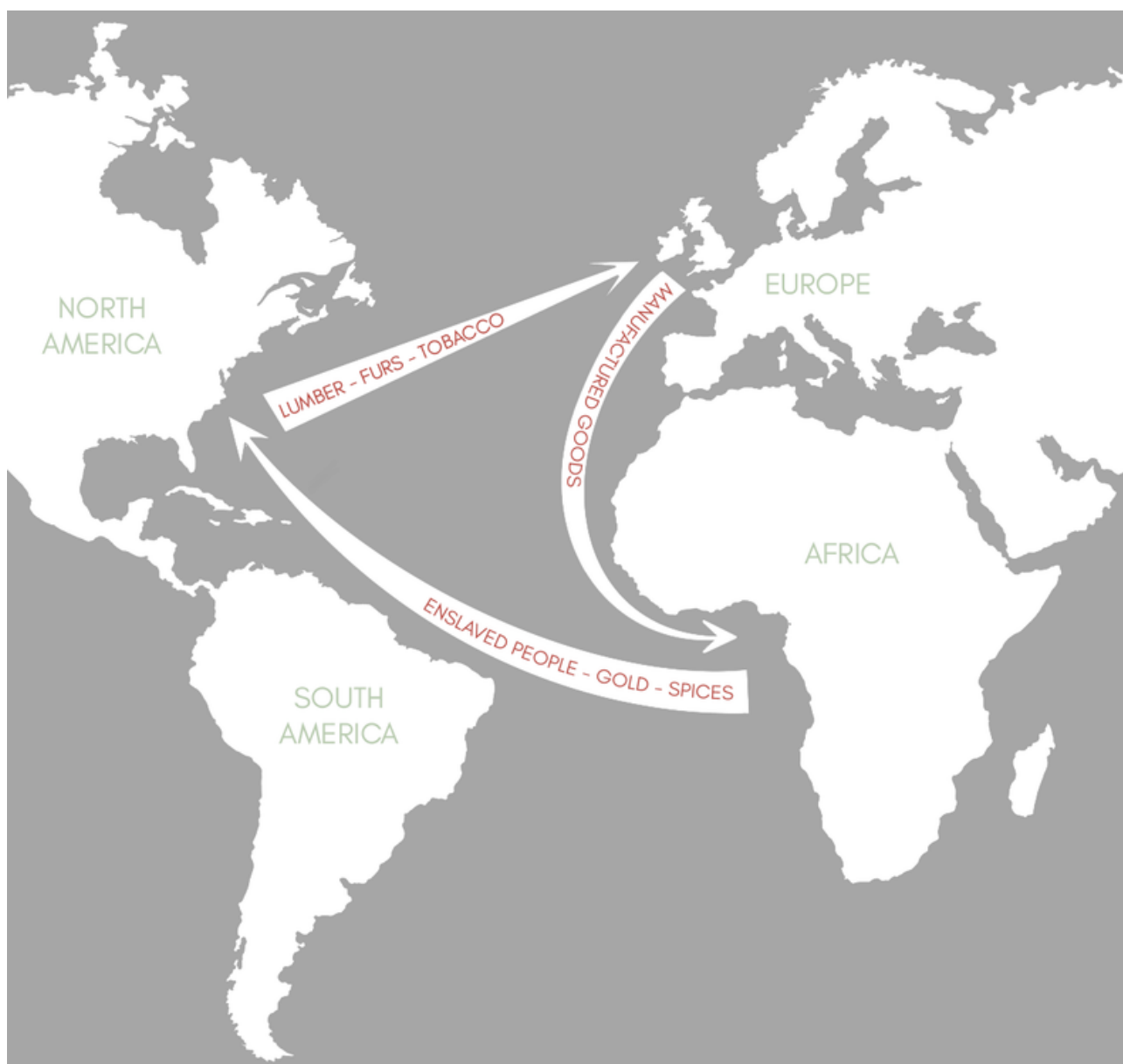


**Slavery and
the Quaker
meeting**
a research guide

Introduction

Between 1525 and 1866, approximately 12.5 million people from African countries were enslaved and transported across the Atlantic as part of an economic system (simplified in the diagram below) that made many British people a lot of money. Efforts to justify and maintain this system, as well as its direct impact on those involved, are key contributors to racial injustices experienced in the world today.

Quakers are traditionally thought of as fighting against slavery, and it is true that many Quakers made large contributions in this area. However, there were also Quaker enslavers and Quakers who derived significant profit from the suffering of those enslaved either by owning an interest in ships and plantations or by supplying slavers with goods.



