sound insane. That was not the case in the time of William Wilberforce, however. His genius marshaling the arguments and case against slavery and the slave trade no doubt fueled the set of reasons, why we can today so easily dispense with the many rationalizations invoked in his time.

In 1785, he experienced what he described as a spiritual awakening, causing so much turmoil in his mind that he considered abandoning politics for a life in the church. He sought the counsel of John Newton, a former slave-ship captain, who had become a rector of St. Mary’s Church in London. Newton, who wrote hymns, such as “Amazing Grace,” helped Wilberforce confront the crisis he faced at the intersection of religion and modern life. He was eventually successful in convincing Wilberforce to combine his new religious beliefs with his existing political skills and career. Thereafter, Wilberforce considered the abolition of the slave trade his destiny, and with the long-term support of Newton and others, worked to awaken

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the consciousness of his nation and the world. Kevin Belmonte, the author of *Hero For Humanity*, points out that “Wilberforce’s view of his personal destiny eventually altered the destiny of the entire country.”14

To assail contrary arguments, Wilberforce systematically engaged in a first of its kind campaign, involving members of Parliament, clergy, businessmen, former slaves and the common man. He educated and persuaded the adoption of an enlightened view of the slave trade, waging a campaign, now symbolic of his legacy that fixed him as one of the great forces in the history of humanity. Wilberforce and his close friends, the so-called Clapham Sect, employed the use of handbills to garner support and funding for this campaign.15 A public-relations campaign sought to focus on the evils of the slave trade. For example, the 14 February 1824 letter by noted abolitionist Reverend Thomas Clarkson explained his travel over the whole of Britain, eventually thousands of miles on horseback, advocating for change in the law.16 17

In a first, Wilberforce effectively employed anti-slavery petitions signed by thousands of people and delivered to Parliament.18 Abolitionists, such as playwright Hannah More and poet William Cowper, wrote poetry and sponsored anti-slavery writings, illustrations and sympathetic works of art. His friends, drawing from abolition efforts started by Quakers and

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14 Belmonte, Kevin, telephone interview, 17 October 2014.
15 The Clapham Sect was made-up of a group of wealthy Evangelicals and high-minded politicians based in Clapham, England, located a few miles south of what is now Westminster. The Clapham Sect initially consisted of Wilberforce, Henry Thornton, Edward Eliot and Charles Grant, and grouped together like-minded thinkers to advocate for social causes and abolition of slavery.
17 Appendix IX, 30 March 2015 photograph of Thomas Clarkson’s Chest on display in the Wilberforce House Museum, Hull, England (Clarkson carried this chest to explain the cruelty of the slave trade, including items like shackles, chains, thumb screws, handcuffs, among others).
18 The most famous is the *Manchester Petition* in 1788 that, according to documentary film maker Chuck Stetson, included 2,500 names including some women who at the time were not even allowed to vote.
Evangelicals, aided Wilberforce, fueling him with information, advice, materials and moral support that he used in Parliament to fight the slave trade. Wilberforce was also strategic at networking and formed lasting alliances with powerful politicians like William Pitt, the youngest prime minister of England. Later in life, Wilberforce counted his illness and resulting exhaustion a blessing because it required him to go to Pitt for help, “On this, I went to Mr. Pitt, and begged of him a promise, which he kindly readily gave me, to take upon himself the conduct of that great cause.”

Wilberforce’s unmatched debating skills complimented Pitt’s loyalty and unmatched political connections to advance the cause.

With the help of abolitionists such as Reverend Thomas Clarkson, Wilberforce marshalled evidence and guided others to collect facts about the trade and its human costs. John Newton, the former slave-ship captain, helped him secure detailed data on the slave voyages, records, and atrocities. In addition to reports, petitions, songs, and meetings, Wilberforce’s public speeches delivered with eloquence, logic and persuasiveness, before Parliament and elsewhere, reflected Wilberforce’s leadership qualities. One of his most famous speeches was given in the House of Commons on 12 May 1789. Wilberforce weaved together compelling anti-slavery arguments focusing not just on moral deficits and human suffering, but also on the ills visited by slavery on modern English society. He also emphasized the destabilizing effect of slavery on the countries of Africa. Wilberforce argued, “Does anyone suppose a slave trade would help their civilization? Is it not plain, that she must suffer from it?”

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Africa.”21 He also told accounts like that of the slave ship Zong, to illustrate how special interests were driving an unsustainable practice:

One would think it had been determined to heap upon them all the varieties of bodily pain, for the purpose of blunting the feelings of the mind; and yet, in this very point (to show the power of human prejudice) the situation of the slaves has been described by Mr. Norris, one of the Liverpool delegates, in a manner which, I am sure will convince the House how interest can draw a film across the eyes, so thick, that total blindness could do no more; and how it is our duty therefore to trust not to the reasonings of interested men, or to their way of colouring a transaction.22

Finally, Wilberforce facilitated an anti-slavery narrative, a public-relations campaign that resonated with other personal stories organized by the Quakers, such as that of former slave Olaudah Equiano, author of *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, The African*. Equiano described being kidnapped, separated from his family and transported to servitude by a slaver. Equiano, having never before seen the ocean, wrote, “The first object which saluted my eye when I arrived on the coast was the sea, and a slave ship, which was then riding at anchor, and waiting for its cargo. These filled me with astonishment, which was soon converted into terror when I was carried on board.”23 Publicity created by this book and other works by abolitionists fueled popular campaigns, such as boycotting sugar made with slave labor in the West Indies.

The legacy of William Wilberforce is also one of remarkable perseverance. His career in Parliament started upon his election as a member representing Yorkshire on 7 April 1784. Three years later on 28 October 1787 he wrote what he referred to as the mission statement for his life, recording in his journal, “Almighty God has set before me two great

21 Ibid.
22 Ibid.
objectives. The abolition of the slave trade and the reformation of society.”

On 12 May 1789 Wilberforce gave his acclaimed first speech advocating abolition of the slave trade. On 15 March 1796, he suffered a crushing defeat when his anti-slave trade bill was narrowly defeated in Parliament. Wilberforce experienced a nervous breakdown. Yet, Wilberforce doggedly persevered in his battle against slavery while facing death threats and confronting constant ill health.

While he focused on expanding the campaign to end the slave trade, a world experiencing tumultuous times constantly challenged his ability to do so. His career in Parliament witnessed the recent loss of England’s colonies in America, and on 1 February 1793 France declared war on Britain beginning a distraction lasting 22 years. Ironically, Napoleon’s support of slavery eventually shifted the tide for abolition of the slave trade in England.

Wilberforce, taking advantage of news that Napoleon declared himself the emperor of France and was an active advocate of slavery, harnessed anti-French sentiment that began to outweigh pro-slavery sympathies in Britain. The Slave Trade Act of 1807, William Wilberforce’s signature legislation, was passed on 25 March 1807. His fellow members of Parliament gave him three cheers as he sat weeping in response to the success. Even so, he persisted in his fight against slavery until he retired from Parliament on 22 February 1825, after 45 years of service to his country.

Approximately eight years later, on 26 July 1833, the House

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26 Pollock, John, Wilberforce (London: John Constable, 1977), 211.
of Commons passed legislation abolishing slavery itself anywhere in the British Empire. Three
days later, on 29 July 1833, he died at the age of 73.

In addition to attacking the inhumanity of the slave trade, he was equally
central to addressing the rife social ills of his time. Wilberforce was determined to make
goodness fashionable and to create a cultural renewal. He wrote the book, *A Practical View of
Christianity*, a best-seller in five languages. Wilberforce also created societies and organizations
that helped with the betterment of society. According to Chuck Stetson, documentary film-
maker, “Wilberforce was generous of his time, resources and focus, and was a pioneering
philanthropist leaving a legacy of charitable organizations which thrive even today.” However,
the legacy Wilberforce is most remembered for is abolishing the slave trade. The Archbishop of
Canterbury, Justin Welby, points out that Wilberforce “felt called by God to abolish the slave
trade and in doing so shed light on one of the largest forced movements of people in history, a
practice presenting many complex issues even today.” His legacy lives on in the works of his
descendants Lady Kate Davson, Sam Wilberforce, and William Wilberforce, who continue the
campaign against slavery worldwide in organizations such as Anti-Slavery International.

The horrors of the transatlantic slave trade are indisputable and rightfully judged
harshly by history. But in his time, William Wilberforce faced many and persistent detractors
who demonized him for daring to assail an institution at the very foundation of society. One
such detractor, celebrated naval hero, Lord Nelson, lambasted Wilberforce saying, “I was bred in
the good old school and taught to appreciate the value of our West Indian possessions, and

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28 Chuck Stetson, producer of the PBS documentary, *The Better Hour*, telephone interview, 3
April 2015.
29 The Most Reverend and Right Honourable Justin Portal Welby, Archbishop of Canterbury,
personal interview, 29 March 2015.
30 Davson, Lady Kate, personal interview, 29 March 2015.
31 Wilberforce, William, telephone interview, 20 April 2015.
32 Wilberforce, Sam, telephone interview, 15 April 2015.
neither in the field nor the senate shall their just rights be infringed, while I have an arm to fight in their defense or a tongue to launch my voice against the damnable doctrine of Wilberforce and his hypocritical allies.”33 Despite this organized and invested opposition, with the passage of the Slave Trade Act of 1807, William Wilberforce’s leadership set in motion a ripple in the sea of freedom that would eventually wash over the whole of humanity creating a legacy of abolition alive and well today.

