

## Library of Birmingham Archives & Collections

### **Additional Black History references in Birmingham Archives and Heritage from printed sources.**

References are listed by type of publication – newspapers, books, pamphlets etc. and then in chronological order.

#### **From Newspapers:**

##### **Aris's Gazette 3 June 1754**

At the Old Theatre, Moor Street: appearance of the 'Wonderful Black' acrobat 'who performs such curious equilibres on slack wire'. There is a longer description of his act. On 17 June 1754 he is called the 'Wonderful African', and on 8 July, 1754 he is named as 'Abbobeco' and there is a benefit performance for him.

##### **Aris's Gazette 11 Nov 1771**

'A Young Creole Slave' about 21 years of age, can dress and shave completely, and look after horses, talks very good English. Any person wanting such a Black, by applying to the printer, may be informed of his price. NB he never drank any kind of spirit.

##### **Aris's Gazette 12 February 1810**

Inquest on a young man of colour who accidentally drowned in the Birmingham Canal near Snow Hill. It appears that from the darkness of the night he accidentally fell into the canal and was heard by some boatmen to fall in.

##### **Birmingham Journal Sat 4 June 1825**

John Lewis, a man of colour, was committed for trial, charged with stealing two planes on 7 May, from a garden, where they had been placed on the day of the robbery. Property of T.Griffin. 1 month in prison at Warwickshire Assizes. 16 July 1825.

##### **Birmingham Journal 18 Feb 1826**

A negro named Holden was brought up on a charge of begging in the streets with a pictorial & descriptive tin plate upon his breast, calling on the 'Friends of Humanity' to afford him relief. The poor fellow said he was an African by birth, had been taken to the West Indies at the age of seven & sold for a slave. He arrived in Scotland when 20, & was pressed for the Menelaus frigate, from which he had been discharged about 7 yrs. He said he married a woman in this town about 9 yrs ago & if the magistrate would overlook his conduct this time, he would go to Liverpool & endeavour to get on board a ship. Upon this promise, the Magistrate ordered him to be discharged.  
(Police Court 13 Feb 1826)

**Birmingham Journal 18 March 1826**

John Morris, a black, was charged with violently assaulting a woman. Both were inmates of the same lodging house.

'The black stated, in extenuation of the charge, that the complainant had, in conjunction with his landlady, annoyed him in the most extraordinary manner, by perforating his under lip with a needle, & forcing the same instrument under his ears when he was in bed, & with the most ludicrous gesticulation, described innumerable indignities he said he had received in consequence of his being of a nation & complexion different from the complainant.'

Committed to the House of Correction. (Mon 13 March)

**Birmingham Journal 29 December 1827**

An unnamed 'man of colour, dressed in the style of a conjurer' was prosecuted for begging in the street. The individual was unable to speak, having been punched or kicked in the face.

**Birmingham Journal 14 February 1829**

Betsy Allen, a 'mahogany coloured Cyprian' [i.e. prostitute] appeared in court charged with breaking windows.

**Birmingham Journal 19 December 1831**

A 'bronze coloured West Indian' by the name of Dubeck was sentenced to 21 days in the house of correction for aggressive begging. Dubeck told the magistrates that he was a native of the West Indies, had served as an officer in the Columbian army and then as a cook on board a ship before coming to England.

**Birmingham Journal 29 June 1833**

Robert Gurley, 'a thorough black negro' was handed over to the police by a waiter at the Castle Inn in June 1833, having attempted to steal food and enter rooms at the hotel. Gurley had been seen around town for some weeks, was evidently homeless and sleeping on the steps of shops in Bull Street and High Street. The magistrates sent him to the house of correction for a month.

**Birmingham Advertiser 3 September 1835**

John Anthony, 'a black man' appeared at the public office before the magistrates for begging in the streets. Became insolent when he was directed to the Mendicity Society Office. Was convicted and sent to the house of correction in Warwick for one month's hard labour.

**Birmingham Journal 5 September 1835**

John Anthony, 'a black man' was convicted of begging in the streets and sent to the house of correction in Warwick.

**Birmingham Journal 21 November 1835**

Edward Marshall, 'a lad of colour' caused a disturbance with a group of other youths at the Mount Zion Chapel on Newhall Hill.

**Birmingham Advertiser 22 September 1836**

At the fifth anniversary meeting of the Temperance Society at the Town Hall a 'Caffre' chief, described in the newspaper as 'a wild African', spoke, with an interpreter, on the evils of drink among the 'Hottentots' [name given by Europeans to the Khoekhoe people of south-west Africa].

**Birmingham Journal 7 July 1838**

Public meeting on 'Negro education' at Wesley Chapel. Address by the Reverend E. Frazer, 'a highly intelligent negro'.

**Birmingham Journal 4 October 1838**

Thomas London, a 'man of colour' had been beaten up at Stourbridge Fair and died. London was a familiar figure at Midland fairs and races. 'The deceased got his living by going from race to race with a tin at his breast, to excite commiseration, and at others by engaging persons to play at games of chance'.

