

William Wilberforce: Triumph Over Britain's Slave Trade

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History has shown that the road to societal change is often paved with hardship and sorrow. The fight to end the British slave trade was a poignant example of the struggles to reach that change. The British slave trade thrived for over two centuries and was responsible for transporting 3.4 million slaves, mainly to Spanish, Portuguese, and British colonies.¹ This horrific institution was permeated with misery, corruption, and cruelty. The conditions on the ships were abhorrent. The male captives were shackled together below deck, unable to move, and forced to lie in their own filth.² The women were allowed some mobility and stayed on deck but were exposed to sexual harassment.³ Yet the appalling trade was “as accepted as birth and marriage and death.”⁴ It was not until William Wilberforce decided to combat slavery within Parliament that slaves had true hope of freedom. William Wilberforce’s campaign against the British slave trade, beginning in 1789, was a seemingly-endless battle against the trade’s relentless supporters. His faith propelled him through many personal tragedies for nearly two decades before he finally triumphed over the horrific trade. Because of Wilberforce’s faith-fueled determination, the slave trade was eradicated in the most powerful empire in the world. After the trade was abolished, Wilberforce fought for emancipation of all slaves in the British empire. He died just days after the House of Commons passed the act to free all slaves, an act that owed its existence to Wilberforce’s relentless fight against the slave trade.⁵

¹Clarkson, Thomas. “The History of the Rise Progress and Accomplishment of the Abolition.. Vol. I.” Recovered Histories - Pamphlet, recoveredhistories.org/pamphlet1.php?catid=653.

²An Appeal To the Religion, Justice, and Humanity Of the Inhabitants Of the British Empire, in Behalf Of the Negro Slaves in the West Indies [microform] : Wilberforce, William, 1759-1833 : Free Download, Borrow, and Streaming https://archive.org/details/cihm_42789/page/n7.

³Ramsay, James. “An Essay on the Treatment and Conversion of Slaves in the British Sugar Colonies.” Recovered Histories - Pamphlet, recoveredhistories.org/pamphlet1.php?catid=82.

⁴Metaxas, Eric. *Amazing Grace: William Wilberforce and the Heroic Campaign to End Slavery*. Authentic Media, 2013.

⁵Belmonte, Kevin Charles. *Hero for Humanity: a Biography of William Wilberforce*. Navpress, 2002.

On August 24, 1759, William Wilberforce was born into a rich merchant family in the port city of Hull.⁶ After his father died in 1768, Wilberforce was sent to live with his aunt and uncle in London.⁷ They were people of fierce Christian convictions and greatly influenced Wilberforce's formative years. They also introduced Wilberforce to John Newton, a famous slave captain turned abolitionist.⁸ Wilberforce became quite attached to Newton. Newton's influence, as well as Wilberforce's aunt and uncle's, directed his thoughts towards faith.⁹ When his mother and grandfather discovered Wilberforce's interest in Newton's zealous faith they were furious and immediately brought him back home to Hull.¹⁰ They discouraged any extreme religious ideals and diverted his attentions to material pursuits.¹¹

At age seventeen, Wilberforce attended Cambridge University, where he met and befriended future prime minister William Pitt, and developed a passion for politics.¹² During his last year at Cambridge, Wilberforce ran for Parliament. He was elected in 1780 as a Member of Parliament for Hull, and for Yorkshire in 1784.¹³ After the 1784 Parliament session closed, Wilberforce went on a trip with Isaac Milner, an ardent Christian, who refueled his fascination in Christianity for the first time since he was a child. His interest morphed into an obsession, one that captivated his every thought until his conversion to Christianity on Easter, 1786. This became known as his 'Great Change.'¹⁴ After being convinced of the truths of Christianity, he found his life entirely altered. He considered retiring from politics. He sought advice from

⁶“History - William Wilberforce.” *BBC*, BBC, www.bbc.co.uk/history/historic_figures/wilberforce_william.shtml.

⁷ Hague, William. *William Wilberforce: the Life of the Great Anti-Slave Trade Campaigner*. Harcourt, 2008.

⁸ Belmonte, Kevin Charles. *Hero for Humanity: a Biography of William Wilberforce*. Navpress, 2002.

⁹ Belmonte, Kevin Charles. *Hero for Humanity: a Biography of William Wilberforce*. Navpress, 2002.