APPENDIX I

Slave Ship Diagram

APPENDIX II

Map of the British Slave Trade

Source: http://news.bbc.co.uk/cbbcnews/hi/newsid_6340000/newsid_6346700/6346787.stm
APPENDIX III

William Wilberforce

APPENDIX IV

Reverend Thomas Clarkson (Abolitionist)

APPENDIX V

John Newton: (A former slave ship captain, author of “Amazing Grace”)

Source: http://abolition.e2bn.org/people_35.html
APPENDIX VI

William Wilberforce Delivered the Speech of 1798 to the House of Commons

Source: Kevin Belmonte (personal collection, used with permission).
APPENDIX VII

Am I Not A Man and A Brother? (The motto of the abolitionist campaign)

APPENDIX VIII

The Slave Ship Zong

APPENDIX IX

Reverend Thomas Clarkson’s Chest

Reverend Clarkson carried a chest to illustrate the cruelty of the slave trade. The chest contained items such as leg shackles, handcuffs, thumb screws, etc.

Source: Photograph taken by the author, 30 March 2015, Wilberforce House Museum.
APPENDIX X

William Wilberforce Handwritten Annotations in *Debate On A Motion For The Abolition of The Slave Trade, In The House of Commons On Monday and Tuesday April 18 and 19 1794 Second Edition*. This was recently discovered and has not yet been made public.

APPENDIX XI

Cast-iron Box Made Out of Shackles and Chains by Former Slaves

I obtained this photograph from Sam Wilberforce who told me that in his understanding the box is not otherwise known outside the family. He gave me permission to share it for the first time in my paper on William Wilberforce.

Source: Private collection of Sam Wilberforce.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

PRIMARY SOURCES

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Abolition of the Slave Trade Act of 1807. CAP, XXXVL, March 25, 1807.

This Act prohibited the importation of slaves into any port or place. It was a landmark
decision that helped promote the slave trade abolitionist movement headed by William
Wilberforce and his allies. I located documents that showed evidence of slave trading
continuing illegally even after this act was passed. I also found records of these illegally
traded slaves being seized by authorities. I learned in my research that passing an act is
one thing and enforcing it is another entirely.

An Abstract of Evidence Delivered Before a Select Committee of the House of Commons, 1790,
Number 18, Suffolk Record Office, 306.302. Printed by James Phillips, George Yard,

This abstract was especially helpful in teaching me about the evidence gathered by
William Wilberforce and his allies on the slave trade for their abolitionist campaign. It
contains a list of names of witnesses by the Select Committee on behalf of the Petitioners,
and their evidence. It also had diagrams (pp. 36-37) and dimensions of the slave ships
that showed me how cramped and inhumane these conditions were for the slaves. It also
provided a map of the West Coast of Africa so I could see more clearly the trade paths. I
was amazed that the slave ships would take months loading up this coast before starting
the deadly journey through the Middle Passage where more than a third of the slaves
would perish before the slave ship even arrived at its final destination.

An Address for the purpose of considering the Propriety of Petitioning Parliament for Abolition,
1792, Number 19, Suffolk Record Office, R326, printed by G. Jermyn, Bookseller,

This address was to educate people about the slave trade, but unfortunately, the meeting
was not in full attendance because of poor weather conditions that prevented the address
from being presented as planned. As a result, when the petition was to be signed many of
the Parliamentarians refused to sign claiming they did not fully understand the details of
the petition. This document also included an appendix, which contained a copy of
grocer’s James Wright’s advertisement of Haverhill saying he will no longer participate
in selling sugar that is produced by slaves.

An essay on the Slavery and Commerce of the Human Species (1st edition copy), Number 16,
Suffolk Record Office, 306.362 (Essay 1). Printed by J. Phillips, George-Yard,

This essay was translated from a Latin dissertation, which received first place in the
University of Cambridge in 1785 with Additions. This essay was the first written by
Thomas Clarkson that began his entire lifetime of work dedicated to the cause of
abolition. He worked closely with William Wilberforce blanketing all the counties of
England, Scotland and Wales with information such as this and pamphlets, speeches,
flyers, poems and other strategic pieces to educate the people about the horrors of the
slave trade.

Printed by Christopher Sower Germantown, Second Edition, 1760. Rare Book Division,
<http://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/8bd6ce4a-d1e9-ee1c-e040-e00a18066059> (21
April 2015).

This primary source was extracted from the yearly meeting minutes of the people called
Quakers, held at London in 1748. It provides a detailed account of the British slave trade
and how it affected the slaves.

Brougham, Henry. *Extracts From the Evidence Delivered Before A Select Committee of the
House of Commons, in the Years 1790 and 1791,* Printed for L. Wayand and sold by J.S.
Jordan London 1791
<https://books.google.com/books?id=9aQNAAAAAQAJ&pg=PP1&lpg=PP1&dq=Extracts+From+the+Evidence+Delivered+Before+A+Select+Committee+of+the+House+of+Commons,+in+the+Years+1790+and+1791&source=bl&ots=4ibhrJDKk&sig=aXxrbFJf
OxsjpWO8A7j6rEe9M4g&hl=en&sa=X&ei=as81VcnKD4XmoATDoIHACA&ved=0C
C8Q6AEwAw#v=onepage&q=Extracts%20From%20the%20Evidence%20Delivered%2B
Before%20A%20Select%20Committee%20of%20the%20House%20of%20Commons%2
C%20in%20the%20Years%201790%20and%201791&f=false>.

This primary source was created on the part of the petitioners in favor of the abolition of
the slave trade. It gave me insight into the power of the petitions that the abolitionists
tapped in to with their campaign to show the number of supporters that had enlisted. It
also showed me the power of their writing and how well they summarized their points of
view to be presented in Parliament and with the public to increase their support.

Buxton spoke for William Wilberforce on behalf of the Africans for their rights to freedom. I tried to imagine how intimidating it must have been for Mr. Buxton to speak on behalf of William Wilberforce and in turn on behalf of the Africans. This would be a daunting task for anyone especially following in the footsteps of the most eloquent speaker William Wilberforce.


This letter was very interesting to me because Buxton wrote of his melancholy over William Wilberforce’s decision to quit Parliament and how he felt honored to be called a friend of William Wilberforce, but how he felt unworthy to represent him at the same time.


Buxton wrote of the importance of their work that he supported with great interest. He wrote of the importance of having support from the British people to not participate in the sugar trade.


This letter from Reverend Thomas Clarkson introduced Gustavus Vasa (also known as Olaudah Equiano) to Reverend Mr. Jones at Trinity College in Cambridge.

Clarkson, Reverend Thomas Diary (Travels in the West Country 1787) 1787, St. John’s College Library, Cambridge, Folder 1, Document 1, Scanned pages 7-8, 11-13, 17-21 <http://abolition.e2bn.org/source_1.html>.

This extract captures Reverend Thomas Clarkson’s spectrum of emotions and his determination involved in abolishing the slave trade. Wilberforce and his allies worked strategically together to depict the horrors of the slave ships, their captains and crews, and the corrupt practices that ran rampant in the trade. This source also documents the personal meetings that were held with local politicians and officials to gain support of the abolition movement.

This book is very special and I was so excited to be given the opportunity to view it by Vanessa Salter the Assistant Curator of Projects at the Wilberforce House in the city of Hull, England. During my visit to the Wilberforce House to conduct research, Ms. Salter offered to show me an item in their collection that has only recently been discovered and has not yet been analyzed by any outside Wilberforce researcher. She explained to me that this book contains the handwritten annotations made by William Wilberforce himself.

Draft letter/article from Thomas Clarkson (countering claims that slavery is right), 1790, Number 4. St. John’s College, Folder 1, Document 7 <http://abolition.e2bn.org/source_4.html>.

This draft article/letter from Reverend Thomas Clarkson is written in response to Mons. Mosneron de l’Auny 1790. It counter argues that slavery is not right, even if it always was practiced in Africa, and lacks few other alternatives. This letter shows how Wilberforce and his allies used evidence and their background knowledge that they had meticulously gathered from sources on the front lines of the trade to negate the slave trade proponents.


This primary source represents one of the pro-slavery arguments supporting the British slave trade created by planter-politician Bryan Edwards. Edwards, like many of his peers, claimed that the British slave trade invoked principles of ‘humanity’ and ‘improvement’ in the defense of their slave holdings. These arguments were repeatedly used on the floor of Parliament, published in pro-slavery pamphlets and newspaper articles to attempt to maintain a trading system that exploited and oppressed the African slaves using violence and other hostile forms of control.


This letter from an African ruler addressed to Liverpool merchants outlined the goods he was seeking from them in trade. It included items such as iron bar, powder, beads, salt and mugs. He offered slaves in return. He addressed the letter as Dear Gentlemen and I thought about how barbaric the slave trade was and how harshly the slaves were treated on board. I had never thought of the slave ship captains and traders as gentlemen.
Equiano, Olaudah. Letter to the Quakers from Gustavus Vasa (Olaudah Equiano) and others. Library of the Religious Society of Friends in Britain, MS Box W2/5/14, 1785 <http://abolition.e2bn.org/source_0.html>.