**Birmingham Journal 6 October 1838**

Captain Effendi, 'a Turkish gentleman', was called as a witness to a court case, having been present in the Theatre Royal when a riot took place. Effendi was unable to give evidence, however, as there was no copy of the Koran in court for him to be sworn in.

**Birmingham Journal 23 November 1839**

'The royal Wizard of the South, Barnardo Eagle, at the Shakespeare Room, will commence his feats of delusion, magic mystery, legerdemain and fairy scenes on Monday next. The whole of the amusements will be attended by his East Indian servant Sambo Lily White.'

**Birmingham Journal 1840?**

10 June 1840 Edward Oxford was arrested in London after an attempt to assassinate Queen Victoria.

**Birmingham Journal 23 May 1840**

'Two men of colour', Edward Barrett from the Oxford Estate in Trelawney and Mr Beckford, both members of the Baptist Church of Jamaica attended an anti-slavery meeting at the Town Hall organised by Joseph Sturge.

**Birmingham Journal 4 July 1840**

One J. Cheetham opened what he called 'a Hindoo Establishment' on 6 -7 Worcester Street, selling and exhibiting items from across the West Indies. These included fossils, richly coloured shells, stuffed birds and a wide range of decorative items.

**Birmingham Journal 12 September 1840**

William Barr & Son of Edmund Street completed what was claimed to be the world's largest umbrella, 18 feet in both height and diameter, containing no less than 62 yards of crimson damask. The umbrella had been commissioned, at a cost of some 50 guineas, by an unnamed 'sea captain' as a gift for an African prince.

**?Aris's Gazette 17 September 1866**

Blind Tom, a Black piano player from Georgia, USA, performs at the Town Hall. [Langford]

**Birmingham Post, 08 September 1873**

The Great African Blondin – first use of 'Blondin' was by a white French tightrope walker. Is a statue to Blondin in Ladywood. See Chris Upton's article - Birmingham Post, 14 November 1992.

**Birmingham Post, 21 February 1938 and Birmingham Daily Mail, 21 February 1938**

Picture of 'Birmingham Indians'. The Birmingham Indian Association was formed by K.M.Pardhy for Indian students at Birmingham University.

**Evening Despatch 4 Aug 1955 [Birmingham Biography newscuttings]**

The parish of Christ Church, Yardley Wood announced that its new curate would be Mr Vivian Singh 'who is partly of Indian descent'. Mr Singh was a graduate of physics from Cambridge University, presently studying for the ministry at Westcott House, Cambridge. He has a half-blue for cross country running. He is intending to live in the Colebourne Road - Westridge Road district.

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**Birmingham Newspaper Cuttings.**

Ethnic Communities, 1954 - 2005

From 2005- These have been divided into cuttings for different communities and are filed separately

**Birmingham Post 31 August 1965**

'Plain man's guide to the race relations societies'.

The Race Relations Board's West Midlands Conciliation Committee was set up in August 1966 with legal powers to deal with cases of racial discrimination (but not in employment or training).

**Birmingham Newspaper Cuttings.**

Sikh Community in Birmingham & the West Midlands. January 1967 - March 2003. **LF 19. 971**

## From Books

**The African Slave, A Tale Founded on Fact by 'Aunt Sarah', 1823**  
**63649 [Birmingham Printed A 16]**

**LS5/69**

**A short review of the Slave Trade and Slavery, with considerations of the benefit which would arise from cultivating tropical productions by Free Labour. A compilation of statistics and extracts from accounts by men who have lived with and observed Africans, and slaves.** Material originally compiled in 1825.

Handwritten on corner of title-page: J. Sturge, Edgbaston. 130 pages.

**Memorial of 1<sup>st</sup> August 1838** [Anti-Slavery meeting with Joseph Sturge at the Town Hall]  
**217752 [Birmingham Printed A 9]**

[Another copy of this item can be found in the records of the Ladies' Negroes' Friend Society, [MS 3173] IIR 62]

**A Descriptive catalogue of Wet Preparations, Casts, Drawings, Models, Books etc. contained in the Museum of the Birmingham and Midland Counties Lying-in Hospital and Dispensary for the diseases of Women and Children; arranged and edited in compliance with the wishes of the Board and Medical Officers by John G. Connor.** (Birmingham, 1847)  
[35000 Birmingham Institutions D/12]

Includes on p. 101:

'D.216 – Head and Trunk of a Female Black Child, who died a few hours after delivery.'

**Life of Mary Ann Schimmelpenninck ed. Christiana Hankin. (London, 1858).**

**397 587: A 942.073.**

MAS (1778-1856). Her parents were Lucy Barclay & Samuel Galton.

