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SESSION TITLE

# Historical Source 1:

An account of an Emancipation Day celebration held in Jamaica on 1st August 1838, written by William Ramsay.

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SESSION 3

Key Stage 2



### HISTORICAL SOURCE 1:

#### **An account of an Emancipation Day celebration held in Jamaica on 1st August 1838, written by William Ramsay.**

The sentences shown in the box below are extracts from a two-page account of a 1st August celebration held on a Jamaican sugar estate called Dawkins Caymanas, near Spanish Town. The account was written in 1838 by Mr William Ramsay, one of the guests at the celebration. The original document is in the National Maritime Museum's archive collections in London. Some of the content has been adapted and edited to make the transcript easier to read.

#### **Celebration of the 1st August 1838 at Dawkins Caymanas near Spanish Town**

Surely the Reverend Mr Phillippo must be a proud and happy man. Not only did His Excellency, the Governor, receive him and his immense congregation on the memorable 1st of August with honours that could have been acceded only to Royalty itself but condescended, it is said, at the Reverend Gentleman's request to attend an entertainment given on Friday last by the Apprentices of his congregation at Dawkins Caymanas...

As soon as His Excellency the Governor arrived at the Great House of the Estate a group of the late Apprentices surrounded his carriage to greet him and his group of friends.

A beautiful saloon had been prepared for their reception.

Although no public announcements were made to announce that the fete was taking place a considerable number of the respectable inhabitants of the neighbourhood, and of Spanish Town, graced the scene with their presence.

The tables were set out along a beautiful lawn between the Great House and a cluster of the Apprentice's cottages. A fabric of evergreens adorned the table, which was also covered with flowers.

All 300 guests sat down to their repast at about 5 o'clock.

An upper area – the saloon – had a separate table for His Excellency the Governor, Mr Henry, the owner of the Estate, Mr Stewart, the Island Secretary and Attorney for the Property, their guests and the Reverend Mr Phillippo (performing the honours of the table).

After grace by the Reverend Mr Phillippo the operations of the table commenced.

The cheerful order and decorum shown by the peasantry pleased His Excellency.

The repast was crowned by a delicious dessert.

Immediately on the removal of the cloth the President rose to propose the health of Her Most Gracious Majesty Queen Victoria and the noble Governor, Sir Lionel Smith, which were responded to with thunders of applause.

Before returning to his carriage His Excellency thanked the masses for their enthusiasm and expressed his full confidence in their good conduct.

One of the Apprentices was invited to speak on behalf of the masses. He stood

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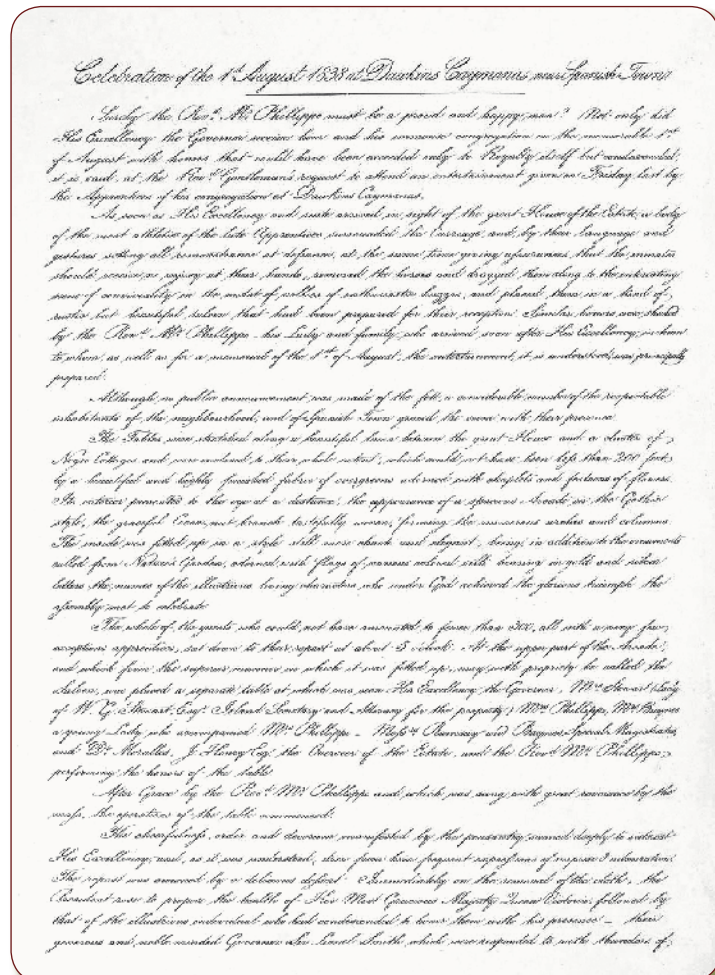
#### Celebration of the 1st August 1838 at Dawkins Caymanas near Spanish Town

