

# **The Slave Trade and Emancipation Recalled by Streets in Camden Town**

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## ***Summary***

The slave trade and emancipation, in economic and social aspects, can be recalled through the street names of Camden Town, an inner north London suburb. Jeffreys Street was built in 1810-1830 on land that the first Lord Camden gained from his wife Elizabeth Jeffreys: her family's wealth was gained as importers of tobacco from America and merchants in the trans-Atlantic trade. Molesworth Place was named for the second Lord Camden's wife, Frances Molesworth, who was from an established gentry family in Cornwall and Devon: her family had benefitted from plantations in the West Indies. Yet also, a nearby street, Wilmot Place, recalls a family that contributed over three generations to the emancipation of slaves: Chief Justice Sir John Wilmot affirmed the married rights of freed slaves living in England; John Wilmot chaired Parliament's Commission providing compensation for loyalists of the American Revolution, when the British Army gave freedom to slaves leaving rebel plantations; and MP cousins Wilmot-Horton and Eardley-Wilmot both promoted emancipation as well as the humane care of prisoners. While this history is about the upper classes, for whom more records remain, it contributes to understanding the colonial past within London's local history.

## ***Introduction***

Black History Month started in Britain in 1987 (Bellos 2017). It promotes understanding of the growing presence and contribution of Africans in Britain who came as servants of colonialists, as working people in services industries including the navy and as elites in politics, business and education. It also faces the historical fact that Britain's post-Restoration wealth was founded on slavery, with London very much the biggest beneficiary through the Atlantic trade. Camden Town, an inner suburb of London, was built on land which belonged to trading merchants and has connections also with emancipation that are visible in local street names.

Eric Williams, from Trinidad and Tobago, published *Capitalism and Slavery* in 1944 (Williams 1944). He contended that slavery was the economic basis of the British industrial revolution and questioned the primacy of morals in the abolition of slave trading. These two themes continue to be important in research on British trans-Atlantic trade (Zahedieh 2010) and the Royal African Company (Pettigrew 2016), as well as the compelling evidence of the continuation of British interests through slavery into the nineteenth century (Sherwood 2007, Brown 2006) and a database which holds records of claims for compensation after the Slavery Abolition Act of 1833 (Hall 2014).

Local historians have also contributed to knowledge. The areas close to the docks and warehouses of the Thames provided lodgings for new arrivals while merchants built larger houses on higher ground nearby. There are publications concerned with slavery for Lewisham, Whitechapel and Kent (Anim-Addo 1995, Morris 2011, Killingray 2007) and projects for Hackney and Blackheath (Hackney Museum 2014, Mathuna 1998). In north London, Camden History Society has published articles on Lord Chief Justice Mansfield, living in Hampstead, who determined that James Somerset could not be forcibly removed from Britain and sold into slavery; on Dido, the Black 'companion' of Mansfield's daughter recorded in a Kenwood House painting; and on the freed-man Olaudah Equiano, famous through his autobiography, who lived for three years in Fitzrovia (Camden History Society 1982,

Equiano 1789). Yet no studies have been made for the central area of the borough, Camden Town.

### ***Camden Town***

The architectural historian John Summerson described Camden Town as a 'Georgian suburb' (Summerson 1945). It was built on 220 acres land lying either side of the Fleet river. The estate, called Cantlowes, was described in the Domesday book and in the Parliamentary survey of church property of 1649. While St Paul's cathedral held the ground rent, lay ownership for farming rents passed from the Bishop of London, John King, to his family at the beginning of the seventeenth century. The land and manor house were sold during the Commonwealth to a City draper, Richard Utber, and then again after the Restoration to the royal physician, Sir George Ent. In 1683 it was bought for £3000 by the city tobacco merchant John Jeffreys. The land gave pasture for milk cows and hay for London's horses. Maps for the later eighteenth century show scattered farm buildings and an inn at the road junction to Hampstead (where there is now Camden Town Underground station). Lord Camden inherited the land through his wife and after an Act of Parliament, set out an estate for building Camden Town. It was started in 1790 and completed by 1870 – Fig 1 outlines the estate boundaries on the present north London roads (Camden Town 2020).



