

Britain, Slavery and Gothic Fiction

Source 1: The Royal African Company

In London, just a few doors down from the headquarters of the *East India Company* stood the headquarters of the *Royal African Company*. This company started off as *The Company of Royal Adventurers*, which received a royal charter from King Charles II in 1660. Its principal aim was to develop the African slave trade and ensure that Britain received its share of the profits.

LONDON the 9th Day of April 1686

Barbados 26th February 1685

Account of Sales of Negroes by the Solider Capt Charles Masters
Commander from Wida for acc^o of the Roy African Company of England.
M W B G

Sold John Gibb Esq. bills payable the last day.	5	2	140	
Sold John Gray to pay in May next	3			1200
Sold Philip Lewis to pay in May next	1			1200
Sold Mathew Chapman to in 1 month	5		110	
Sold Edward King bills pay. by 1 st Septemb ^r	7		80	
Sold for Cash to Richard Wynn	2		37.10	
Sold Thomas Harum bills pay. by 1 st Septemb ^r	3	3	120	
Sold George & Dares to pay in 3 months	1		17	
Sold Nathaniel Fox to pay in 3 months	1		18	
Sold Paul Lyle to pay in December	4		80	
Sold William Colseth pay ready money	3		60	
Sold Sir Robert Dares bills	3	1	96	
Sold John Gray bills	2	1	60	
Sold Capt. Rich ^d Scott bills pay. in 3 months	6		115	
Sold Major John Johnson to pay in 2 mo th	1		17	
Sold John Waite 2 bills pay. in 8 months the one half money in 6 mo th all of Barbados	17	4	378	
Sold Ben ^t Noyce 20 in July 1685 in February	2	1	60	
Sold for Cash to John Deacon	2		40	
Sold Edward Denny	1		22	
Sold Alexander Campbell 23 in months rat in Barb.	1		16	
Sold William Kippi to pay in 3 months	1		22	
Sold James & Wynn 11 money rat in Barb.	1		19	
Sold Nathaniel Aynswood to pay in 3 mo th	1		24.10	
Sold William Baynes to pay in 3 months	1		20	
Sold Francis How to pay in 6 months	6		114	
March 1 st Sold John Raven to pay in 6 months	3	2	78	
Sold John Raven to pay in 6 months	1	1	34	
Sold Thomas Sabie to pay ready money	1		15.10	
Sold Henry to pay in 3 months	1	1	30	
Sold Abraham Darrah bills pay. in Feb ^r	4	8	126	
	78	32	1	1993.10
Delivered the Capt. for his commission Negroes	2			
At rate on acc ^o of 1 st of Barbados according to the Company	22	8	2	
Charges on the Negroes viz:			102.40	1.3
To boatmen to make out the Negroes & co. 05			5	
To provisions in Barbados by Sugar for at Barb.			17.6	
To boatmen aboard and ashore the 3 days of Barb.			15	
Commission on said money at 7 percent			14.26	6.58
To acc ^o of the Royal Afric ⁿ Comp ^y of England for the net proceed			1997.43	16800

carried further in their own private bills &c. musters hundred thirty seven pounds five shillings
this price half penny Sterling & sixteen thousand eight hundred pounds of Mass^e Sugar
Stephen Garrison

This document is from an account book showing slaves obtained in Africa by the Royal African Company and the islands they were delivered to in the Caribbean.

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Source 2: The Museum of London Docklands

This museum – opened in 2003 - tells the history of London’s River Thames. The building is an early 19th century Georgian warehouse (built in 1802), which used to house sugar. It is in the “West India Docks” on the Isle of Dogs.



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Source 3: Extract from *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, the African. Written by Himself* (1789)

“At last, when the ship had got in all her cargo, they made ready, and we were all put under the deck. The stench of the hold while we were on the coast was so intolerably loathsome, that it was dangerous to remain there for any time, and some of us had been permitted to stay on the deck for fresh air; but now that the whole ship’s cargo were confined together, it became absolutely pestilential. The closeness of the place, and the heat of the climate, added to the number in the ship, which was so crowded that each had scarcely room to turn himself, almost suffocated us. This produced copious perspirations, so that the air soon became unfit for respiration, from a variety of loathsome smells, and brought on a sickness among the slaves, of which many died, thus falling victims to the improvident avarice of their purchasers. This wretched situation was again aggravated by galling of the chains, now become insupportable; and the filth of the necessary tubs, into which the children often fell, and were almost suffocated. The shrieks of the women and the groans of the dying, rendered the whole a scene of horror almost inconceivable.”

This book was published in London in 1789 – a slavery narrative, a travel narrative and the story of the writer’s spiritual journey (to Christianity). It describes the enslavement and eventual emancipation of its writer, Olaudah Equiano.

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Source 4: An article from a London newspaper, published on Thursday 16th April 1789

For the DIARY.

ON THE

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Addressed to the Supporters of that alarming Measure.

COUNTRYMEN, reflect a moment on what you are about!—the Sugar colonies, the trade of which is of more advantage to this country than most who talk on the subject are aware of, will soon be lost to us. The capital employed in the culture of the colonies it is said, and I believe truly, to amount to between sixty and seventy millions, two thirds or more of which, belong to the subjects residing in this kingdom. Can England in her involved situation, owing at this moment 240,000,000*l.* afford to lose so immense a sum? For the lands cannot be cultivated, nor the manufacture of sugar, &c. carried on, without the trade your ill-judged zeal wants to put an end to. Are you prepared with a fund to make up a compensation to the planters, merchants, and thousands of annuitants, whose daily bread depends on the produce of this beneficial commerce with the West India Islands?—You mistakingly treat this business as though you yourselves were not concerned in the event; short sighted must that man be who is so deluded. I have good reason to believe, that nearly one third of the commerce of this kingdom depends on the African trade, directly or collaterally.—If you give up your trade, what must become of your navy, the bulwark of England?—remember that every mariner you lose for want of employment, goes into the scale of rival nations, who have, at this moment, agents somenting this madness that has spread itself amongst the multitude.—The cry is humanity;—I am free enough to call it the cry of folly and enthusiasm; for supposing all the stories that have been propagated and written upon this subject, for a moment, to be

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This article attempts to persuade its readers of the economic benefits of slavery in the West Indies.