and gave thanks to the Proprietor of the Estate, the Attorney, the Overseers and the Special Magistrate of the Parish. He also thanked the philanthropists at home and abroad who had laboured so successfully for their liberties.

The 300 guests were all cleanly and neatly dressed and conducted themselves in the most orderly manner.

After singing a few hymns applicable to the occasion, and engaging in other acts of devotion enjoyed by the Baptist Church, the company separated in good time and in good humour, thus affording as they were concerned the surest promise of future industry, social order and happiness.

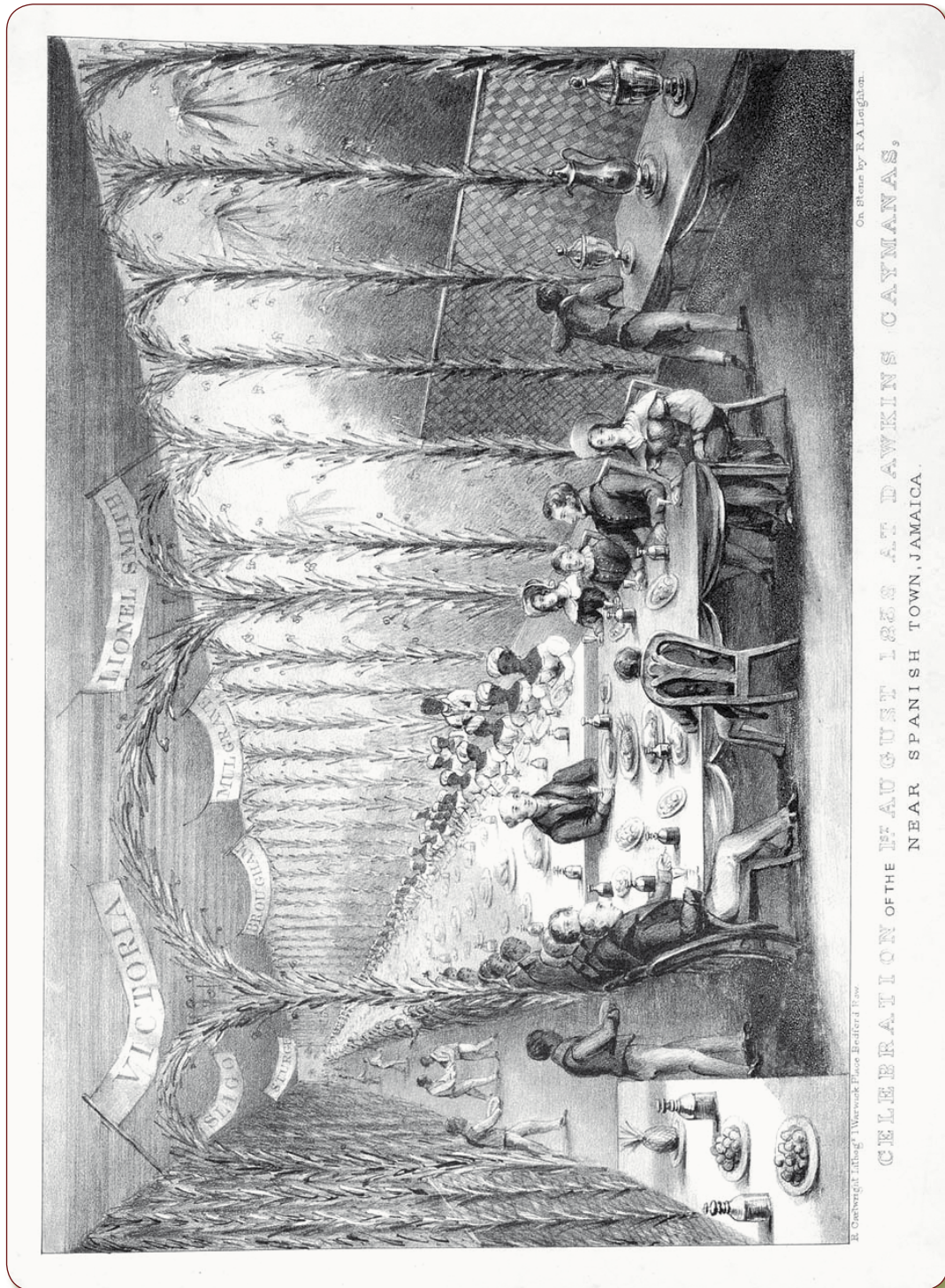
Image 1: An extract of the original account, written by William Ramsay



