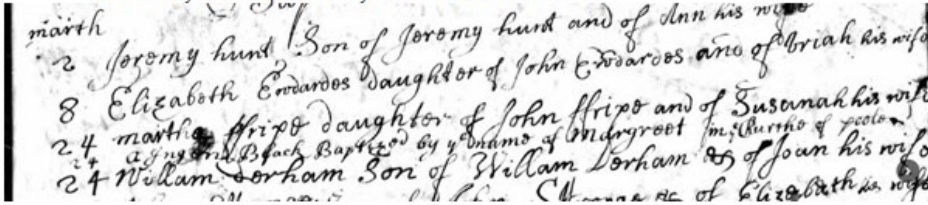


Beginning Your Family History

Part Sixteen: Black History Month 2020



Posted by Penelope Lovesy at 16/10/2020 09:14:05



Catherine Ross - Founder Director, Museumand - The National Caribbean Heritage Museum, Editor of Black History Month 2020, writes:

"This year's Black History Month is a time to shine a light on our shared British history and tell the whole story honestly and truthfully, to decolonise and reclaim history, and tell stories from the perspective of all people."

"Black people have always made history and always will – but it's equally important that Black people take the lead on how that history is discovered, explored, researched, recorded, archived, curated, exhibited and shared. That means supporting Black-led heritage organisations and professionals; making national and local institutions much more accessible and representative; and empowering communities to define and share what Black history means to them."

<https://www.blackhistorymonth.org.uk/article/section/bhm-intros/why-black-history-month-is-more-important-than-ever-this-year/>

In the Poole parish records, evidence of Black history exists. An illustration of this is that on 29 September 1787 "John, a black belonging to Mr John Fiander," was baptised. We know that in 1784, Mary Fiander willed her 'sloop or vessel called Mayflower' to her son John. However, how do we link these two glimpses from the records and discover more about the John who was baptised without framing and telling his story through the history of the Fianders?

In this blog I want to link to a range of resources which can guide you through researching Black history. I am not an expert in this area, and I do not know the answer to the question above but will continue to learn and search.

<https://www.blackhistorymonth.org.uk/>

The website for Black History Month 2020 has a range of information and articles and some thorough sections on history, it is definitely worth reading.

<https://blackbritishhistory.co.uk/>

The Black British History website is a brilliant resource. The "aim is to foster a creative dialogue between researchers, educationalists (mainstream and supplementary), archivists and curators, and policy makers."

They "seek to identify and promote innovative new research into the history of people of African origin or descent in the UK through its Black British History Experts Database of researchers and archivists, both academic and independent, providing an introduction to the ever-growing body of Black British History resources and information available."

Exploring the website leads to a page of their past workshops, here you can watch or listen to lectures on a variety of themes, I really enjoyed Adrian Stone on 'My Genealogical Journey: Using Genealogy, Family History and DNA to tell Black British History'

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Another section of the website - Resources - leads to a number of useful links; <https://blackbritishhistory.co.uk/resources/links/> including archives and research centres, educational resources and online information.

The website for the Black Cultural Archives is full of information, even if you cannot visit the archive in person.

<https://blackculturalarchives.org/about>

"Black Cultural Archives is the home of Black British History.

We use our mission to collect, preserve and celebrate the histories of people of African and Caribbean descent in the UK and to inspire and give strength to individuals, communities and society."

"At our HQ we run a series of gallery exhibitions, educational programmes and public engagement events. We provide free access to our unique set of archives, museum objects and reference library."

Under the Collections heading there is a section of Subject Guides

<https://blackculturalarchives.org/subject-guides> These are very comprehensive and detailed. You can also search the catalogue online.

The National Archives Black History page <https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/black-history/> links to resources, events, multimedia and blogs. The resource is there to help discover documents relating to British Black History within the National Archives collections.

The British Library also has subject guides relating to their collections:

<https://www.bl.uk/subjects/black-britain-and-asian-britain>

"The British Library offers many resources for the study of Black and Asian history, politics, culture and creative arts in Britain. Our collections also reflect the long and turbulent histories of race and empire, as well as post-colonialism. They include music, books, journals, archives and manuscripts, newspapers, maps and photographs, prints and drawings, web pages and stamps. We also offer a range of relevant events."

The Legacies of British Slave Ownership <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/> is a searchable database. Here is some context for the database and project:

"Colonial slavery shaped modern Britain and we all still live with its legacies. The slave-owners were one very important means by which the fruits of slavery were transmitted to metropolitan Britain. We believe that research and analysis of this group are key to understanding the extent and the limits of slavery's role in shaping British history and leaving lasting legacies that reach into the present. The stories of enslaved men and women, however, are no less important than those of slave-owners, and we hope that the database produced in the first two phases of the project, while at present primarily a resource for studying slave-owners, will also provide information of value to those researching enslaved people."

The legacies project has been used by both the National Trust and Historic England for recent reports:

<https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/features/addressing-the-histories-of-slavery-and-colonialism-at-the-national-trust>

<https://historicengland.org.uk/research/inclusive-heritage/the-slave-trade-and-abolition/audit-of-slavery-connections-with-englands-built-environment/>

UCL, Institute of Education, has also produced a guide to resources for Black History:

<https://libguides.ioe.ac.uk/BAMEresources/blackhistorymonth>

Parish records, census returns, and local archives are also places to search for Black History. For example, Dorset History Centre produced a blog about Black Voices;

<https://news.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/dorset-history-centre-blog/2020/07/01/black-voices-matter/>

which includes some illustrations from their History Centre. It is advisable to contact your local history centre, museum, archive or library to see how they can help.

This is just a brief list of what is available when you begin searching. There is so much advice and guidance out there and varied resources to explore.

Image taken from the Poole Parish Records 1689; "An Ingen Black baptised by the name of Margroot in the Church of Poole."

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