Fig 1. Camden Town land boundary - blue line (© OpenStreetMap contributors)

Charles Pratt, himself the son of a Chief Justice, made a successful career combining law with politics. He became Baron Camden in 1756, taking the name Camden from his house at Chislehurst in Kent where the Elizabethan historian William Camden had once lived. He married Elizabeth Jeffreys, whose family's land included the Cantlowes estate. Their son, John, the second Lord Camden, married Frances Molesworth whose family from Cornwall had inheritance of property in the West Indies. The third Lord Camden, George, married Harriet Murray, daughter of the Bishop of Rochester: the three generations of Lords Camden had connections with the Wilmot family, also lawyers and politicians, who were linked to emancipation (Camden Town 2020). These phases of Camden Town are recorded in names – Jeffreys Street, Molesworth Terrace, Wilmot Place – in the northern part of the Camden Town estate.

### ***Jeffreys***

John Jeffreys, a City merchant originally from Wales, bought in 1683 the land of Cantlowes that later became Camden Town. In the Commonwealth period, Jeffreys took up the American tobacco trade through Jamestown and the Chesapeake. He rose in the City of London and was elected Alderman in 1660 (although buying his way out of the duties). Tobacco was a labour-intensive crop: John Jeffreys is recorded in 1655 negotiating transport of 100 Irish indentured labourers to Virginia (America and West Indies 1860). In the next year, he co-financed the *Rappahanock*, which bought 54 slaves on the Bight of Biafra and Gulf of Guinea Islands and disembarked 37 at Virginia; and thereafter he traded enslaved people with the Royal African Company (Slave Voyages 2019, Evans 2010). From the 1680s he shared his business with two nephews, Jeffrey Jeffreys and John Jeffreys, who were both knighted. The family have memorials in the church of St Andrew Undercroft, in the City of London, where the Jeffreys held property, alongside the Elizabethan historian John Stow (Aldgate Ward 1929).

Sir Jeffrey Jeffreys took on the larger part of his uncle's overseas business. He became a director of the Royal African Company, and ran two ships, respectively

called *Jeffery* (130 tons) and *Jeffrey* (80 tons). He is recorded investing jointly in nine ships and journeys, such as *Montagu*, which in 1703 landed 133 enslaved people at Antigua and *John Bonadventure* in 1704 with 420 arriving (Slave Voyages 2019). Most is known, however, about the *Hannibal* because of the journal that was kept by its 30-year old captain, Thomas Phillips, whom Sir John Jeffreys appointed. Phillips describes his journey in 1694-5: trading on the west African coast with both European and African vendors; the customs of the people at Accra, where 700 Africans were embarked; and the mortality rate of almost 50% – predominantly from infections – on the ten-week voyage to Barbados. Phillips' words are humane:

I can't think there is any instrinsic value in one colour more than another, nor that white is better than black, only we think it so because we are so, and are prone to judge favourably in our own case ... [They] are as much the works of God's hands, and no doubt as dear to him as ourselves... [W]hat the smallpox spared, the flux swept off, to our great regret, after all our pains to give them their messes in due order and season, keeping their lodgings as clean and sweet as possible ...' (Phillips 1704).

A plaque that Brecon local council erected for Phillips as 'one of the first persons to make such liberal remarks on race' has been vigorously contested (Wales Online 2010). The views of Sir Jeffrey Jeffreys, at that time MP for Brecon, are unrecorded. Of Sir Jeffrey's two sons, Edward, the older, crossed the Atlantic after 1715 and held plantation land on the Rappahannock river in North Virginia; he did not return to England. His second son, Nicholas, trained in law and became a Justice of the Peace in Holborn: he married Frances Eyles who was also from a merchant family. They inherited from Sir Jeffrey property at Brecon in Wales, manor houses in Oxfordshire and Gloucestershire, land in the City at St Mary Axe (becoming the most valuable) and the land of Cantlowes estate. Charles Pratt, the future Lord Camden, married Nicholas and Frances Jeffreys' daughter Elizabeth in 1739, although it was only in 1785, when Elizabeth's sister died, that the family inheritance finally passed to him (Camden Town 2019). Just one item in the family records – a bond for enslaved people and marketable muscovado sugar in Barbados (Kent County Archives 1692) – directly recalls the distant origin of their wealth.