On pp. 44-45 she writes the following story:

[Her grandfather, Samuel Galton of Duddeston speaking to her :]

"... And so the bright pleasure of being generous can in like manner only grow from the homely root of self denial. Dost thou remember too, the Black and the cocoa-nut?". This alluded to the following incident. I had often heard of cocoa-nuts, and read descriptions of them growing in the country of the Blacks, from the beautiful cocoa-nut palm; and I had

been told that the pulp and the milk were delicious, and the husk good to make cordage, and that the shell would make a beautiful cup. It had long been the object of my ambition to possess a cocoa-nut. When I was five years old [1783], my grandfather, to my great joy, brought me a magnificent one from Liverpool. I had set my heart upon making a little feast for the whole family, myself included, with its contents, and in my mind's eye I already saw its shell turned into a cup. Just at this time a gentleman's servant, a Black, came to our house with his master, a West-Indian captain. I had never seen a Black before, was frightened, and called him a "ramoneur", thinking he was a chimney- sweeper; but on its being explained to me that he was a negro, that he had been kidnapped from his country, and taken from his family and friends, and brought away and sold for a slave in Jamaica, and that he could never see his country more, I immediately ran for my cocoa-nut and gave it him, saying: "This is from your country; it is all I have to give you, but take it and welcome". The servant was ever after very kind to me and I remembered the pleasure I had in giving the cocoa-not was very much greater than I could have had in eating it and making a cup of it.'

[In 1782 her family moved to The Five Ways Hagley Road, & c. 1785 to Great Barr House.]  
pp. 243-5 mention of numerous Black servants in Liverpool

**Free Schools, colleges, hospitals and asylums of Birmingham**, by G.Griffith. (1861).  
p.448

Town Mission school erected in Steelhouse Lane on site of the old workhouse. On Wednesday evenings reading and writing were taught. Many of the scholars were middle-aged. The evening opened and closed with religious exercises.

"One aged black, a beggar in an infirm state of health was pointed out as having been an attendant for three months, in which period he had made most satisfactory progress."  
[nd. For this, assume c. 1860]

### **African Aid Society**

129686 Address of the B'ham Committee to the Midland Counties, 1861

129687 'The American Crisis & the Slave Trade'. Report of a public meeting.

### **Both in B'ham Printed D/43**

### **Artisans Dwelling Committee Report. 1884 (L 41.8)**

p. 50.

Statement by Councillor Middlemore:

" Thus, in another three-roomed house I found the kitchen & attic were occupied by a man, his wife, & three children, & the middle room by a black man & white woman — the former of whom gets his living by selling religious literature."

(Address not given; possibly St Mary's ward).

**Birmingham Pictorial and Dart. June 1901.**

A 'Bicycle Gymkana' charitable event was held at Moseley Hall Convalescent Hospital for Children to raise money for the hospital.

'As I approached the flag-decorated entrance to Moseley Hall, a cyclist with a dark face and a bright scarlet turban dashed past and joined the well-dressed throng at the gate. I thought for a moment that some of the competitors were riding through the streets in costume, but on closer inspection I discovered that he was a genuine Hindu. Subsequently I obtained an introduction and made a sketch which he signed J.M.Cotelingham.' The ladies made much of him. He informed me that, with two others, he was 'doing Europe', with a view to discovering the secret of England's greatness, a kind of mission, the result of which, he being a journalist, would be imparted to his fellow countrymen upon his return. I wished him luck on his quest.'

**187188 Birmingham Institutions E/2****What I saw in Birmingham Mission. P. 10 (1902)**

Photograph of 'Mail' and the match boys includes one small Black boy.

**George Edalji: see also**

in LSH: L 43 352665 Edalji, S. A miscarriage of justice. The case of George Edalji, convicted October 1903 and sentenced on an unproved charge of horse maiming.

in ISG: 200769 Home Office. Parliamentary Report. Papers relating to the case of George Edalji. 1907.

**Jones T. *History of the Corporation. 1915-1935. Vol.V. Pt.2. pp356-357.***

The Police Training School at Digbeth Station, 'one of the most efficient in the country' was reorganized in 1919.

'In addition, thirty-two police officers from overseas countries — Afghanistan, China, Columbia, Egypt, India, Iraq, Kashmir, Malay States, Siam and Yugo-Slavia — were instructed at the Birmingham [Police Training]School in British Police work.' [Between 1920 and 1934].

## From Pamphlets

**Account of a shooting excursion on the mountains near Dromilly Estate in the parish of Trelawny, Island of Jamaica on the month of October 1824.** Printed by Hudson of Bull Street, Birmingham, 1828.

Collects different accounts of a pursuit of a village of settled 'runaways', from the West Indian newspapers and reports on the injustice of this 'excursion'.

**265528 Lp 07.2 HUD**

**African Scenes or Incidents in the life of the Rev. Robert Moffat, Missionary from South Africa, being an address delivered by him to the Sunday School Children in the Town Hall, Birmingham on Wednesday September 14, 1842 by Rev. R. Moffat (1842)**

Printed in Birmingham by John W. Showell. Signed by Anna Jane Pilcher, St Nicholas, and E Harrison.

**Ref: 669226 [Lp 07.2 SHOW]**

**Hashmi, Mahmood.**

The Story of Mashriq. [An Urdu community newspaper]

**From Annual of Urdu Studies, [ ] pp. 91-105**

**LP 78.1 HAS**