These types of introductions made by Wilberforce and his allies led to the writing of Equiano’s book The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano that told the amazing story of his childhood in Africa, how he was kidnapped into slavery and his later road to freedom in the Caribbean and England. The responses to his book, both pro and con, helped me to learn more about the different perspectives on the slave trade during that time period. This letter and seven others were thanking the Quakers for their work and the book “A Caution to the Great Britain and Colonies Concerning the Calamitous State of the Enslaved Africans.” This letter symbolizes correspondence between the various groups concerned with abolishing slavery before the establishment of the 1787 Committee for Effecting the Abolition of the Slave Trade. He thanked them for their deepest sense of their benevolence and their attempts to break the yoke of slavery and to ease and comfort they were extended to the thousands upon thousands of grievously afflicted and heavily burdened slaves. The letter pleaded with the Quakers to persevere and for them to be enlightened by God to continue their fight against slavery. It was letters like these and later Equiano’s book that Wilberforce masterfully used in the abolition campaign to change the minds and hearts of the world regarding this horrific practice.

Handbill 1788 Exeter (declaring support for an abolition committee and funding), 1788, Number 2. St. John’s College Library, Cambridge, Folder 1 Document 3, Printed Handbill 1 <http://abolition.e2bn.org/source_2.html>.

This handbill highlights Exeter’s dedicated support for the abolition committee both in theory and in financial funding. Wilberforce and his allies worked diligently gaining the support of the local townspeople and mayor by holding meetings, speeches and special events that generated publicity to help spread the abolitionist message. This form of grassroots movement was another leadership quality led by William Wilberforce that would later be emulated by other activists from around the world.


This handbill, produced by James Wright of Haverhill, declared that he would cease from selling sugar that was produced by slaves. This primary document touched my heart because it referred to the slaves as his fellow creatures. He listed the slave practices against them as the robberies, murders, burning of towns, stirring up and exciting the Natives to make War and Depredations on each other, in order to obtain Captives to sell
to European Traders in the Human Species. He also referred to these practices as inhumane and unchristian showing that William Wilberforce and his allies’ religious and moral beliefs against these practices.


This list of slaves on the plantation in 1798 was handwritten and reflected the lease conveying them as property instead of humans. It was a legal transfer of all the slaves on the “sugar works plantation” with 349 names listed. This list was generated in a settlement on the marriage between Charles Rose Ellis Esq. with the Honorable Elizabeth Hervey. It was a new concept to me when I read this list because I had never seen human names listed as property or possessions that people would be documenting in their court proceedings during this time period. It was a big list written by hand in a calligraphy type of writing that categorized men, women and children separately. It made me feel sad when I read over the beautiful names of these people.

Knox, W. A Country Gentlemen’s Reasons For Voting Against Mr. Wilberforce’s Motion For the Bill To Prohibit The Importation of African Negroes Into the Colonies. J. Debrett, London, 1791 <http://abolition.nypl.org/content/docs/text/a_country_gentleman.pdf?__utma=10456805.1121243463.1429590082.1429590082.1429590082.1&__utmb=10456805.2.10.1429590082&__utmc=10456805&__utmz=10456805.1429590082.1.1.utmcsr=google|utmcn=(organic)|utmcmd=organic|utmctr=(not%20provided)&__utm=-&__utm=167831329>.

This primary source was interesting because it provided me perspective on what William Wilberforce’s opposition was like during his political career. These arguments were complicated and had to be carefully examined and counter argued by Wilberforce and his allies. It made me realize how difficult it must have been for Wilberforce to confront these opposing forces every day for more than forty years of his life.


This statement showed the support of women on the abolitionist movement. I remembered from some of my interviews with historians and scholars explaining to me that the use of artwork, clothing, jewelry, tea sets, and other items that were created for people to show their support of the abolitionist movement. This gave people, especially women, a conversation starter about their beliefs. This is one of the unique characteristics of this abolitionist movement is that it became a universal movement that provided women and other ordinary people the ability to voice their own opinions on these complex issues.

This source provided a great deal of information on the historical context of England. It was interesting to read about the time period that Wilberforce lived in. I have learned by doing my National History Day projects the importance of learning about the big picture of my topic and then adding the more detailed, personal information of the individual I am researching to gain an in-depth knowledge of my project. My visit to England and the many primary and secondary source materials I was fortunate to encounter while there made this research project come alive.


This poem is an amazing example of how William Wilberforce and his allies used anti-slavery poetry and printed materials to distribute throughout the country to educate people about the horrors of slavery and how it tore families apart. It also referred to the alternative of salvation in Christianity by the abolitionists. This particular poem details the sadness and grief the slave woman experienced being separated from her child, her slave voyage and finally her eternal salvation.


This primary source called for the abolition of the British slave trade calling the slaves his fellow creatures created by God deserving fair and equal treatment. I found this source to be inspiring and compassionate towards the slaves because Phillips wrote about them in such a kind and considerate manner.

Ramsay, James Reverend. *Objections To The Abolition of the Slave Trade With Answers*. J. Phillips London, 1788 <http://abolition.nypl.org/content/docs/text/objections_slave_trade.pdf?__utma=10456805.1121243463.1429590082.1429590082.1429590082.1&__utmb=10456805.6.10.1429590082&__utmc=10456805&__utmz=10456805.1429590082.1.1.utmcsr=google|utmccn=(organic)|utmcmd=organic|utmctr=(not%20provided)&__utmv=-&__utmx=-&__utmi=10456805.1429590082.1.1.utmcsr=google|utmccn=(organic)|utmcmd=organic|utmctr=(not%20provided)&__utmv=-&__utmx=-&__utmi=10456805.1429590082.1.1.utmcsr=google|utmccn=(organic)|utmcmd=organic|utmctr=(not%20provided)&__utmv=-&__utmx=-&__utmi=10456805.1429590082.1.1.utmcsr=google|utmccn=(organic)|utmcmd=organic|utmctr=(not%20provided)&__utmv=-&__utmx=-&__utmi=10456805.1429590082.1.1.
Reverend James Ramsey wrote this primary source that addressed the publication entitled, “Considerations on the Emancipation of Negroes, and the Abolition of the Slave Trade, by a West India Planter.” In his writing he systematically addressed all of their arguments supporting the British slave trade. This type of clear and concise writing in response to their opponents was one of the greatest strengths of the abolitionist movement strengthening Wilberforce as their parliamentarian leader. Ramsey was an instrumental member of the team that helped to defeat the opposition on these intense, emotional issues involved in the British slave trade giving Wilberforce strategic points to make during arguments in Parliament.


This is an opinion in connection with the appeal of the trial in the case of Gregson vs. Gilbert, which is the legal dispute between the owners of the slave ship Zong. The insurance underwriters denied the claim by the ship owners following loss of the “property” when the slaves were thrown overboard and drowned. The dispute was framed in the opinion with the following introduction, “This was an action on a policy of insurance, to recover the value of certain slaves thrown overboard for want of water.” When I read this opinion it really took my breath away because of some of the references to human beings (slaves) as property. What is really shocking is that no matter how one comes down on the legal issues presented, you realize when reading this that the arguments of both sides assume the Africans killed in the Zong massacre are just property.


This primary source written by Liverpool merchant Michael Sergant, a pro-slavery lobbyist presented this to Parliament. In his address he claimed that the well-regulated plantations, under the protection of a kind master, enjoyed even greater advantages that when under their own despotic governments. I quoted this primary source in my research paper to show the specific types of arguments that William Wilberforce and his friends were up against in their fight to abolish the British slave trade.
This primary source was very interesting to me because I had never viewed a report that referred to people as imports and exports. I had always thought of these terms in the context of goods not humans. The King ordered a full report on the commerce of the slave trade in Africa and the West Indies and its effect on the kingdom. This report included the number of slaves coming in and out of the ports and how much total money was being made on these transactions.


This pamphlet created by William Dillwyn and John Lloyd, leading members of the Quaker Abolition Committee entitled “The Case of our fellow-creatures, the oppressed African, respectfully recommended to the serious consideration of the legislature of Great-Britain by the people called Quakers”. It was printed in London by James Phillips, in 1783, and widely circulated to MP’s, local government officials and others in power by members to guarantee widespread distribution of the facts. Wilberforce used great leadership in navigating this strategic campaign of abolition.


This cover was the first abolitionist committee set up by the Quakers that included 35 members including a doctor, chemist, tinplate worker, printer, conveyancer, linen bleacher, maltser, cutler and surgeon. This artistic design later became the official logo for the campaign logo. It was primary source evidence of how William Wilberforce and his allies understood the importance of creating a marketing campaign with a brand for people to see and support. It was a beautiful yet simple design that placed the emphasis on the information not on a complicated artistic design.

This petition from the Yearly Meetings of the Society of Friends was presented to Parliament on 16 June 1783. It was the first petition ever made to Parliament that was signed by 273 Quaker members. It was calling for members of Parliament to intervene on behalf of the slaves calling it an inhumane practice that went directly against their Christian faith. They referred to the slaves as their fellow creatures that were entitled to the same rights of mankind, and should not be held as private property in bondage.


This piece of writing was key to William Wilberforce’s campaign to abolish the British slave trade. He wrote it as an appeal on behalf of the African slaves in the West Indies. Wilberforce was a skilled writer and eloquent speaker who captivated his Parliamentarian audiences for hours at a time. In my research I was amazed to see what a prolific writer Wilberforce was. That resulted in an extensive list of primary sources to use and learn from for my project.


These collections of letters chronicle William Wilberforce’s communication between the abolitionists, legislators, philanthropists, and his sons. The letters reflect Wilberforce’s vast undertakings in many arenas to alleviate the suffering of vulnerable populations and disenfranchised groups. Wilberforce’s leadership gift of building meaningful, lasting relationships is also evident in his writings and letters.