## ***Molesworth***

Charles, the second Lord Camden married Frances Molesworth who was the daughter of William Molesworth of Wembury, Devon. The Molesworth family name was given to a group of ten houses that curve from Jeffreys Terrace into Jeffreys Street as Molesworth Place on the 1833 Camden Town estate map - Figs 2 and 3.

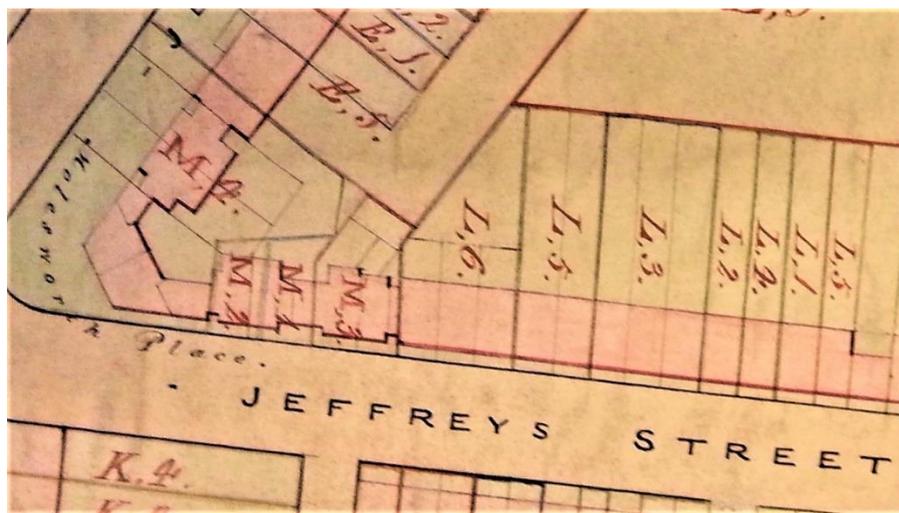


Fig 2. Molesworth Terrace shown on Camden Town estate map 1833 (section), Camden Estate, London Metropolitan Archives



Fig 3. London street map, 1843 (section), Society for the Dissemination of Useful Knowledge

Frances Molesworth's forebear, Hender Molesworth, came from Cornwall, which had maritime links with the Caribbean. He was designated as Captain in 1670, holding 2480 acres in St Catherine's parish in the 1670 island survey, and was a member of the first Council of Jamaica (Legacies of British Slave-ownership 2020a). From 1684 to 1687 he was the island's governor, marrying the previous governor's widow. "This gentleman behaved to the universal satisfaction of the island; his deportment was courteous, he was easy of access, given to no vice or extravagance .... a man of moderate principles" (Leslie 1740). With the Hanoverian accession in 1689 Hender was awarded a baronetcy, but he died shortly after while in Cornwall and the title passed to his brother. His will freed his two servants and made his wife Mary tenant for life of the Jamaican land. Between 1721 and 1743 the land is recorded variably as Cow Park, Pitney and Spring Garden. In Jamaican Quit Rent books for 1754 it is described as 3269 acres in St Dorothy, shared between Sir John Molesworth, 4<sup>th</sup> Bt and his son William (Legacies of British Slave-ownership 2020b). Possibly the shared ownership was compensation by the father for the traditional inheritance by the elder son of their family house and estate at Pencarrow, near Bodmin in north Cornwall.