**HISTORICAL SOURCE 1:**

**An account of an Emancipation Day celebration held in Jamaica on 1st August 1838, written by William Ramsay.**

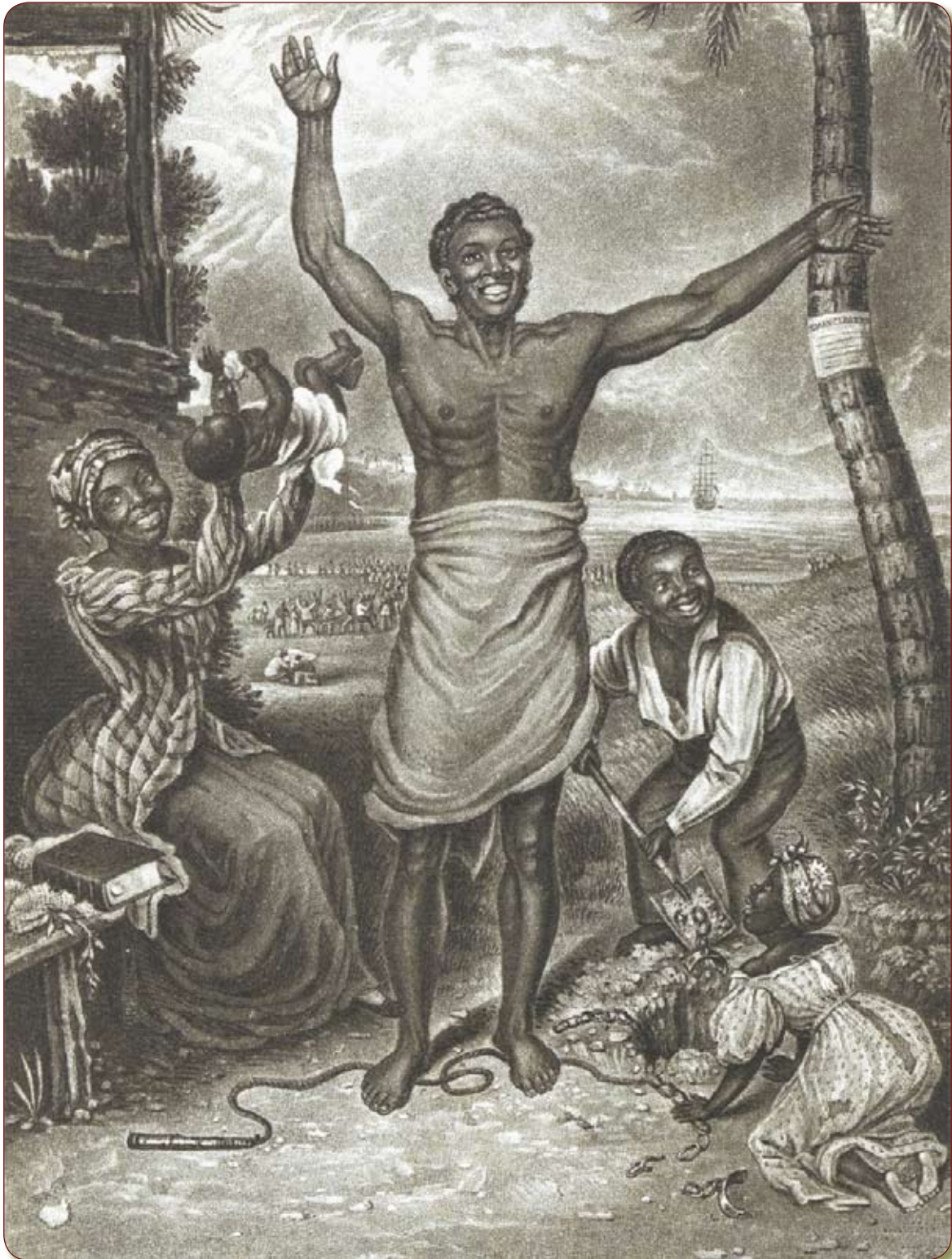
**Image 2: A lithograph showing the 1st August celebration at Dawkins Caymanas in 1838**