This is a private letter written to Thomas Buxton by William Wilberforce. It was interesting to read about his daily activities from his personal perspective for a change instead of from a secondary source that I had previously read. I was impressed at how devout he was as a Christian and how this letter described to his friend how all that he was working on was the work of God.


This letter outlined his travel plans for his campaign work. As I read about his duties and activities I realized how time consuming it must have been for him and his family. His
involvement in the abolitionist movement dominated his life for so many years, and this letter provided a glimpse of what some of his journeys entailed.


William Wilberforce wrote in this letter to Thomas Buxton about the importance of how he spent his time each day. It was an accounting of how he invested his time and presentations he planned to present to Parliament. His careful accounting of his time made me realize that he put great effort in to spending his time in meaningful, focused ways that would help advance his great objects of abolishing the British slave trade and reforming the manners, morals of his society.


This was a private and confidential letter regarding William Wilberforce’s health. He wrote about his complaints about his vision that was troubling him making it difficult for him to read the newspaper accounts of his activities and his fellow abolitionists. This letter made me realize how challenging it must have been for William Wilberforce to be so active in a public campaign to abolish the British slave trade, but so limited in his ability to see how it was being written about by others because of his limited eye sight. This was a very serious physical obstacle that I was amazed did not stop him from reaching his goals.


This was a letter that William Wilberforce wrote to William Pitt that stressed the importance of helping the African people. It moved my heart the way he wrote about the Africans in such a loving and compassionate manner. He was so thoughtful and kind and it was reflected in his correspondence again and again.


This letter referred to their work as Abolition Warfare and how the British slave trade is a great evil that must be battled. His religious conviction was very clear in this letter. He felt strongly that he was fighting a battle much larger than himself on a spiritual level. His perseverance and tenacity was like hand-to-hand combat as he continued to press on each day in Parliament with his speeches, petitions and investigations of the British slave trade.

These writings were interesting discussions of recent abolitionists’ debates that Wilberforce had participated in for the movement. As I read his accounts I thought about the countless debates he participated in and the preparation it must have taken to execute these events. I was impressed to later learn about a recent find at the Wilberforce House that was a book of abolitionist’s debates that William Wilberforce had annotated himself in the margins. It was an honor to be given the opportunity to read these letters at Oxford and to be able to make the connection with the special rare book at the Wilberforce House that Vanessa Salter had shared with me in my recent visit.


This writing was about a recent bill in Parliament regarding their Abolitionist efforts. When I read the details he had recorded I came to understand all the correspondence and conversations that had to have taken place for these bills to be introduced and voted upon. I was amazed at what a prolific writer William Wilberforce was reflecting the expansive amount of work he accomplished in the name of the cause.


William Wilberforce wrote of others who held hostilities against him. I was amazed to think of all of the powerful people who opposed him from the slave traders, the people in power, the plantation owners, the merchants, the lawyers, the insurance professionals, and others. Wilberforce was keenly aware of his opposition and he worked diligently day after day to persuade them to see his viewpoints and to rethink their long held beliefs.


William Wilberforce wrote to Buxton how he was confidently anticipating the more glorious hour after overcoming his great enemies of God and man. This letter was so beautiful to me because Wilberforce took a very hostile conflict and wrote about it in a way that made it seem beautiful. He was thinking about his earthly circumstances from an eternal perspective based on his Christian faith, which helped him to fight the good fight each day.

William Wilberforce refers to his duty of straining his eyes and the intensity of the inner flame that burns for God. He would write about his vision limitations and other physical ailments, but then he would often refer to his strong motivation to accomplish the work set out before him each day. I was moved by his perseverance and inner drive. I found his attitude inspiring for my own life as a young person to not be overwhelmed by physical challenges, but to welcome the opportunity to press on as Wilberforce did to change the world.


William Wilberforce wrote to Buxton referring to the importance of the well-being of the Africans. I was impressed with his compassion and respect for the Africans and how he often wrote of them as his fellow creatures. This letter came to my mind when I was interviewing William Wilberforce who said that his ancestor is the father of the human rights movement in the way he viewed the African people as equal to others. It impressed me that William Wilberforce’s descendants are carrying out this same belief in their work for Anti-Slavery International that combats modern day slavery and human trafficking.


William Wilberforce was writing in this letter to Buxton to encourage him to not delay in his return to London when Parliament assembled. William Wilberforce had to communicate with his friends in Parliamentary gatherings before they took place to increase his much needed support for the abolitionist movement.


William Wilberforce wrote about how he is experiencing confusion in his mind that he scare knows what he is writing about, yet one idea is clear to him, the idea of the abolition of slavery. I thought about how much information he had to retain each day and how overwhelming it must have been for him both mentally and physically. I was moved by the honesty and forthrightness of this letter that helped me to feel like I knew him on a more personal, human level after I read his writing in the Oxford Bodleian Library.

Wilberforce wrote of the logistics of delivering the pamphlets written by Tom Macaulay. How they had to be divided up and carried by different members of their abolitionist team because they are too heavy for one person to carry. This letter helped me to realize all of the logistics involved in executing this lengthy campaign day after day.


In this letter William Wilberforce wrote that he only has a minute to write since dinner has some time been on the table. He wrote of his need for wisdom regarding the anti-slavery laws and what he would be attempting regarding their implementation. It was interesting to me that what he longed for was wisdom. He was called upon again and again to respond to other people and do complicated tasks, and wisdom was his greatest asset.


William Wilberforce wrote in this letter to invite Buxton to his home and expressed the importance of their friendship. Wilberforce wrote that he drew strength from the support of his friends.


In this letter William Wilberforce wrote of the importance of liberty for the Africans that he wrote is due to all people. This was such a profound and moving letter. As I read his beautiful cursive handwriting I thought about all the Africans that he helped with his efforts and their future generations.


This is a typed letter marked private. William Wilberforce wrote of his notice that he gave in the House of Commons after being so exhausted with his physical indisposition. He wrote about how he had gone to William Pitt and made him promise to take upon himself the conduct of the Great Cause. He wrote to Buxton to take on this blessed service and to apply his legal skills to the cause. He wrote that he cannot doubt what he is doing is highly pleasing to God and beneficial to his fellow creatures. If it is God’s will he wrote may God render you an instrument of extensive usefulness. William
Wilberforce definitely was an instrument of extensive usefulness with his years of dedication and service to the abolitionist movement that changed the entire world.


William Wilberforce wrote of the rights of the Africans in the British colonies and how he wanted to introduce a bill in Parliament specifically addressing these rights. It was interesting to read these types of personal letters to hear directly from William Wilberforce the thoughts he was thinking before he gave major speeches in Parliament that I had previously read about during my research.


This letter highlighted a family weddings and social gatherings that William Wilberforce participated in with his family. This letter reminded me of his devotion to his loved ones and how those close relationships strengthened him both emotionally and spiritually helping him to persevere for so many years during his fierce battle against the British slave trade.


William Wilberforce writes of requesting signatures of other members of Parliament for an anti-slavery petition. This letter represents all the time William Wilberforce invested to make personal contact with others in power for the grass roots movement to abolish slavery.


This letter communicated to Buxton all of this networking for the abolitionist movement. Wilberforce works diligently to keep Buxton abreast of their strategies and advancements for their great cause.


William Wilberforce sent his Anti-Slavery Reports to Buxton of 1841-1843 for his review and feedback. As I read this letter I realized what a great team player William Wilberforce was enlisting the help of many other people with different expertise areas to form a united force to fight the slave trade.

William Wilberforce wrote to Buxton that it is his conviction that it is the duty of the government to avert so great an evil and that any infringement whatever on the full, perfect entire freedom of the whole Negro population will forfeit justly and for even the confidence of the British public.

Wilberforce, William, personal manuscript, 4 August 1793, MS Wilberforce c.43, Special Collections, Bodleian Libraries, Oxford University, Oxford, England.

This primary source included sentimental recollections of his childhood and academic endeavors that led him to Parliament. Page 20 of this source referred to his interactions with African merchants that gave him information full of error and prejudice. Wilberforce wrote in his manuscript about the evils of the slave trade and its affect on humanity. He also wrote about how the trade linked the economies of the West Indies, Europe, and Africa.

BOOKS


This book by Thomas Clarkson was instrumental in the fight to abolish the British slave trade. Clarkson was a key partner to William Wilberforce in their campaign going by horseback to every county in the United Kingdom spreading the word about the horrors of the slave trade. He was the voice in the countryside while William Wilberforce was the voice in Parliament paired with the writings and tactical maneuvers of Templeton Sharpton as their lead writer. Clarkson shows with this work that he was also a skilled writer who could capture the key points that needed to be made when fighting the trade.


Cobbett collected William Wilberforce’s parliamentary speeches and organized them in one source. It was helpful to be able to view this source to study Wilberforce’s speeches and various efforts he presented during his long career fighting to abolish the British slave trade. It amazed me how many speeches he gave and how he never wavered from fighting for the African slaves even in the face of great adversity and death threats.

This book was very interesting because it informed me of William Wilberforce’s private life as well as his very public life. It had endearing accounts of time he spent with his family and friends during his demanding fight to abolish the British slave trade. It described him as fond of children, his family and enjoying “heating his feet up on the grass” of his country home to help balance out the stressful demands he faced on the floor of Parliament battling the powerful pro-slavery interests of his time.