Frances Molesworth's father, the second son, married Elizabeth Smyth, co-heiress of a Bristol trading family, and bought a house at Wembury in Devon, near to Plymouth, in 1756. Sir John Molesworth may have sold the Jamaica land for this purchase. William had two daughters, but he, his wife and their elder daughter had all died by 1763. Frances Molesworth, the surviving daughter, first lived with her uncle, Sir John, at Pencarrow and on his death, when she was seventeen, went to her aunt Margaret, Lady Lucan, to live in London. There, Frances was at the centre of Georgian Society life. She was courted by three senior politicians, painted twice by Reynolds, and at the later age of 25 married John Pratt, Lord Camden's only son and inheritor. Wembury House was sold in 1803 and contributed funds to buy the

Mayfair house, 22 Arlington Street, where the (now) Marquis and Marchioness Camden received guests at the highest level (McCarthy 2019).

### ***Wilmot***

While the Jeffreys and Molesworth connection for Camden Town is by inheritance, the link with Wilmots is more complex. The new streets and terraces of Camden Town were mainly given family names, such as Jeffreys Street. King's Road was an old packhorse road from London out to Hampstead. By the 1840s, Camden Road leading northwards was lined by villas and on a map of 1843 (Fig 4) the side roads Rochester G(ardens) and Murray S(treet) can be seen. These are the family names of Harriet Murray, daughter of the Bishop of Rochester who married George Pratt in 1835: George became the third Lord Camden in 1840. (Brecknock Terrace, on the map, was named for the Pratt family's second title, Lord Brecknock.)



Fig 4. Jeffreys Street, Camden Town, April 2020, author's photograph. Molesworth Place houses are on the left.

But from Jeffreys Street across King's Road is Wilmot Pl(ace). How did the name Wilmot come about? The two explanations that are given in the standard source of reference on London street names can be discounted (Bebbington 1973). Lord Rochester, poet at court in the exceptionally licentious period of Charles II, was named John Wilmot. But he died 150 years before the roads were named Rochester and Wilmot and it seems unlikely that the Bishop of Rochester, the third Lord Camden's father-in-law, would have welcomed this association. A second suggestion that it was the name of a builder, is also not tenable. A David Wilmot was an early developer in the east end of London. His son rose to become a magistrate whose house in – coincidentally, Camden Row – Whitechapel, was ransacked in the 1780 Gordon Riots. There was a Wilmot Square and a Wilmot Road, either side of Bethnal Green Road, before twentieth-century redevelopment (Baker 1998). A Charles Wilmot, who styled himself 'architect and surveyor', lived and built houses in northern Clerkenwell in the 1820s (Temple 2008). However, no developer named Wilmot can be found on the leases of Camden Town: in the areas around Jeffreys Street, the developer was George Lever, with his father, also George Lever (Camden Town 2020).

A more plausible explanation is through personal links; and connections over three generations between the Lords Camden and the Wilmot family are explored below. Charles Pratt, the first Lord Camden, knew Sir John Wilmot as a close legal colleague and later within the House of Lords and also his brother, Sir Robert Wilmot, who was a Secretary in Parliament. The link of John Pratt, the second Lord Camden, with Sir John Wilmot's son, John Wilmot, was indirect: it was through Joseph Kay, architect to the Camden Town estate and to the Foundling Hospital, where John Wilmot was a Vice-President. George Pratt, the third Lord Camden, had a long-standing friendship with Eardley Nicholas Wilmot, a grandson of Sir Robert.

In contrast to the Jeffreys, the Wilmots have a positive story of anti-slavery. The Wilmot family was from Derbyshire and Warwickshire in the Midlands of England, reaching back to the sixteenth century. In the mid-eighteenth century, two legally-trained brothers rose to senior positions in London and gained knighthoods: Sir John Wilmot became Chief Justice of the Common Pleas and Sir Robert Wilmot became

Secretary to the Lord Chancellor. They lived near Bedford Square, now part of the borough of Camden. In 1766 Sir John made a significant judgement on slavery. Two women had come to England with servants from the West Indies. One servant, John Hylas, had gained his freedom and married the other servant, Mary; but later Mary was taken back to the West Indies and was again sold in slavery. With the support of the young Granville Sharp, Hylas went to court for his wife's return. Sir John Wilmot ruled on behalf of her return and financial compensation, although on the basis that Mary was legally his property as his wife. The judgement has received less attention than Lord Mansfield's later decision on Somerset; yet the argument of marriage being a stronger legal tie than slavery ownership could have been a significant challenge to property rights if it had been developed (Paugh 2014).