**HISTORICAL SOURCE 2:**

**A 19th century engraving of an enslaved African family celebrating their freedom. The exact date of this image is unknown.**

Source: Yale Caribbean Studies Resources (<http://caribbean.commons.yale.edu/collections/>).



### HISTORICAL SOURCE 3:

**A photograph of a 19th century medal that was produced to commemorate 'Emancipation in the West Indies'.**

The image on the front of the medal shows an African man shaking hands with a European man, accompanied by an African woman and child and a European woman wearing a bonnet.

The legend reads: **'We Are Men And Brethren'** and the medal is stamped: **'Emancipation/ Aug. 1. 1838'**.

The words on the reverse side state: **'Their Names Shall Be Sacred In The Memory Of The Just'**. There is also an inscription within a palm wreath: **'Penn / Gran. Sharp / Wilberforce / Benezet / Clarkson / Buxton / Brougham / Sturge / Sligo'**.

The medal was produced to commemorate the ending of slavery in the British Empire on 1st August 1838.

The list of names represent people from Europe who were associated with anti-slavery and emancipation between the 17th and 19th centuries – William Penn, Granville Sharp, William Wilberforce, Anthony Benezet, Thomas Fowell Buxton, Henry Brougham, Joseph Sturge and Howe Peter Browne (the 2nd Marquis of Sligo).



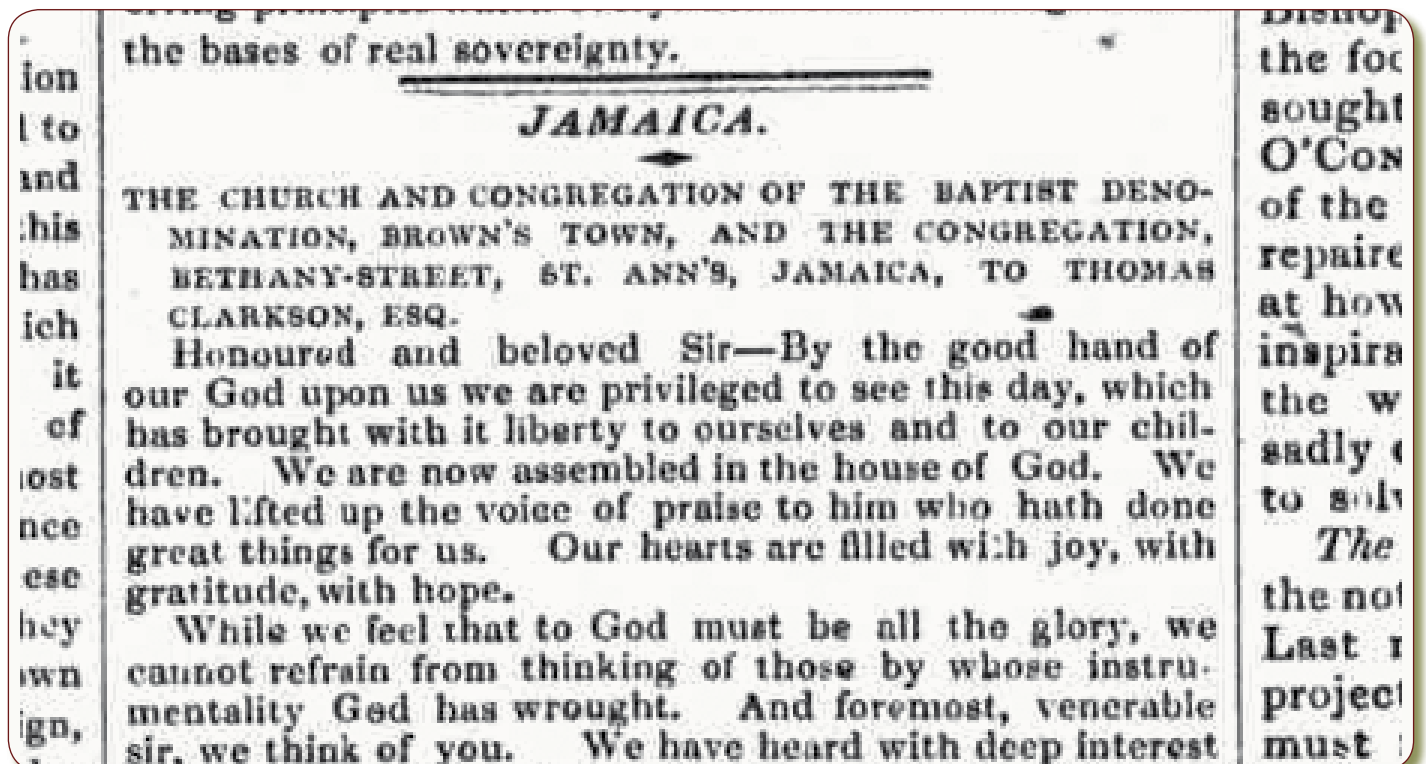
## HISTORICAL SOURCE 4:

This is an extract from a letter sent to the anti-slavery campaigner, Thomas Clarkson. It was written by a Baptist pastor and missionary called John Clark, and was sent to England on behalf of his church congregation in Brown's Town (St Ann's Parish, Jamaica). The letter is dated 7th August 1838 and describes the celebrations that took place on Emancipation Day.

The text appeared in the Morning Chronicle newspaper (published in London) on 4th October 1838.

**Image 1: An extract of the original account, written by William Ramsay**

1. What does this information source tell you about how people in Brown's Town celebrated emancipation?
2. Who was Thomas Clarkson? Find out about his life.
3. Why do you think that Pastor John Clark wrote to Thomas Clarkson?
1. Why do you think this letter was published in a British newspaper?



**HISTORICAL SOURCE 4:**

We beg, beloved sir, to be allowed to subscribe ourselves,  
 Yours, with gratitude and affection,  
 JOHN CLARK, Pastor.

Signed on behalf and at the request of the congregations.  
 August 1, 1838  
 Brown's Town, Jamaica, August 7, 1838.

Honoured and very dear Sir—I trust you will excuse the liberty which we have taken in sending the accompanying address to you. It has been prompted with gratitude and affection. It was unanimously agreed to by a congregation of about 1,000 persons at Brown's Town, while an equal number were not able to get within the chapel walls. It was also adopted unanimously by a congregation of upwards of 1,000 persons at Bethany, ten miles from Brown's Town.

It may give you pleasure to hear that the boon of freedom was received with gladness; that the 1st of August was spent as a sacred sabbath-day; the places of worship were crowded, while thousands were unable to obtain admission. The three following days were spent in joyousness and festivity; but I have not heard of a single instance of disorder, or one of drunkenness.

On the 2d 800 persons sat down in our chapel-yard to a feast, all neatly dressed, all well behaved. It was a day to which I shall ever look back with unfeigned pleasure.

At Bethany we worship in a large rough shed. The people who attend, anxious to manifest their gratitude to God for his mercy to them, contributed no less a sum than 250l. currency to build a place of worship.

Your labours on behalf of the sons and daughters of Africa have not been in vain. They have been productive of incalculable good. Ethiopia is stretching forth her hands unto God!

Did time allow I would do myself the pleasure of writing more at large; but the packet post is about to leave, and there will not be another opportunity of sending for a fortnight.

Praying that God may bless you with every temporal and spiritual good,  
 I am, beloved sir, yours affectionately,  
 J. CLARK, Baptist Missionary.