This is the book that scholar and evangelical Isaac Milner and William Wilberforce read together on their long travels together in Europe during the summer of 1785, while they debated the claims of Christianity. It was these exchanges that brought the great change in William Wilberforce’s life transforming him from a skeptic of religion to committing his life fully to God and His calling of to abolish the British slave trade and aide in the reformation of manners.


This primary source profiled the life of Isaac Milner including some of his letters and writings. It also provided me with valuable information on the Clapham Sect which were William Wilberforce’s friends, a group of evangelicals and Quakers that helped him in the campaign to abolish slavery and reformation of manners.


This was one of my favorite sources for my research project on William Wilberforce because it taught me so much about the horrors of slavery from a slave’s perspective. This remarkable story recounts Equiano’s childhood in Africa and how he was kidnapped and sold as a slave and later how he obtained freedom in the Caribbean and in England. It was also helpful that there were critics of the book included in the edition so I could see what people during that time period were saying about this story.

This source provided me background information on William Wilberforce and the Anti-Slavery Society made up of abolitionists. Jay also provided additional information on emancipation and other aspects of slavery and the fight for freedom.


This was the book that Sir Isaac Milner had packed in his luggage on the summer trip he took with William Wilberforce throughout Europe. They read the book together discussing and debating Christianity in great detail. It was through these discussions and exchanges that Wilberforce experienced his “great conversion” to the faith which would later lead to his calling to abolish the British slave trade and reform the morals of his time. Wilberforce would later come to write a bestselling book of his own on this same topic, *A Practical View of the Prevailing System of Professed Christians in the Higher and Middle Classes of this Country Contrasted with Real Christianity*.


Member of Parliament, Temple Luttrell, argued before Parliament that if Britain did not trade slaves then other countries would. In his speech he admitted the trade to be inhuman and evil, but attempted to justify it by claiming the colonies must be cultivated by slaves, and that he felt it was better to supply them in British ships than buy them from French, Danish or Dutch slave traders.


This work became largely influential in the battle against slavery. It has been cited repeatedly throughout my research as inspiring others who were working to abolishing slavery in other settings. His writings are very effective in persuading the reader that the practice is wrong and violates human rights because he participated in the trade himself as a slave ship captain for more than twenty years providing him a front line view of the atrocities being practiced.


John Newton is best remembered for his hymn “Amazing Grace” that he wrote after leaving his post as captain of the slave trade to join the church. He then dedicated his life to God and serving others. It is John Newton who encouraged William Wilberforce to
remain in Parliament to fight the British slave trade instead of entering into a career in the church. He felt strongly that Wilberforce could accomplish greater good confronting this barbaric practice than abandoning the campaign.

London, 1791.

Paine was an English and American political activist, revolutionary and philosopher. As the author of *Rights of Man* his ideas reflected the idea of transnational human rights for all. His writing was very influential with the slave abolitionist campaign to end the British slave trade.


This is the published opinion of the appeal filed by the owners of the slave ship *Zong* after they won in a trial against the insurance underwriters that denied the claim for property loss in related to the *Zong* massacre. The opinion, even though it upholds the ruling against the owners and in favor of the insurance company, is horrifying because of the way it refers to African slaves as simple property.


These essays were also instrumental in the abolition of the slave trade because many of the pro-slavery supporters had been claiming that slavery was acceptable based on Biblical principles, but this work challenged that claim promoting the principle that all people are created by God and are created equal. Scott helped to show that this topic of slavery was not just an economic topic, but also one involving peoples’ moral beliefs and ethics.


The author stated that these Evangelical leaders helped to awaken the Church of England from its philosophical pride or lethargy. It is a collection of profiles depicting the courageous lives dedicated to serving others and making significant differences in the world in which they lived. The author felt that each leader had consecrated gifts that enabled them to create lasting legacies that continue to be valued inheritances today.

These writings gave information on the Wilberforce family, the abolitionists and the legislators. It was interesting to read through the different sections to learn more about this amazing man and his many accomplishments.


These writings were also very informative about William Wilberforce. I thought it was very special that his family members would take the time to write down information about his life for others to learn more about him in the generations to come. I am sure these collections are considered family treasures to the Wilberforce family today.


This collection of family prayers shows the devotion this family had to their Christian faith. It was interesting that Kevin Belmonte was a part of this project since he is also a Christian scholar that I interviewed about William Wilberforce early on in my research project.


This primary source was a detailed report in opposition to the British slave trade that highlighted their arguments against the atrocities experienced by the slaves in the Middle Passage, the cruelty of their degradation and specific incidents of death and torture. It also carefully addressed their opponents’ arguments in detail helping to strengthen the abolitionists cause.


William Wilberforce’s private papers provide insight into his dedication and commitment to the cause of the abolition of the British slave trade. He was a prolific writer that is a tremendous benefit to those interested in learning about his concentrated effort that took place for the majority of his life.

William Wilberforce wrote this book after his religious conversion to Christianity. It went through eighteen English editions between 1797 and 1830. He felt strongly that people needed to live a dedicated, authentic life connected to their belief in God. He felt that during his time many people were calling themselves Christians, but not committing their lives fully to this belief system in practical, evident ways. This book became a best seller and translated into more than five languages. It was instrumental in his campaign to abolish slavery and to reform the manners of society at that time.


This primary source is a reflection of William Wilberforce’s eloquent writing style that was the foundation for his gifted orations. It is another example of how William Wilberforce gave a voice to the voiceless, and how his leadership qualities of excellent writing and speaking skills helped to protect this vulnerable population.
SECONDARY SOURCES

INTERVIEWS

Ackerson, D. Kenneth Wayne. Email interview. 20 April 2015.

Dr. Ackerson wrote *The African Institution (1807-1827) and the antislavery movement in Great Britain*, a book that is cited in many profiles on William Wilberforce. He shared with me in the interview that some scholars have questioned Wilberforce’s leadership skills, saying he was perhaps too passive. Ackerson felt that the reality is that an in-your-face-advocate of an issue like this would have scared people away or turned them. He felt that his strength came from the strength of his character and his dedication to his principles rather than the fire and brimstone approach sometimes attempted. Ackerson was also impressed with Wilberforce’s ability to remain the Parliamentary leader of the anti-slavery movement for decades despite being in ill health. Ackerson also stated that Wilberforce’s legacy is that no matter what the circumstances and obstacles, it is always possible to right a wrong. Wilberforce’s work against the odds, pressure whether it is economic or moral, did not stand in the way of that. He also felt Wilberforce was key in bringing “gentlemanly politics” that was often being conducted behind closed doors with men involved onto the floors of Parliament to be debated and into the more public arena with petitions, protests and debates. He concluded the interview by stating that Wilberforce was ahead of his time in terms of his connection to the people and his insight into how valuable public opinion could be.

Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby. Personal interview. 29 March 2015.

Lady Kate Davson invited me to attend church with her on Palm Sunday at the Canterbury Cathedral while my family was visiting England. It was a beautiful service and I was so excited to see such an amazing place. While I was there, I had the opportunity to interview the Most Reverend and Right Honourable the Lord Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby. During our discussion, he talked about the importance of Wilberforce’s work and what a profound affect he had on all of Great Britain with his abolition of the British slave trade and his reformation of manners. He had an in-depth knowledge of Wilberforce that greatly impressed me in our interview. It occurred to me during our discussion that had he lived during the time of Wilberforce, they would have likely been close friends and fellow leaders for the anti-slavery cause.
Belmonte, Kevin. Telephone interview. 18 October 2014.

Biographer Kevin Belmonte, author of Hero for Humanity: A Biography of William Wilberforce is an impressive scholar with extensive knowledge of Wilberforce and his allies. He was the director of The Wilberforce Project at Gordon College, a program that encouraged all activities related to William Wilberforce’s legacy. He edited Wilberforce’s classic work A Practical View of Christianity and is a contributing writer for Christian History magazine. Belmonte’s book is beautifully written chronicling his lengthy career and achievements. I am grateful for his research and insight that helped me to navigate the overwhelming amount of primary sources from British Parliament, the Wilberforce family, the Quakers, the pro-slavery leaders, the abolitionist campaign materials and the broad spectrum of primary sources available today. Without Belmonte’s expert guidance and analysis in his biography, I would have felt like I was searching for a needle in a haystack when approaching some of these source holdings on William Wilberforce.

Davson, Lady Kate. E-mail interview. 2 February 2015.

Lady Kate Davson is a direct descendant of William Wilberforce, his great, great, great granddaughter. She agreed to let me interview her and has invited me to visit her home in Canterbury. She is so kind to include me in her activities and share her stories about her family. We just confirmed the dates of our family’s trip to England and I am looking forward to conducting these historic interviews.

Davson, Lady Kate. Personal interview. 29 March 2015.

It was my privilege and thrill to be invited to Canterbury, England by Lady Kate Davson, a direct descendant of William Wilberforce. Lady Davson took me and my family to Palm Sunday service at the Canterbury Cathedral and facilitated the opportunity I had to interview the Archbishop of Canterbury. I met many of her friends and neighbors in a gathering following the service. She also hosted a “British Roast” (a delicious Sunday meal) in her home in which we had an extended discussion of William Wilberforce and work by the family in modern times to combat human trafficking and other forms of slavery that continue to plague humankind. Lady Davson opened her home and her heart, sharing her passion for William Wilberforce and his legacy and I feel honored that I was fortunate enough to have this wonderful opportunity. If William Wilberforce was anything like his descendent Lady Davson, I feel as though I have had an experience of reaching back in time to make a personal connection with a leader in history and his legacy of passion, persistence and resolve.
Hochschild, Adam. Email Interview. 16 April 2015.