John Wilmot was Sir John Wilmot's second son: he inherited, as his older brother Edward died in the East Indies. Born in 1749, John had legal education and was an MP from 1776 through until 1796 (Fig 5). He took an independent anti-war line



Fig 5. *The House of Commons, 1793-94*, by Karl Anton Hickel (section), National Portrait Gallery. John Wilmot is in profile, lower row third from the left

during the American Rebellion (Wilmot 1778). Yet at its end, in 1782 the leading minister Lord Shelburne chose Wilmot to review the destitution payments being paid to returning British loyalists by the Treasury and Wilmot then continued as a full Commissioner to assess all the claims for compensation. The inquiry was based in Lincoln's Inn Fields but visits were also made in Canada and America. New categories of claim emerged over time and each claim had to be assessed individually. Despite criticism that the Commission took six years, investigating 3325 claims of which 2291 were accepted, Parliament confirmed an allocation totalling £3m from public funds, becoming the first example of pensions to citizens by the British state (Wilmot 1815, Annual Biography 1817).

The Commission worked within the confines of its Parliamentary Act to recompense duly proved loss of property. During the war, Britain had offered freedom to enslaved blacks who left their estates and joined the British army: within more than 140 volumes of testimony, about 50 claimants were identifiable in the records as black, known usually by their first name, although only a few could demonstrate that they had held property. Half gained some compensation, usually at the lowest level (Norton 1972). Britain provided resettlement for displaced people, including both enslaved people and some freed blacks, in islands in the Caribbean, in Florida and also in Nova Scotia on the east coast of Canada. These latter, although freed blacks, were given poorer land than the whites and some made a further journey for resettlement in the newly founded colony of Sierra Leone in West Africa (Jasanoff 2011, Ranlett 2014, Cahill 1999).

Two further Wilmots were concerned with the slavery at a political level. While slave trading had been officially been proscribed by the Abolition Act of 1807, it continued illegally and extensively. Robert Wilmot-Horton, the grandson of Sir Robert Wilmot, took on the additional name Horton in 1823 after his father-in-law's death. He was a Tory MP for Newcastle-under-Lyme, a supporter of Catholic emancipation and also of assisted emigration to reduce poverty in England. He opposed slavery during his appointment as Colonial Secretary between 1825-1828. Yet the political pressure for emancipation – making slavery itself illegal as well as slave trading – was blocked by the West India lobby. With changing government, Wilmot-Horton left Parliament in

1828 to become Governor of Ceylon, where he was able to introduce a range of progressive reforms although not of slavery there (Richards 2008).

With the reform of Parliament in 1832 and inquiry into rebellion in the West Indies of the previous year, Parliament passed a new Act of Abolition in 1833. But it was by no means complete: it applied to the West Indies, Cape and Mauritius, but not in parts of West Africa and the territories controlled by the British East India Company, including Ceylon (only included in 1843). The owners of plantations, both in the colonies and in England, would be indemnified for the price of their slaves through a fund of £20 million, paid through a loan from commercial bankers. Moreover, it was not full abolition: the planters exchanged ownership for (compulsory) five years of 'apprenticeship' and the practical lives of the indentured workers remained much as before (Draper 2010, Hall 2014).

