

Scotland and England's involvement in the slave trade with crimes against humanity

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This report draws quotes and excerpts from the following sources:

- 1) The Trilogy of Savitri's Garden by Fisal Ally
- 2) A whisper behind the silence by Indranie Deolall, October 8, 2021 (Her report is based on Dr. David Alston (a Scottish historian)s
- 3) How Scotland erased Guyana from its past- 'The portrayal of Scots as abolitionists and liberal champions has hidden a long history of profiting from slavery in the Caribbean by Yvonne Singh
- 4) [En.wikipedia.org/wiki/Slavery_in_Britain](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Slavery_in_Britain) (Retrieved on July 18, 2023 at 7:40pm)
- 5) Slavery and the Slave Trade; [Nrscotland.gov.uk/research/guides/slavery-and-the-slave-trade#](https://nrscotland.gov.uk/research/guides/slavery-and-the-slave-trade#)
- 6) Slavery and Scotland; [Nrscotland.gov.uk/research/learning/slavery](https://nrscotland.gov.uk/research/learning/slavery)
Retrieved July 18, 2023 at 8:26pm.

Introduction

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Introduction

The Trilogy of Savitri's Garden is a love story where indentured laborers from India first arrived in British Guiana (Guyana in South America) in 1838. This book also goes into

slavery and the slave trade. So far when it comes to slavery in Guyana and the Caribbean, I keep coming across articles where the Scots were highly involved in the slave trade and profiting for these crimes against humanity. I also did some searches online on this topic and continue to come across the Scots involvement in British Guiana in South America.

Many in the Americas know what slavery was all about, and also what indentured labor was all about. It was basically the same.

For example when the Indians from India arrived in the Americas, they were treated as slaves, they were beaten and mistreated and worked to death until their contracts were cancelled and that happened a number of times, and taking indentured laborers by the British to British Guiana was banned a number of times because of the cruelty taking place in the plantations across British Guiana.

Section 1 - The love story, 'The Trilogy of Savitri's Garden, and Slavery and Indentured laborers

After researching for about 15 years and writing and rewriting the novel 'Savitri's Garden' which was first published in 2002 and then updated over the next few years. As I discovered more information, I continued to make this same identical story from 2002 more historical to teach the history of indentured laborers to British Guiana (Guyana in South America). This novel grew into a trilogy with a study guide. The first book had to be broken down into two parts, thus there were four novels and the study guide, a total of 5 books, which are being given away for those interested in this work.

Ex-slaves in the Trilogy of Savitri's Garden

But most of all I learned a lot about slavery while researching, and included ex-slaves as a big part of the book. The novel included fictional characters that were ex-slaves who were Cooper (Coop) now a servant; Jamal Thomas; Joseph now an African driver; Lillian (Lilly), Kwesi a mulatto driver.

From the glossary at the back of book I, Part I are some very important definitions:

Abolishment of slavery - took place in 1838 in the British colonies, while slavery continued in other places such as America, Brazil and Cuba and was not abolished till after the 1860s.

Apprenticeship period - after slavery was abolished on August 1 1834, the Africans were placed on an apprenticeship program, where the agricultural workers would work for six years, and the non-agricultural workers would work for four years, but the work was harder and the hours were longer. During the apprentice period the Africans worked forty and a half hours a week with no pay, and they were given the option to work for wages for thirteen and a half hours or they could have used this time to work on their own

provision ground. The apprentice period had ended on July 31, 1838 for all apprentices (Source: The West on Trial by Cheddie Jagan)

Section II - Slavery in Scotland

The Scottish involvement in the slave trade where a Scottish historian, Dr. David Alston provides the research, along with Yvonne Singh article

A whisper behind the silence by Indranie Deolall, October 8, 2021

[Stabroeknews.com/2021/10/08/features/first-person-singular.a-whisper-behind-the-silence/](https://stabroeknews.com/2021/10/08/features/first-person-singular.a-whisper-behind-the-silence/)

For more than 20 years, the historian Dr. David Alston (a Scottish historian) has been on an often lonely road, carefully researching the extensive role of Highland Scots in the transatlantic African slave trade, and the profitable plantations of the Caribbean, but especially the prized jewel British Guiana (Guyana in South America), where they came to seek, make, keep and add to their fortunes.

‘Due for release this month as a scholarly book of the same name subtitled “Silenced histories of Scotland and the Caribbean,” his 400 page publication by Edinburgh University Press, is an important and courageous collection of evidence that seeks to help correct the national narrative including the myth that the Scots were more egalitarian than the English, and that they did not engage in the slave trade.

“Scots were involved in every stage of the slave trade: from captaining slaving ships to auctioning captured Africans in the colonies and hunting down those who escaped from bondage. This book () focuses on the Scottish Highlanders who engaged in or benefitted from these crimes against humanity in the Caribbean Islands and Guyana, some reluctantly but many with enthusiasm and without remorse. Their voices are clearly heard in the archives, while in the same sources their victims’ stories are silenced - reduced to numbers and listed as property.”