Hochschild is a lecturer at the Graduate School of Journalism at the University of California, Berkeley. His *Bury the Chains: Prophets and Rebels in the Fight to Free an Empire’s Slaves* (2005) is about the antislavery movement in the British Empire. He focused in on the story of how the abolitionists united to transform the mind of the British people about slavery and how it influences contemporary activists who are inspired by the work of Wilberforce and the others. The interview with Hochschild referred to Wilberforce as a great Parliamentarian leader of the abolition movement and uniting other great abolitionists such as: James Stephen, Elizabeth Heyrick, and above all Thomas Clarkson. He also had many strong suggestions of other secondary source books to review such as those by James Walvin and David Brion Davis.

McQuade, Aidan. Email Interview. 30 March 2015.

I was fascinated by this interview provided by Aidan McQuade, the Director of the Anti-Slavery International organization because I learned so much about modern-day slavery and human trafficking. McQuade was very knowledgeable about William Wilberforce. He was impressed with the moral courage that Wilberforce possessed and practiced. He commented on how Wilberforce had the courage of his convictions even when his beliefs made him unpopular. He was also impressed with Wilberforce’s tenacity and persistence that enabled him to remain dedicated to his cause year in and year out. He also stressed the importance of Wilberforce’s friends and allies such as Thomas Clarkson, Equiano, Granville Sharp, the Quakers, the early trade unions, and many others.

Regis, Nicoll. Telephone interview. 19 November 2014.

I was honored to have been able to interview Regis Nicoll, author of a collection of articles on Wilberforce. He shared with me what made Wilberforce a great leader. William Wilberforce had clarity of vision and a dogged determination to see it through; he was an excellent communicator; he was a team builder, partnering with those of like mind to accomplish shared goals, and also bridge builder with folks with whom he disagreed; he would never let setbacks or defeats deter him from his course; he understood that slavery was only a symptom of a much wider and deeper problem (moral decline) that must be addressed for any lasting social change. This was a very insightful view of the great leader William Wilberforce.


While I was visiting England, I had the opportunity to take a train ride to Hull, the city where William Wilberforce was born at home and where the same Wilberforce House is now a museum and archive. This house has been renovated into a museum covering
several subjects including the life and legacy of William Wilberforce. It was amazing to see the place I had been researching about for so long. I called ahead and asked if I could interview anyone and I was put into contact with Vanessa Salter. She showed me many primary sources including a book full of debates from Parliament annotated by Wilberforce himself, and only recently discovered. No academics have seen this book before. It was refreshing to meet Vanessa, someone who shares my enthusiasm for William Wilberforce.

Stetson, Chuck. Telephone interview. 3 April 2015.

Chuck Stetson was very knowledgeable about William Wilberforce based on his scholarly research and documentary film making of The Better Hour. I am honored that he invited my family to attend the Wilberforce Award dinner in Washington, D.C. in June. He asked me to speak at the annual event about my research on Wilberforce. Mr. Stetson has also graciously provided me the opportunity to write an article entitled “What Every Young Person Needs to Know Today About William Wilberforce” for The Washington Times newspaper. This is a tremendous opportunity for me to share my research and pursue my dream of becoming a journalist. Stetson has spearheaded many educational projects to implement curriculum in middle school and high school classrooms across the country. He is currently leading the cause to incorporate ethics training for business school students based on the requests of the leaders of Fortune 500 companies who feel that this would be a tremendous asset to their incoming employees.

Walvin, James. Email Interview. 21 April 2015.

Walvin is a professor at the forefront of the research on Britain and the slave trade. He wrote A Short History of Slavery (London: Penguin, 2007), and he is an expert who is often called upon to advise museum displays, articles and speeches. He was an expert who helped to organize the 200th anniversary of the abolition of the Atlantic slave trade. He feels strongly that William Wilberforce was the Parliamentary leader of the abolition movement because he took on a task that no one else took on during his lifetime. He was the voice for the cause for decades. Walvin also pointed out that while many remember William Wilberforce as the father of the abolition movement and his name is always associated with it, but that he was also instrumental as a member of the campaign team. Walvin referred to Wilberforce as one of many great people that helped to change history.

Wilberforce, Sam. Telephone interview. 15 April 2015.

Sam Wilberforce has been extremely helpful contacting other descendants of William Wilberforce. I was able to contact him through the William Wilberforce family tree website. I learned through Sam that there are twelve living descendants who have the patrilineal surname Wilberforce along with four whom had adopted it from their mothers.
He said that Wilberforce was a legendary speaker who once calmed a riot in York by getting up on a podium and speaking to the crowd. William Wilberforce was an extraordinary presence and a great conversationalist as well according to Sam Wilberforce. He is also organizing for other Wilberforce relatives to allow me to interview them when I come and visit them.

Wilberforce, William. E-mail interview. 26 January 2015.

It was such an honor to learn from William Wilberforce that he thinks it is wonderful I am doing a research project on his ancestor. He lives sixty miles away from the Wilberforce House in North Yorkshire where he has invited my family and I to visit. He will be sharing with me some of William Wilberforce’s personal items that he said would be helpful to my research project. I am looking forward to meeting him and all of his relatives over Easter break.

Wilberforce, William. Telephone Interview. 20 April 2015

I had the privilege of interviewing William Wilberforce, a direct descendant of William Wilberforce, regarding the leadership and legacy of William Wilberforce. William described his ancestor as a persuader, a person who did not confront people directly. He said that William Wilberforce was a gifted orator was never confrontational, but he could talk anyone into agreeing with his viewpoints. According to Wilberforce, he was very tenacious and led by example with his Christian faith. When asked what Wilberforce’s legacy is, William told me that his legacy is the beginning of human rights. In the 18th century when Wilberforce began his campaign, people really didn’t think about the Africans. Wilberforce encouraged people to treat their fellow human beings, as they would like to be treated. He actually got people thinking about the welfare of the Africans, and influenced them to use everyday items to show their support such as their tea sets, artwork, clothing, and other items to be able to show their support for the abolitionist movement. It became a universal campaign that even ordinary people could get involved in, according to William Wilberforce. William Wilberforce owns a cast iron box that was gifted to his ancestor by freed slaves. The box is made of melted-down shackles and manacles that the slaves had previously been forced to wear. The freed slaves made this to thank Wilberforce for his efforts. There are only two boxes of its kind with one owned by William Wilberforce and the second box housed at the Wilberforce Museum in Hull, England.

Wilberforce, William (Dan). Telephone interview. 22 April, 2015

I had the privilege of interviewing William (Dan) Wilberforce, a direct descendant of William Wilberforce. Dan Wilberforce said that William Wilberforce very successfully made the idea of religion around common humanity very accessible. According to Dan Wilberforce, William Wilberforce was more like a general, coordinating his allies and
coming up with new ideas. He admires his relative because William Wilberforce never tried to take too much control over the abolition project. Instead, he let others contribute and this strategy proved quite prosperous. Dan Wilberforce also stated that the life and legacy of William Wilberforce proves that change can happen one lifetime at a time. Dan Wilberforce has completed his degree in Human Rights in London and he plans to do his legal training next – strategically placing himself to help victims of modern slavery, or human trafficking. I left this interview inspired, and concluding that Dan Wilberforce is a modern-day Wilberforce.

**BOOKS**


Dr. Ackerson was so insightful in our interview with his in-depth understanding of William Wilberforce. I came across this book later in my research process that described Wilberforce as a pivotal abolitionist and antislavery group with member in Britain that included royalty, prominent lawyers, members of Parliament, William Wilberforce, Thomas Clarkson, and Zachary Macaulay. This group focused on the spread of Western civilization to Africa and abolition of the slave trade to improve the lives of all people. Ackerson was an excellent addition to my research with his scholarly writings and outstanding interview.


This collection of poems and songs was interesting to read. I have always enjoyed singing “Amazing Grace” and now especially so after I have learned about its author, John Newton, as a slave trader and how he influenced William Wilberforce to stay in the fight and not retreat to the church to be a voice for the voiceless to abolish the horrible British slave trade.


Mr. Belmonte’s book was one of the key sources for my research. I was able to also interview him early on in my project. He was so kind and passionate about William Wilberforce being a man of great faith and inspiration. Belmonte stated that Wilberforce’s influence on modern culture is unparalleled. I enjoyed learning about Wilberforce’s childhood, his college years and later his political battle to abolish slavery. Belmonte’s book and interview have inspired me to strive in my life to help others like Wilberforce did for so many.

The title of this book refers to the King James Bible. Since its publication in 1611, it has been the best-selling book in the world. Many believe that it has had the greatest impact on the world. While the King James Bible has spread the Protestant faith, it has also influenced the worldviews of many, including William Wilberforce’s. Because of this, the King James Bible was crucial to the abolition of the slave trade.


Carey states that people involved in the late eighteenth-century slavery debate developed a sentimental rhetoric, using the language of the heart to strong effect. Examining poetry, journalism, novels, and political writing, Carey explains that slave-owners and abolitionists made strategic use of the rhetoric of sensibility in the hope of influencing a reading public thoroughly immersed in the "cult of feeling."


This secondary source work provided key analysis of William Wilberforce’s work and his writings. It refers to him as a saint and a statesman. It expertly quotes William Wilberforce’s diaries his private letters with his family, friends and others.