This guide will give you some ideas and links to resources to help you research how the members of your meeting responded to slavery in the past. It is based on the work of Ann Morgan, and her work investigating Lancaster Meeting, and has been compiled by staff at the Library of the Society of Friends.

General tips

Make lots of notes

Where relevant include:

- Library and archive reference numbers
- Titles
- Authors
- Page numbers
- Dates
- Web addresses

This is useful if you or someone else wants to revisit a source at a later date and you should always credit the sources you have used.

Be aware of copyright rules

If you plan to share your work with others, specifically if you are using images, make sure you have the right to do so. Due to quirks in the law, some older archive material is technically still in copyright, and when a library, archive or museum has professionally photographed an item they will own the copyright of that image. The National Archives produces helpful guidance in this area. If in doubt, ask permission.

Work with sensitivity

Be mindful of the humanity of the people involved in your research, and ensure your language reflects this - the term "enslaved people" is preferred over "slaves" for example.

Images of black people kneeling or in chains, such as the famous Slave Ship Brookes image or the Wedgwood Medallion, can be used to illustrate specific points but they evoke strong feelings and you should avoid using them as general decoration.

Work with others

You might find it helpful to link up with other people with similar interests. Look for local history groups, particularly local black history groups, in your area. Check with your local university to see if there are any academics supporting community research.

Using books

Find written sources about the development of your area and any links with transatlantic colonies. Note the names of people connected to the slave trade including owners of plantations and transatlantic merchants. Check if any of the names collected are Quakers.

Look for any local abolition societies.

Finding books

Google Books

A search engine that searches the full texts of books and periodicals that have been scanned by Google. Where these are out of copyright, you can get full access to the text. Where they are in copyright you can often get access to a limited number of pages.

books.google.com

Google Scholar

A search engine that searches academic literature, including journals, books, conference papers, theses and dissertations. If you find something you are interested in, it also recommends related articles.

scholar.google.com

JISC Library Discover

A database containing the catalogues of 179 academic libraries across the UK, enabling researchers to find copies of books in libraries near them.

discover.libraryhub.jisc.ac.uk

Local archives or local studies libraries

These have collections and staff that specialise in the local area.

Were they a Quaker?

To confirm whether someone was a Quaker or not, the best place to start is the birth, marriage and death records.

If you have access to one of the big genealogy sites such as Ancestry.com or Findmypast, Quaker birth, marriage and death records are available. If you don't have access, you can search names on **www.bmdregisters.co.uk**. The search results will show the event (such as birth), the year it happened, the location and, crucially, the recordset. The Quaker record set is RG6.

You can also look at meeting records (see below) to check whether they were convinced or disowned.

Free resources online

Sites such as archive.org and the Hathi Trust offer access to a variety of out of copyright works, scanned by libraries around the world. Archive.org also has a library function, if you sign up for a free account you can "borrow" temporary access to their selection of in-copyright works.

www.archive.org

www.hathitrust.org

JSTOR offers free access to some out-of-copyright journals, and also allows holders of free personal accounts to view 100 articles free per month.

www.jstor.org

British Library ETHOS gives online access to thousands of PhD theses.

ethos.bl.uk

Using databases

Universities around the world have been working on projects to collate information on the history of slavery and make it easier to access.

You can use any names or locations you have come across in your research to search these databases for relevant information.

UCL Legacies of British Slavery Database

This database was built using the records of the Slave Compensation Commission, who paid compensation to slave owners on the abolition of slavery in 1833.

It can be searched to find individuals who enslaved people on plantations in the British Caribbean, and continues to be updated with additional information. It is particularly useful as the database can be filtered by religion.

www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs

Runaway Slaves in Britain

A database of over 800 newspaper advertisements seeking the return of enslaved people who had escaped in Britain.

runaways.gla.ac.uk

Slave Voyages Database

A large and complex database of the ships, traders and captives of the Atlantic slave trade. It can be used to search for ships that sailed from specific ports, ship owners and captains.

www.slavevoyages.org

Slavery Images

A collection of over 1,200 images, created as an educational resource to help visualise the experiences of those enslaved as part of the transatlantic trade.

www.slaveryimages.org

Genealogy Services - e.g. Ancestry, Findmypast, The Genealogist etc.

Unlike the other databases on this page, these are not free to access, but if you do have a subscription they can be used to build up the family trees of individuals you have identified as having links with slavery, from the first Quaker in the family up until abolition in 1833.

By building up a picture of the family you can investigate how links with slavery changed with the generations and how that may have had an effect on the family's Quakerism.