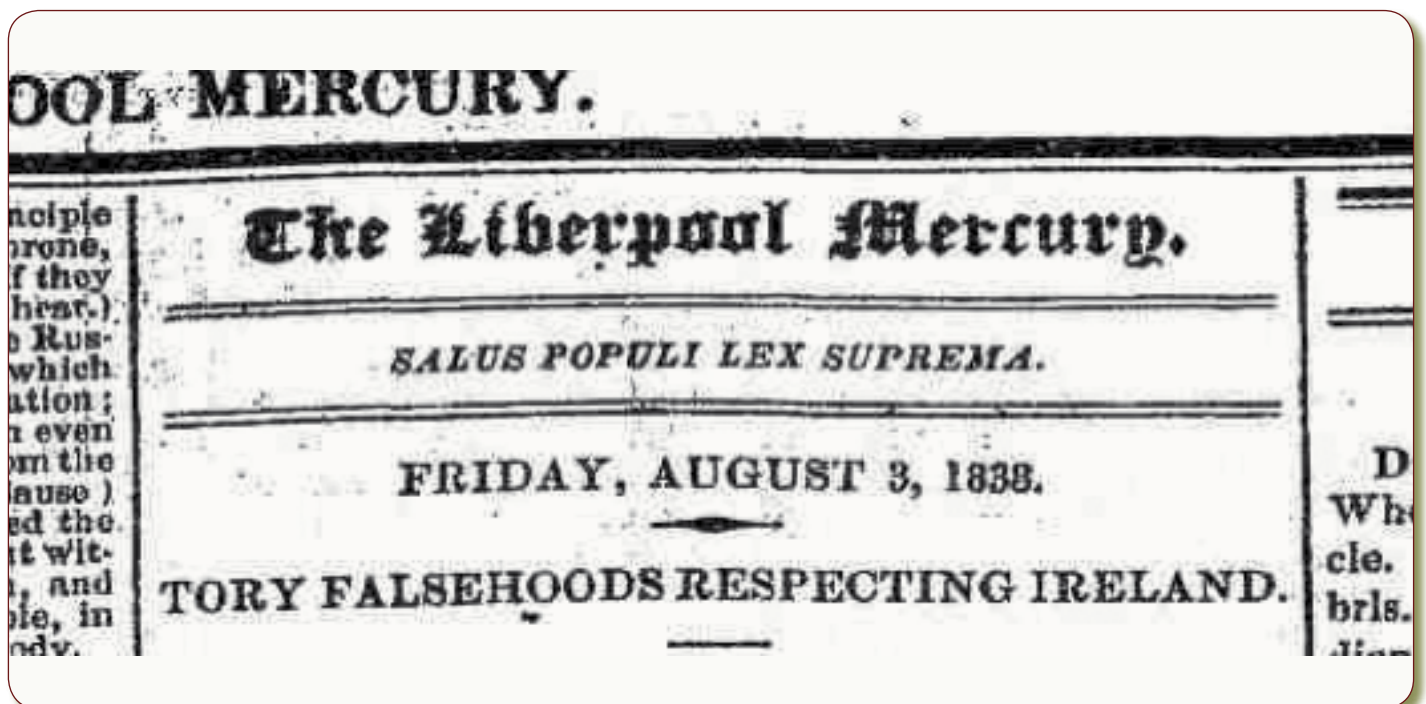
The *Lausanne Gazette* states, that the Swiss deputation sent to compliment the Emperor of AUSTRIA



## HISTORICAL SOURCE 5:

The lyrics of this song were printed in the Liverpool Mercury newspaper on 3rd August 1838. The song was written and performed by a man called Richard Rathbone at a meeting of the Anti-Slavery Society in Liverpool to celebrate Emancipation Day in the Caribbean. Richard Rathbone (1788-1860) was a wealthy merchant in Liverpool who campaigned against slavery all his life.

A transcript of the meeting held on 3rd August 1838 was published on page 252 of the newspaper. During the meeting members of the Anti-Slavery Society celebrated the emancipation of enslaved Africans and also discussed sending funds to the Caribbean to help with education.



Note:

A translation of the Latin phrase below the newspaper's title is:  
**'THE HEALTH OF THE PEOPLE IS THE SUPREME LAW'**

Source:

The British Newspaper Archive:

<http://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk>

**HISTORICAL SOURCE 5:**

... would be ready to act with them in the formation and support of such an institution as that to which allusions had been made.

**RICHARD RATHBONE, Esq.**, here volunteered the following song, after an apology for defects of composition and musical execution.

**PARAPHRASE OF BURNS'S SONG**  
*"Scots wha hae wi' Wallace bled."*

—  
**WRITTEN FOR THE 1st AUGUST, 1830.**  
 —

Injured men! who long have bled,  
 'Neath the yoke of despots led,  
 Your bonds are burst, your foes are fled;  
 Hail! blest Victory!