This secondary source was instrumental in helping me to navigate the vast collections of primary sources on William Wilberforce. Cowie’s work was extremely helpful because it chronicled his life giving key information on manuscripts and archival resources, as well as extensive information on the work on published on Wilberforce’s personal life. I was disappointed when I learned that Cowie had passed away in the fall because I wanted to interview him and personally thank him for his outstanding research that had helped me so much on my project.


This secondary source gave excellent analysis on Wilberforce’s life. If made me realize how amazing it is that Wilberforce dedicated most of his life from his early twenties to 73-years-of-age at his death to the Abolitionist movement. This source helped to highlight the personal side of Wilberforce and the many sacrifices he made for this admirable cause. It is the first biography where the author had access to the Wilberforce papers and he has an honors degree in History from Oxford. He stated about Wilberforce that his conscience dictated everything he did each day. He believed that Wilberforce had more influence and power than any other Member of Parliament in history. I felt as
if I had followed in the footsteps of Furneaux when I visited the Wilberforce House in Hull where I viewed the Wilberforce papers and Oxford’s Bodleian Library where I visited their special holdings and read Wilberforce’s original manuscripts.


This book was very inspirational to me because it highlighted how William Wilberforce was able to forge the way for the abolition of slavery and reform the morals in England during this time period. John Pollock and J. Douglas Holladay wrote the chapter on William Wilberforce including in-depth information about his life of significance and the forces he was working against throughout his campaign to end slavery and change the way people thought, behaved and believed. Wilberforce is described as a man tiny in stature, but towering in significance who stands before us as an inspiration and a challenge to live lives of significance as he did during his time in history.


This award-winning author and leader of the Conservative Party in England, wrote a tremendous book about William Wilberforce. Hague detailed Wilberforce’s dramatic life of service from the perspective of a politician himself that possesses a deeper understanding of the countless political strategies and maneuvers he had to perform in his lengthy battle of the British slave trade. Hague was also able to capture how Wilberforce was able to hold on to his ethics and moral principles over politics and power. His book helps to illuminate how Wilberforce always put service to God over self to benefit all of humanity with his abolition of the slave trade.


This book contained many stories of bravery and courage including William Wilberforce. The book is dedicated by the authors to those who dove headfirst into battle, those who made amazing discoveries and those who moved boundaries in their lifetime. I think William Wilberforce is the perfect candidate to be included in a collection such as this for his perseverance and tenacity in fighting the British slave trade for the majority of his life. Conn stated that Thomas Clarkson’s most important single act was to recruit to The Society for the Abolition of the Slave Trade the youthful MP for Yorkshire, William Wilberforce. He described Wilberforce as the brilliant advocate in Parliament, Clarkson their passionate voice in the country and Granville Sharp their writer and tactician behind the scenes. He referred to them as a formidable trinity.

This secondary source gave insightful information on William Wilberforce and his evangelical colleagues from the Clapham Circle. It helped to provide information on his leadership and legacy of moral renewal and how he changed people’s hearts and minds and the world.


*Amazing Grace* tells the story of an unsung hero, William Wilberforce. It gives an in-depth look at the life and legacy of the great British abolitionist and his extraordinary role as a human rights activist. At the center of his life was the passionate twenty-five year fight to abolish the British slave trade, a victory achieved in 1833 just three days before his death. This book helped me become acquainted with an exceptional man who inspired Abraham Lincoln and the anti-slavery movement in America.


*Seven Men* offers answers in captivating stories of some of the greatest men who have ever lived. Seven figures come to life as real people who experienced struggles and challenges that probably would have destroyed the resolve of other men. One of these amazing men was William Wilberforce. Metaxas stated in the book that William Wilberforce was someone who took the Bible seriously, and as a result of this belief, he literally changed the world. He made a significant impact on the social ills of the day through personal effort skill and influence; he showed perseverance and selflessness in combating injustice. That was Wilberforce’s secret.


Pollock provided helpful information on William Wilberforce’s life and the historical context of his time. He also drew from many previously unpublished manuscripts that helped me to look for newly available sources that I may not have been aware of had it not been for his excellent research. Lady Kate Davson (William Wilberforce’s great, great, great, granddaughter, who I visited in England) and scholar Kevin Belmonte both recommended this secondary source to me for my project. Pollock used the unpublished manuscripts of William Wilberforce to create one of the most in-depth biographies on Wilberforce.

Reddie was a student of Spanish and Caribbean studies and travelled extensively throughout the Caribbean formerly known as the West Indies. His writing provides more details on the growth of Britain’s military power and the development of slavery. Reddie describes himself as an African (Caribbean) British subject who was raised in a Christian household giving him a unique perspective on the story of the struggle to abolish slavery in the British colonies. I purchased this book from the Wilberforce House in Hull.


I was fortunate to receive this book from the editor Chuck Stetson after I watched his documentary *Creating the Better Hour* and interviewing him on the telephone. The documentary was an outstanding source that provided many other possible sources such as the Archbishop of Canterbury (who I was also able to interview while visiting Canterbury with the Wilberforce descendant, Lady Kate Davson). Stetson also invited me to attend and speak at the Wilberforce Awards dinner at the Mayflower Ballroom in D.C. on June 11th. Stetson also asked me to write an article for the Washington Times telling whatever young person should know about William Wilberforce today. These events were some of the greatest NHD moments in my project when I am able to take my research and present it back for other people to learn from, too. I also want to be a journalist, so this is the perfect opportunity to begin now.


This source tells the treacherous story of the slave in the West Indies. It highlights how slavery affected the culture and financial base of the western world. I purchased this source at the Wilberforce House in Hull after Vanessa Salter recommended it to me in the course of my interview of her. This source helped me to visualize how brutal the conditions were for the slaves who worked in the fields of the plantations. The author described how the slaves were forced to work from sun up to sun down daily with each task having its own exquisite pain.

Aiken highlights how William Wilberforce is an instrumental leader in the abolition of the British slave trade. The article discusses how Wilberforce almost abandoned politics to enter the church, and how the former slave captain John Newton encouraged him to remain in the House of Commons in order to serve God as a Christian political statesman.


This article profiles William Wilberforce as the champion of the cause to abolish the British slave trade as a politician, an evangelical and a gifted orator. It included details on how Wilberforce was attacked in several biographies written by historians and how he serves as a model Christian statesman. Bradley also gives in-depth analysis on how this one individual greatly influenced the campaign against the trade on the lives of the British people and their political opinions.


I learned more about William Wilberforce’s educational background at Cambridge from this article and how he studied at St. John’s College. He was one of the youngest members, along with Pitt the Younger, to be elected to Parliament in 1780. It is amazing to me that his political career continued until 1825 in spite of his many health problems and mental challenges on the front lines of this brutal fight against the slave trade. It also highlights how he fought valiantly against the vice and evils of his time, and in the later part of his life fought for full emancipation for the slaves.


This was an interesting article by Carey that examined the sentimental contents of the reports of a historic political event and the speech that William Wilberforce gave before the British Parliament. Carey also examined the parliamentary reporting that took place during this time. It made me realize the importance of the tone of the speeches given by William Wilberforce and the effect he had on his listeners regarding these very controversial and often emotional debates and speeches.

This article emphasized how William Wilberforce was a social reformer who worked diligently to end the slave trade throughout the entire British Empire. It included information on how he met Issac Milner and John Newton, both dedicated Christians, when he was working in Parliament. Their friendships with Wilberforce led to his dedicated renewed Christian faith. It is interesting to me that it was John Newton, a former slave captain, who was instrumental in convincing Wilberforce to fight the horrors of the slave trade after he had participated in it for more than twenty years. Newton knew first-hand the atrocities that had been committed, and he had even been involved in committing them, but he stopped and became a positive force to end these horrible practices.


This article expressed the family’s sadness about letting go of a home that had been in their family for three centuries. The owner of the home, William Wilberforce, is the great-great-great-great grandson of the famous reformer. He recalled memories from his childhood of times spent at the great estate. Despite his amazing legacy, this made me realize that each generation of his descendants have their own challenges.


This article was helpful to my research because it included information on William Wilberforce and other people who helped him to abolish the British slave trade. Influential people that were profiled include English lawyer, politician and abolitionist James Stephen; French-American abolitionist Anthony Benezet; and English abolitionist Granville Sharp. Coffey also provided background information on how the American and French Revolutions on the abolitionist movement and many of the debates in Parliament that took place over the years.


This article by Prison Minister Chuck Colson highlights how William Wilberforce worked to transform society’s values and not just its laws. This is one of his greatest leadership quality and legacies that benefited England and the world. Many political leaders and social activists continue to look to his model today when striving to make a difference in the way people think and behave.

This was an interesting article because it provided information about William Wilberforce’s life and also discusses the film “Amazing Grace” that is a profound account of Wilberforce’s life. Colson and Morse point out how important it was that Wilberforce persevered in the face of intense opposition in Parliament with his insistence in introducing anti-slavery bills that eventually became law.


I found this article very interesting because it profiles Zach Hunter, a fifteen- year-old abolitionist, who worked to end slavery worldwide just like his hero William Wilberforce. Hunter doesn’t believe that slavery is a problem from the past, but states that more than 27 million people are enslaved in modern times. The article informed me that the U.S. Department of State placed 39 countries, including China, Russia, Jamaica, Brazil, and Cambodia on a special watch for human-trafficking issues. I would like to research to see if Zach Hunter is still pursuing this cause eight years later.