Sir John Eardley-Wilmot, the son of John Wilmot was the cousin of Robert Wilmot-Horton (Chapman 2008). He followed the family path into law at Inner Temple but returned to Warwickshire where he became a circuit judge and county Sheriff. He retained his family's socially-minded character, arguing for penal reform for young offenders – with summary punishment and reform rather than incarceration. In 1832 he became an MP in the Reform Parliament as an opponent of slavery. During the committee stage of the slavery abolition bill, Eardley-Wilmot tabled an amendment to reduce the proposed compensation for plantation owners from £20m to £15m, on grounds that there was not abolition but rather a transfer to apprenticeship without real change and that anyway the West Indies interests had not agreed the proposals (Parliament 1833). His amendment failed yet his critique was proven right - the 1833 Act's powers were stymied by local colonial legislatures. Under much pressure, the government introduced new legislation in 1838 to abolish the apprenticeships by 1840. Again Eardley-Wilmot led an amendment, this time calling for immediate abolition of the apprenticeship system. He had chaired abolition meetings in his own county of Warwickshire and had spoken at the national meeting in Exeter Hall, London in 1837, he said, so the Government should not be surprised by his intervention. What did surprise the government was that, on a late-night vote, his amendment was passed, against their wishes ('News of the Week' 1838). It was not

legislation and the government got back on course in a debate the following week, but it confirmed public opinion and Eardley-Wilmot's reputation for progressive causes.

Rather surprisingly, this moment was recorded by Queen Victoria in her Journal (Royal Archives, 2012). On Wednesday 23rd May 1838, writing at Buckingham Palace, she reports: "Heard from Lord John [Russell] that Sir Eardley Wilmot's resolution for the immediate abolition of Slavery was carried yesterday evening at 9 o'clock by 96 to 93. This result was entirely unexpected..." Also surprising, in retrospect, that night, among guests at the Palace were both Sir Eardley-Wilmot and also Sir Wilmot-Horton, his cousin, who had a decade before been Colonial Secretary and had by then returned from his liberal governorship in Ceylon. Nevertheless, by Tuesday 29th May 1838, Queen Victoria reports: "Heard from Lord John that we had a majority of 72 upon this troublesome Slavery Question and that he hopes this Question is now disposed of."

Eardley-Wilmot attended the World of Anti-slavery Convention in London, June 1840. His cheery round face is recorded, next to his Parliamentary friend Dr Lushington, in a large painting in the National Portrait Gallery (Fig 6). Three years later, at the age



Fig 6. The Anti-Slavery Society Convention, 1840, by Benjamin Robert Haydon (section), National Portrait Gallery. Sir Eardley Wilmot is full-face, top row third from left

of sixty and perhaps for financial reasons, he went to Tasmania as governor, intending to take his work on rehabilitation of prisoners forward. In this time, however, Britain closed its penal colonies in New South Wales and focused on Tasmania, without providing adequate financial support for the control of prisoners there. Eardley-Wilmot, although Governor, was framed as an immoral person by local people and Gladstone – on hearsay evidence (and perhaps remembering the 1838 defeat) – removed him from his post. He died shortly afterwards, leading to public outcry and an apology from Gladstone. A tiered stone monument was erected in Hobart in 1850: it was designed by William Kay – the son of Camden Town's architect Joseph Kay, who had emigrated to Australia and became a celebrated architect there (Mickleborough 2011).

### ***Camdens and Wilmots***

What links between the Lords Camden and the Wilmots might support the naming of Wilmot Place in Camden Town? Charles Pratt, the first Lord Camden, knew Sir John Wilmot well through their shared legal work and through the Privy Council (Wilmot 1803). Lord Camden lived in Lincoln's Inn Fields until 1775, but then in Mayfair; Sir John lived in Great Ormand Street until 1792. There is little direct link between John Jeffreys Pratt, second Lord Camden, who lived in Mayfair and was for some years a member of the cabinet, with John Wilmot who lived in the legal area of Bedford Row (until later moving to Bruce Castle, Tottenham) and gave up being an MP in 1796. The second Lord Camden is evident in Copley's portrait of the House of Lords, *The Death of Pitt*, 1791, while Wilmot is seen in Hickel's portrait *The House of Commons 1793-94*. The second Lord Camden sat in the Lords until his death in 1840; his son entered the Lords as Viscount Brecknock in 1835. Neither Lord Camden spoke in the Lords on slavery.