Now's the day, and now's the hour,  
 See the front of Freedom tower,  
 See retire before her power,—  
 Chains and Slavery!

Who would be a traitor knave?  
 Who would fill a coward's grave?—  
 'Tis he who left the wretched Slave  
 In hopeless misery!

Who, for Freedom's rights and law,  
 Freedom's sword would strongly draw?—  
 'Tis he who in that poor Slave saw  
 The trace of Deity!

'Tis he who drain'd his dearest veins  
 To heal oppression's woes and pains;  
 To free the Slave from servile chains,  
 That all should happy be.

Proud usurpers low are found,  
 Tyrants prostrate strew the ground;  
 Liberty's in ey'ry sound;—  
 Yes,—To-day, they're Free!

The Rev. **JOHN HOWARD HINTON**, of London, rose to propose the next toast. He said that, supposing the West Indian Legislatures intended only in name to abolish slavery, still it was something to have compelled them to give up the name, and to have shown them, that as soon as the same thing was attempted under another name the attack would be repeated. (Hear, hear.)

1. Why do you think information about Emancipation Day in the Caribbean was published in a Liverpool newspaper?
2. Who was Richard Rathbone referring to when he wrote the line "Injured men! Who long have bled"?
3. Find out about the Rathbone family in Liverpool. Why do you think Richard Rathbone was an anti-slavery campaigner?

## HISTORICAL SOURCE 6:

An extract adapted from an article published in the Jamaica Gleaner newspaper on 4th August 2012. The article includes historical information about the first 'free villages' established after emancipation in the 19th century.

Article title:

Emancipation: Full Freedom in Jamaica Saturday, August 4, 2012

### Apprenticeship in the Caribbean

*The apprenticeship period was part of the Emancipation Act that came into force after the abolition of slavery in 1834. Under this system apprentices were still forced to work for plantation owners for 40 hours per week without any payment, but were also allowed to work for wages during their free time. Originally, the British Imperial government wanted apprenticeship to carry on in the Caribbean until 1840, but the apprentices and anti-slavery campaigners forced the government to bring the system to an end on 1st August 1838.*

### The growth of free villages

*Free villages were established after full emancipation in 1838. They developed when groups of freed individuals came together to set up a new community and buy their own land away from the plantations, or when individuals bought land and then subdivided it into lots for other people to buy or rent. Often church leaders helped formerly enslaved Africans to establish free villages. Free villages gave the former enslaved Africans the freedom to explore their newly won rights resulting from emancipation. They now had access to land of their own, free from restrictions and the domination of plantation owners. This meant that they could plant their own cash crops and support their families. The free villages, in essence, gave the emancipated the first opportunity to explore freedom.*

## HISTORICAL SOURCE 6:

### Sligoville, St Catherine

*Sligoville is the name of the first free village to be established in Jamaica after emancipation. It was supported by missionaries of the church who were sympathetic to the cause of the enslaved African population. On 10th July 1835, a Baptist missionary in Jamaica called the Reverend James Phillipo bought 25 acres of land near Spanish Town, in the parish of St Catherine, for £100. The land was later subdivided into ¼ acre lots and sold to formerly enslaved Africans for the sum of £3.*

Some of the names of the first people to purchase their own land are shown below:

- Henry Lunan
- Robert Talbot
- William James
- James Henry
- Lewis Harvey

- George Coburn
- Elizabeth Francis
- Robert Downer
- William Hy Cooper
- Francis Cooper

- Edward Allen
- Will Atkinson
- Thomas Clarke
- Thomas Hy Cooper
- Thomas Walter



## HISTORICAL SOURCE 6:

### Some of the names of the first people to purchase their own land are shown below:

In October 1835 the first residents of this free village started to build a new school and church building, which were both completed in time for the Emancipation Day celebrations on 1st August 1838. On 12th June 1840 the village of Sligoville was formally dedicated. It was named after Lord Sligo (a man called Howe Peter Browne), the Governor of Jamaica from 1834 to 1836, to acknowledge his contribution to the process of emancipation.



This is an illustration of the first homes built in Sligoville during the 1830s.