Using archive records

Quaker meeting records

Interrogate your meeting records for any names you've identified so far, looking for participation in the meeting, or disownments.

Read minutes sent down by Yearly Meeting on the slave trade and ownership of enslaved people, and any response to them by the meeting.

Read documents referring to any abolition activity undertaken by the meeting.

Finding meeting records

The archive of your area meeting will be held in an archive repository near to you. If you have difficulty locating the records, search 'society of friends XX monthly meeting' in the National Archives Discovery tool (discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk). If you are still unsure of where your records are, ask the Library for help.

Local archive records

Look for other records relating to individuals you have noted. This may include:

- Wills
- Estate documents
- Business documents

The Library of the Society of Friends

Find out if the Library has any documents related to the individuals you are researching. You can search the online catalogue here:

<http://quaker.adlibhosting.com/search/simple>

There are additional archive items not visible on the catalogue. Please contact us at library@quaker.org.uk and we can look through our other finding aids for you.

How to find relevant archive records

Archive records can be harder to find than books. In an archive most items will be unique, and the collections of individuals or organisations can contain hundreds, or even thousands of items. For this reason, many repositories have not been able to catalogue every individual item in their collection, and a description of a box of items or a folder is provided instead.

A simple keyword search on an archive catalogue may not produce helpful results. It is worth taking time to browse through the catalogue and familiarise yourself with how it is organised. Check the archive's website to see if they have additional guidance or finding aids. It is also worth emailing the staff, explaining your project and what you are trying to achieve. They may be able to point you in the right direction.

See *Using Archives: A Guide for the Inexperienced* for further tips, available online here:

archiveshub.jisc.ac.uk/guides/usingarchives

Useful reading and listening

Masters, Stewart (2020)
"Creating Heaven on Earth: The Radical Vision of Early Quakers"
Salter Seminar 2020.

Part 1 available here:

<https://youtu.be/IMvFA6L7vKg>

Part 2 available here:

https://youtu.be/JJeG_PpCf70

Mackeith, L (2017) "Marginal Stories? Moving our stories to the centre". Hidden Histories Seminar 2017. Available:

<https://youtu.be/Sz4Dx85Ss0k>

Frost, J William (2014) "Why Quakers and Slavery? Why Not More Quakers?" in *Quakers & Abolition* B Carey and G Plank (Eds). Urbana: University of Illinois Press.

Hardy, R (2022) "Friends pledge \$500,000 in slavery reparations". *The Friend*. Available:

<https://thefriend.org/article/friends-pledge-50000-in-slavery-reparations>

Gerbner, K (2019) "Slavery in the Quaker World". *Friends Journal*.

Available:

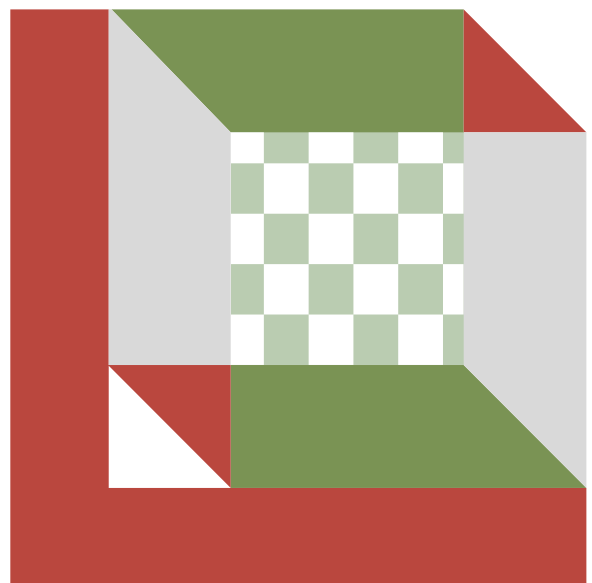
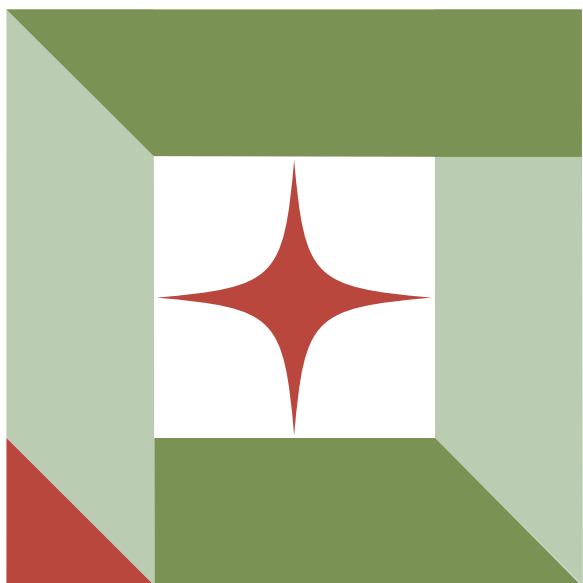
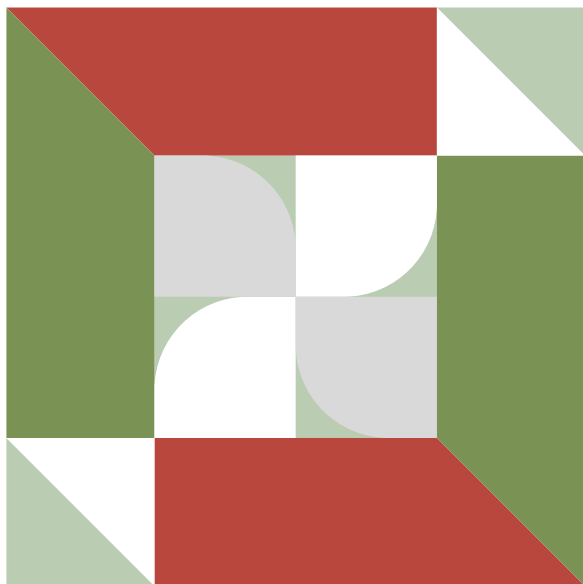
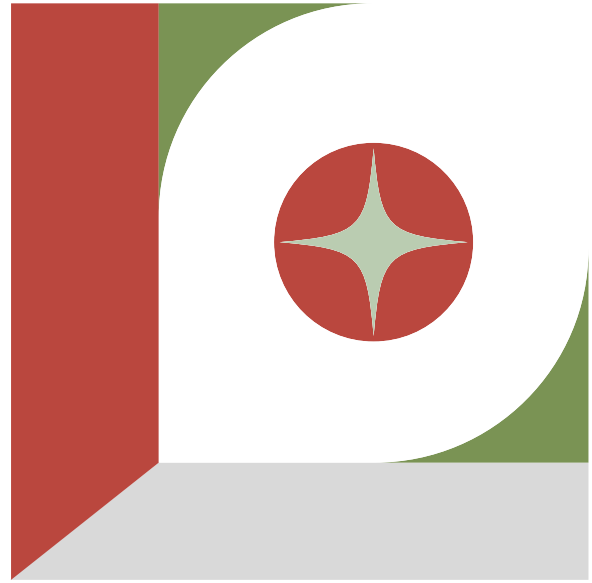
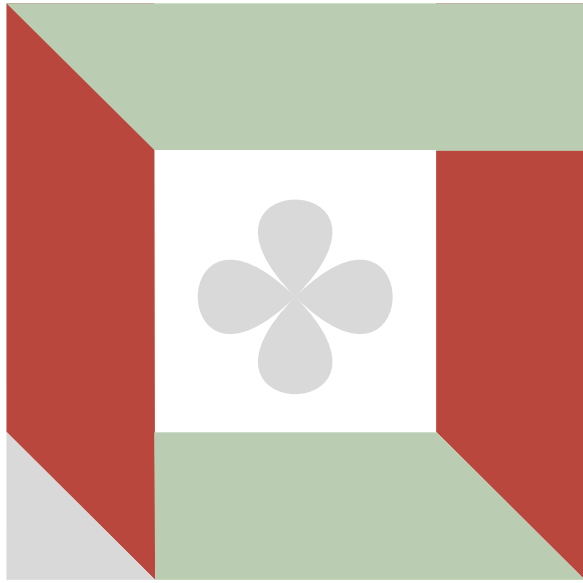
<https://www.friendsjournal.org/slavery-in-the-quaker-world/>

Lothian-McLean, M and Broccoli Productions (2021-) *Human Resources* - A podcast "exploring the true story of British involvement in the transatlantic slave trade and how it touches every part of the nation." Available on Apple Podcasts, Spotify and other podcast platforms.

Hochschild, A (2005) *Bury the Chains: the British Struggle to Abolish Slavery*. Basingstoke: Macmillan.

The Week (2022) "The arguments for and against slavery reparations". *The Week*. Available:

<https://www.theweek.co.uk/news/uk-news/956268/the-arguments-for-and-against-slavery-reparations>



The Library of the Society of Friends