He adds, “but these voices remain a whisper. And yet even that whisper is difficult for us to bear. We (The Scots) are indeed ‘well wadded with stupidity’ and are inclined too readily to wrap ourselves in comfortable narratives of Scottish and Highland victimhood,”...

In 1833, Britain’s Parliament finally abolished slavery.

How Scotland erased Guyana from its past - Yvonne Singh

How Scotland erased Guyana from its past

‘The portrayal of Scots as abolitionists and liberal champions has hidden a long history of profiting from slavery in the Caribbean by Yvonne Singh

[Theguardian.com/news/2019/news/apr/16/Scotland-guyana-past-abolitionists-slavery-caribbean](https://theguardian.com/news/2019/news/apr/16/Scotland-guyana-past-abolitionists-slavery-caribbean)

Excerpts below:

It's hard to process that a network of Scotsmen from here and the surrounding area used Guyana as a "get-rich-quick-scheme", exploiting for profit the trafficked humans (both slaves and indentured labourers) who were my ancestors. A "gold rush" with no thought of the tragic human consequence. Says Singh

'As I wade through research and testimonials of the fate of slaves in Guyana. it's difficult to suppress the anger I feel: up until 1826 (nearly two decades after the abolition of the slave trade in 1807), "the 11 o'clock flog" was administered in Berbice's searing heat to men and women who flagged in their tasks; sexual abuse was so endemic in the same district that, in 1819, one in 50 of the enslaved population was the child or grandchild of a white European.'

She then recalls a troubling story. "Granny said that he Indian women would be working out in the rice fields and it was then that most of the rapes would take place. No one would hear them screa...it was only nine months later that they had to deal with the consequences.

'Today, steps are being made to acknowledge Scotland's slaving past'

Slavery and bondage in Scottish collieries

For nearly two hundred years in the history of coal mining in Scotland, miners were bonded to their "maisters" by a 1606 Act "Anent Coalyers and Salters". The Colliers and Salters (Scotland) Act 1775 stated that "many colliers and salters are in a state of slavery and bondage" and announced emancipation, those starting work after 1 July 1775 would not become slaves, while those already in a state of slavery could, after 7 or 10 years depending on their age, apply for a decess of Sheriff Court granting their freedom. Few could afford this, until a further law in 1799 established their freedom and made this slavery and bondage illegal.

[Nrscotland.gov.uk/research/learning/slavery](https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/research/learning/slavery)

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'Significantly, Scotland and the Scottish people benefitted from the wealth and opportunities that slavery generated. This legacy is still present in our Georgian buildings, statues and street names. Scottish men and women played a strong part in the development of this trade, as well as its abolition.'

Google retrieved (July 18, 2023 at 8:10 pm)

Slavery and the Slave Trade

[Nrscotland.gov.uk/reseach/guides/slavery-and-the-slave-trade#](https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/reseach/guides/slavery-and-the-slave-trade#)

Enslavement markets and auctions

Following the union of parliaments in 1707, Scotland gained formal access to the transatlantic slave trade. Scottish merchants became increasingly involved in the trade and Scottish planters (especially sugar and tobacco) began to settle in the colonies, generating much of their wealth enslaved labour.

Section III - Slavery in Britain

En.wikipedia.org/wiki/Slavery_in_Britain (Retrieved on July 18, 2023 at 7:40pm)

All quotes below:

In 1772, *Somerset v Stewart* held that slavery had no basis in English law and was thus a violation of habeas corpus. This built on the earlier *Cartwright* case from the reign of Elizabeth I which has similarly held the concept of slavery was not recognized in English law. This case was generally taken at the time to have decided that the condition of slavery did not exist under English law. Legally (“de jure”) slave owners could not win in court, and abolitionists provided legal help for enslaved black people. However actual (“de facto”) slavery continued in Britain with ten to fourteen thousand slaves in England and Wales, who were mostly domestic servants. When slaves were brought in from the colonies they had to sign waivers that made them indentured servants while in Britain. Most modern historians generally agree that slavery continued in Britain into the late 18th century, finally disappearing around 1800.

Before 1066

From before Roman times, slavery was prevalent in Britain, with indigenous Britons being routinely exported. Following the Roman conquest of Britain, slavery was expanded and industrialised.

Enslaved Africans on British soil

By the mid-18th century London had the largest African population in Britain. The number of black people living in Britain by that point has been estimated by historians to be roughly 10,000 though contemporary reports put that number as high as 20,000. Some Africans living in Britain would run away from their masters, many of whom responded by placing advertisements in newspapers offering rewards for the returns.

Some of these people fled their slavery in an attempt to create a new life for themselves in the streets of London.

Google retrieved July 18, 8:20 pm

Whilst slavery had no legal basis in England, the law was often misinterpreted. Black people previously enslaved in the colonies overseas and then brought to England by their owners, were often still treated as slaves.

Conclusion

Slavery has been taking place for thousands of years, and it continued all the way throughout the 1800s. It's about exploitation and often genocide was involved. The abolitionists stood up and slavery came to an end. But today it's a new form of slavery, modern day slavery.