This article discussed how the abolishment movement promoted the political mobilization of religious groups and women as well as sparking boycotts. Drescher also highlighted how petitions promoting abolition of slavery during the reawakening of ethics and morality in British culture which was directly tied to Wilberforce’s reformation of manners campaign. Wilberforce felt called by God to reform the manners, morals of British society and to abolish the British slave trade.


This article examines the cultural memory of the bicentenary of the abolition of the slave trade in Britain. It highlights the official government responses and how these are highlighted in the film Amazing Grace. The authors stress that there is a process of historical erasure that takes place rather than a confrontation of the present day social and political effects of this horrific past.


Greenman emphasizes the work of Wilberforce and other Anglican evangelicals over the past 300 years that have addressed major political, social and moral concerns during their
lives. The article stated that scholars often overlook the contributions of these individuals that were made in relation to people’s moral lives. The author also encourages Anglican conservative moral voices to continue to contribute to contemporary ethical debates of modern times.


This article features William Wilberforce with his family background, his British political career and how he helped to influence people in his personal life as well. It also included his contributions to helping to support missionary programs in British India.


This article stresses that modern day asylum seekers need a modern William Wilberforce. It discusses the treatment of refugees awaiting decisions on the applications involving the denial of their basic human rights and draws a connection with the withholding of humane treatment of the slaves being traded in the British slave trade. I have been learning a great deal about modern day human trafficking problems during my research project from articles like Holman’s.


This article highlighted the making of the film *Amazing Grace* that helped to teach a broader audience about William Wilberforce and his allies. It gave detailed background on the locations in England where Wilberforce frequented and scenes of his work in Parliament. It was an exciting article for me to read as I prepare to travel to England with my family in the near future to learn more about my topic and meet the Wilberforce family members.


This article highlights Thomas Clarkson and William Wilberforce. The article also gives information on how the success of the Slave Trade Act of 1807 and the Slavery Abolition Act of 1833 helped influence political events in other arenas including the United States.


Neff’s article described the many leadership qualities of William Wilberforce in a variety of settings that include Parliament, establishing philanthropies and acting as a champion of the cause to abolish slavery within the British society. Neff highlighted Wilberforce’s
ability to deliver gifted orations to otherwise hostile audiences who were drawn in to listen because of his eloquent speech and deliveries.


I found this article to be helpful because it listed many of William Wilberforce’s detractors. I have learned by doing historical writing how important it is to research all sides of my topic to be able to tell the entire story with its many perspectives and points of view. It also detailed his allies and strategies including his strong belief in God that guided his actions daily.


This article highlights the moral lessons that can be learned from William Wilberforce’s life and his allies. It states that people must not feel foolish about their misgivings about politics and not to be afraid to get involved in a variety of issues. It stresses that for an individual to be effective politically, one must possess strong moral standing. It is interesting that Wilberforce was able to confront his opponents on a daily basis within the corrupt system of the slave trade and maintain his own belief system for so many years.

ELECTRONIC SOURCES


This website was instrumental in helping me to understand the details of the British slave trade abolition movement. It was very informative including all perspectives to the topic including arguments opposing and supporting the trade. I enjoyed searching the many primary and secondary sources and listening to the audio recordings that were included in their holdings. The site also provided many intriguing visuals to help me picture in my mind’s eye these people and the many years that were invested in stopping the trade. I have included several visuals from their site in my appendix including Thomas Clarkson’s museum box that he carried with him through out every county that contained slave chains, other tools of torture and visuals of the slave ships to help convince people that this horrible industry must be stopped.

This website helped to highlight William Wilberforce’s legacy of inspiring other individuals to make a difference in their own communities. The site was based on the Better Hour documentary about Wilberforce’s work. It highlighted lessons from his story and invited people to join them in creating a William Wilberforce gathering in their community of like-minded people to choose a topic to make a difference about. I am forming a William Wilberforce group in my community to make a difference, too. I am looking forward to seeing what topic our group chooses to focus on in Kern County.


This guide was very helpful because it provided essential information on the slave trade, what records are available in the National Archives, records relating to transportation of slaves and goods, the campaign against slavery, records of ex-slaves and liberated Africans, the enslaves and resistance, records of plantations, records in other institutions and further reading. It helped me to structure my paper and research process by giving me landmark sources to uncover. This type of guide is very valuable otherwise I can get overwhelmed trying to navigate the sea of sources related to my topic. So instead of looking for a needle in a haystack it gives me very specific things to search for to fill in the big picture and historical context of this fascinating story.


This website was interesting because it provided records about the slave trade from the Navy’s records including the suppression of the slave trade, this inhuman traffic, burning the barracoons, the pen is mightier, fighting on moral ground, defeating the slavers, continuing the operations today, supporting the abolitionists cause with bicentenary events, and news about the topic today. It made me realize what an important role the Navy played in its active policing and enforcing of the 1807 and 1866 Acts against slavery. The website detailed the navy’s campaign which began in West Africa, and lasted well into the 20th century, and has now grown worldwide. The website stated that between 1807 and 1866 the Royal Navy captured well over 500 slave ships and prevented many more from loading their slave cargo.

This website shared information on the global financial institutions that started off as slave profiteering firms before growing into multinational behemoths of today. The article stated that many of the firms have acknowledged their links to slavery today. Some have even apologized for and set up programs to make amends. The list included JP Morgan, the Royal Bank of Scotland, Aetna, New York Life Insurance Company, Lehman Brothers, Bank of America, Wachovia Bank, Yale University, and others. It listed Brown University’s commission that has been set up to look into these links with slavery and how those involved should make amends. It listed how Tony Blair and the US Senate in 2009 passed resolutions to apologize for these slavery practices and segregation. This website inspired me to contact the Brown University Commission to learn more about their work today.


This website helped to highlight the pro-slavery and anti-slavery arguments with interesting images and visuals. Bristol, one of England’s major port cities, is written about in detail because of its many businessmen, merchants, traders and insurance companies who insured the slave ships on their voyages to Africa and the Caribbean. It told of the huge number of people the slave trade also employed in the shipbuilding yards, the local factories where the tobacco and sugar was processed that was grown on the plantations where the slaves worked. The shopkeepers sold the items and the rum from these sources in their shops, too. I also learned about the brass works in and around the city that were produced for trade in Africa and all the wealthy families attached to these dealings. The site told of Charles Pinney, whose father was a merchant in Bristol who owned plantations and slaves on the Caribbean island of Nevis. The politicians also represented these people and their financial interests because it made Bristol stronger financially. Wilberforce was battling against all of these forces. It amazes me that he was victorious over such a deeply ingrained, far-reaching system based on slavery.


This website was helpful in providing me with studies and data regarding how much money is estimated to have been made off the slave trade. I wanted to be sure to include this type of information in my research to show what a huge economic force William
Wilberforce and his allies were battling when taking on this Goliath of an industry with its many financial tentacles. One quote I found especially powerful on the site from Robin Blackburn stated, “Captive Africans and their descendants paid with their blood and sweat from the phenomenal expansion of human possibilities in the Atlantic world.”


William Wilberforce’s descendant, Sam Wilberforce directed me to his website that was extensive in its research and analysis of the transatlantic slave trade and human trafficking that continues to be a major problem in our world today. Sam works with Anti Slavery International fighting modern day slavery around the world. I found it amazing that he is continuing William’s legacy in this fight. It has a lengthy introductory research section that was written for the International Year to Commemorate the Struggle Against Slavery and its Abolition. I learned a great deal about the historical aspects of the trade and the important role William Wilberforce and others played in establishing universal human rights that people continue to fight for today. After reading the many sections of this website I came to realize how timely my topic is regarding William Wilberforce and the abolition of slavery.


This website was very helpful in providing in-depth background information on William Wilberforce and his allies in the campaign against slavery abolition. It incorporated primary and secondary sources into the profile on Wilberforce helping me to understand what scholars said about specific events and turning points in the campaign. The site also had an extensive list of primary sources that I checked against the ones I had already located to see which ones I needed to locate to broaden my research.

FILMS


This film captured William Wilberforce’s epic battle to abolish the British slave trade. It focused on William Wilberforce’s tenacity and perseverance in dramatic scenes that were gripping. I learned a great deal about all the powerful pro-slavery forces that constantly battled against his efforts. The director also did a masterful job of portraying the sensitive and dedicated side of Wilberforce that he shared with his loving family.
The Better Hour; The Legacy of William Wilberforce, Directed by Cullen Schippe, 60 minutes, PBS Studios, March 2008. DVD.

This documentary investigates the 20-year effort of William Wilberforce to abolish the British slave trade. It was an extremely helpful source that I took notes on throughout the viewing for additional interviews, sources and perspectives. It is named The Better Hour because English poet William Cowper described how when character and community unite it brings the world into the better hour. This documentary was very well done by the Public Broadcasting System, and it provided me with additional scholars and experts that spoke on different aspects of William Wilberforce’s life.

SPEECHES


It was fascinating to read Hague’s speech that he gave on the bicentenary of the abolition of the slave trade. In the speech, Hague expressed his deep personal interest in William Wilberforce and the abolition. Hague also discussed other key players in the abolition effort such as Thomas Clarkson and Granville Sharp. He stated Wilberforce’s motive, to remove “the foulest blot that ever stained Britain’s National character.” Hague also addressed some of today’s issues, which include human trafficking and forced labor. William Hague expressed how Britain is working together with other powerful forces to rid the world of human trafficking altogether. In my opinion the continued focus on anti-slavery efforts is large part of the legacy of William Wilberforce.