Some correspondence has survived in the Camden family papers between George Pratt, the third Lord Camden, and Eardley Nicholas Wilmot, the younger half-brother of Robert Wilmot-Horton (Kent County Archives 1858). Eardley was born in 1800, the year after George Pratt. He went into the army and gained the position of

colonel through a period of European peace for Britain – he was too young for Waterloo, yet too old by the Crimean war. The family home of this branch of the Wilmots was at Osmaston in Derbyshire. But to inherit his wife's estate, Robert Wilmot-Horton moved to Catton Hall on the Derbyshire/Staffordshire border and Eardley moved with his mother Mary to Rose Cottage, Malvern, the spa town in Worcestershire (Great Malvern 2020). Charles Darwin was taking the waters at Malvern in 1849 and wrote to his friend William Fox at Osmaston Hall, which his family were renting from the Wilmots: "Lady [Robert] Wilmot lives here with her son, Col. Wilmot. I have not called as I was frightened of this great dandy; if it had been summer I would have called to see the garden." (Larkham 2009) In their letters, Eardley and George Pratt write about their families and their visits to each other's homes. Darwin's view of Eardley matches a letter from Eardley to Lord Camden, where, Eardley jokes that Georges' son is winning their competition in waistcoats (Kent County Archives 1858).

### ***Recompense in Camden Town***

The Legacies of British Slave-ownership database records the 43,000 people who claimed compensation from the British Government after abolition of slavery in 1838. In a blog for the project, James Dawkins described a talk he gave at North London Collegiate School for Girls which, now at Edgware, had been founded in Camden Town in 1850. While the school itself was not financed from plantation funds, Dawkins showed that the school's benefactor and first Honorary Superintendent, Rev. David Laing, had been the son of a slave-owner in Jamaica and a trustee of an estate (Dawkins 2014). The Legacies database includes location of the claimants – one third lived in London and a small number were living directly in Camden Town. Nicholas Clements Henry of 5 Randolph Street claimed on property put in trust by his father on St Kitts from 1828 with total 60 enslaved, for £931. Richard Edward Cardin, living with his family in 1841 and 1851 at 8 Molesworth Place, a 'Retired West India Planter' born Coast of Africa, claimed for 42 enslaved people on St Kitts for £818. But others were unsuccessful: Mary Grant, of 8 Pratt Street claimed for 25 enslaved people in Jamaica and 97 in St Vincent but was refused. John Caspar Mais,

at 18 Camden Street at the time of his death in 1851 made an unsuccessful claim for property in Jamaica. And Elizabeth Byam, a widow of Camden Street, was refused her claim that under the will of her father she was entitled to 1/5th share in his real estate on Antigua and to £10,000 currency (Legacies of Slave-ownership 2020/lbs).

These are small components within the much larger history of slavery; and the material is mainly of the white British upper classes, rather than directly black history. In another record of local history in London, a speech at a 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary event for the Abolition Act, Sylvia Collicott memorialised fifteen African people whose names appear in the Tottenham and Hornsey parish records of the eighteenth century (Collicott 2007). Camden Town has black history in the twentieth century. 'Africa House' was opened in 1933 at 62 Camden Road with funds raised in West Africa, moving in 1938 to 1 South Villas, Camden Square. It was both a hostel for students and meeting-place for anti-colonialists – Jomo Kenyatta and Kwame Nkrumah among them – and the African American singer Paul Robeson was made an honorary member (Sherwood 1993). After Indian independence, in his fifties, nearby in Camden Square lived Krishna Menon, nationalist successor to Jawaharlal Nehru. In the 1970s Jo Slovo and Ruth First, activists of the African Nationalist Council, the revolutionary party in South Africa, lived by Camden Road and a nearby street was renamed Mandela Street (Camden History Society 2002). From the 1980s, Camden Town's social housing has seen arrivals from Eritrea and Somalia as part of diverse population of London whose history continues to be written. Land inheritance and street naming can be added to ways of understanding Black History in London.

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