### Maidstone, Manchester

Maidstone is a small historic village in the north-western hills of Manchester. It was originally a coffee plantation. The township was established as a free village in 1840 by the Moravians to provide a settlement for former enslaved African displaced after emancipation. The original settlement covered 341 acres of land. When the Moravians purchased the land it was subdivided into 98 lots ranging in size from 1-15 acres.

### Sturge Town, St Ann

A Baptist missionary called the Reverend John Clark was the main person responsible for the establishment of the free village of Sturge Town. Established in 1840, Sturge Town has the distinction of being Jamaica's second-oldest free village. The town was named in honour of Joseph Sturge, an anti-slavery campaigner who helped to end the apprenticeship system in the Caribbean.

## HISTORICAL SOURCE 6:



This photograph shows a monument erected in Sturge Town, Jamaica's second free village, established in 1840 in St. Ann's parish (Photographer: Gladstone Taylor). Stony Gut, St Thomas

### Stony Gut, St. Thomas

Stony Gut was the home of Jamaican National Hero Paul Bogle, the leader of the Morant Bay Rebellion in 1865. It is also one of the earliest independent free villages established after emancipation. The photograph on the right is believed to be an image of Paul Bogle, taken in 1865.

## HISTORICAL SOURCE 7:

**An extract from a notice published in the  
Bristol Mercury newspaper (in the UK) on 23rd June 1838.**

This notice announces that apprenticeship will end on 1st August 1838 in the Caribbean countries formerly governed by Britain. The information suggests that emancipation took place at different times – because Antiguans were emancipated in 1834, four years before people in the other former colonies of the British Empire.

**ABOLITION OF APPRENTICESHIP SLAVERY.**

It is our gratifying duty to announce that the force of public opinion in the mother country, joined to an overwhelming sense of the unsatisfactory and dangerous state of the probationary system, and, let us hope and be ready to believe, an admixture of still higher motives have led to the abolition of the remainder of the term of apprenticeship, on and from the 1st of August, in the colonies of St. Vincent and Barbadoes. St. Kitts, following the example so worthily set by Antigua, and so well followed by St. Vincent and Barbadoes, has also passed resolutions for carrying this object into effect; and, as most of our readers are probably aware, Nevis, Tortola, and Montserrat have already adopted the same principle; Grenada and the Windward Isles are expected immediately to do the same; and even at Jamaica "the prevailing opinion is"—we quote from a private letter—"that the planters and other inhabitants of this island are so disgusted and harassed by the continual agitation of the question," and "so alarmed at the mischiefs which are likely to result from the present state of the colony, that they will abolish the remaining apprenticeship also, and even submit to this further sacrifice of property (!), in order to preserve their lives, which the present course of agitation is likely to endanger." Making allowance for the feelings under which the writer of this letter evidently labours, we have no doubt that he truly describes the tendency of the public mind in Jamaica upon this important subject. The legislature of this island was convened for the 5th instant, to take the subject into consideration; and we have no doubt that a few weeks will enable us to congratulate our readers on the utter extinction of slavery in the British colonies on the 1st of August in the present year.

The only colony which furnishes a detail of these interesting proceedings is St. Vincent's, and we take the annexed extracts from the papers of that island:—

The following entry was made on the minutes of the Legislative Council, at a meeting of the honourable board on the 17th April:

"The council, after the most careful consideration of the Governor's message of the 15th January, 1838, in which his excellency urged upon the Legislative Council the wisdom and expediency of terminating the apprenticeship in August, 1838; reflecting, moreover, on the good faith of the British legislature, in rejecting any attempt to abolish the emancipation act of the imperial parliament of 1833, without the co-operation of the colonial legislatures; and taking into consideration the general good conduct of the apprenticed population, under so unprecedented an experiment, and during a period of continued excitement;—under such circumstances, and influenced by such reasons, the members of council are desirous of placing on record the following unanimous opinion:—

"That it is not only expedient to yield to the wishes of the British public, which have been so strongly expressed on this momentous question; but that, moreover, it will be the most conducive to the general interest and happiness of the colony, that a bill should be speedily passed declaring the absolute emancipation of all classes of apprenticed labourers on the 1st of August, 1838; and farther, that the said bill be accompanied by such constitutional measures as are furnished by the British common and statute law, to the end that peace and industry, the handmaids of prosperity, may minister to the best interests of this island."

"JOHN A. BECKLES, President."