¹⁰ Christie, Vance. “William Wilberforce's 'Great Change.'” *VanceChristie.com*, 31 Aug. 2016, vancechristie.com/2016/08/31/william-wilberforces-great-change/.

¹¹ Christie, Vance. “William Wilberforce's 'Great Change.'” *VanceChristie.com*, 31 Aug. 2016, vancechristie.com/2016/08/31/william-wilberforces-great-change/.

¹² Metaxas, Eric. *Amazing Grace: William Wilberforce and the Heroic Campaign to End Slavery*. Authentic Media, 2013.

¹³“William Wilberforce.” William Wilberforce, www.cs.mcgill.ca/~rwest/wikispeedia/wpcd/wp/w/William_Wilberforce.htm.

¹⁴ Belmonte, Kevin Charles. *Hero for Humanity: a Biography of William Wilberforce*. Navpress, 2002.

William Pitt, now Prime Minister, who helped him realize how his newfound faith could shape his service to his country.¹⁵ He listened to Pitt's advice and remained in Parliament but still struggled to discover his purpose there.

Throughout 1786, Wilberforce was still looking for the “distinctive part he was meant to play in public life.”¹⁶ His search led him to noted abolitionists, Sir Charles and Lady Middleton, and the slave trade.¹⁷ The Middletons were convinced that a successful war against the slave trade must be waged by someone within Parliament. They urged Wilberforce to commit to the cause.¹⁸ Because of his extensive biblical study, Wilberforce believed that slavery was evil; still, he was unsure if he was personally capable of bringing abolition of the slave trade to Parliament. One of the Middletons' friends, Thomas Clarkson, visited Wilberforce every week for the first few months of 1787, stirring his conscience with details of the horrors of the trade and persuading him to take the issue to Parliament.¹⁹ Clarkson's extensive research buoyed Wilberforce in two vital ways. First, it provided Wilberforce with a mountain of evidence that would prove useful in future speeches. Second, it reinforced his already deep-seated belief in the heinousness of the slave trade. On October 28, 1787, he met once again with John Newton. Newton's support was the final push that convinced Wilberforce to officially take up the cause. He finalized his decision that very night and wrote in his journal, “God Almighty has set before me two great objects: the suppression of the slave trade and the reformation of manners.”²⁰

¹⁵“The Project Gutenberg EBook, *Private Papers of William Wilberforce*, by William Wilberforce, Edited by Anna Maria Wilberforce.” Project Gutenberg, www.gutenberg.org/files/44912/44912-h/44912-h.htm#Page_1.

¹⁶Lean, Garth. *God's Politician: William Wilberforce's Struggle*. Darton Longman & Todd, 2007.

¹⁷“The Abolition Project.” Women & Women's Groups: The Abolition of Slavery Project, abolition.e2bn.org/people_38.html.

¹⁸Belmonte, Kevin Charles. *Hero for Humanity: a Biography of William Wilberforce*. Navpress, 2002.

¹⁹“Online Library of Liberty.” The History of the Abolition of the African Slave-Trade, Vol. 2 - Online Library of Liberty, oll.libertyfund.org/titles/clarkson-the-history-of-the-abolition-of-the-african-slave-trade-vol-2.

²⁰Lean, Garth. *God's Politician: William Wilberforce's Struggle*. Darton Longman & Todd, 2007.

Wilberforce was convinced that it was his sacred duty to bring abolition to Parliament, and this belief spurred him on through every setback he faced during the fight.

During the remainder of 1787, Wilberforce met with other abolitionists, discussing the best way to initiate Parliamentary action.²¹ Their ultimate goal was to end all slavery in the British empire, but Wilberforce knew this would only be politically and socially possible in increments.²² By ending the slave trade first, they would eliminate the cruelties associated with the trade and hopefully force planters to treat their current slaves better since these slaves would be irreplaceable.²³ While this plan would not end all slavery immediately, it would pave the way for emancipation and help the government settle into the idea of abolition at a less intimidating pace. Wilberforce continued to gather evidence against the trade to bring forward to Parliament. Late in 1787, he announced his plan to introduce a motion early in the next Parliamentary session to abolish the slave trade.²⁴

Wilberforce was fully prepared to present his case when tragedy struck. Completely exhausted, he fell deathly ill in mid-February 1788. His doctors believed that he had “not the stamina to last a fortnight,” and Wilberforce was bedridden for over a month with what researchers now theorize is ulcerative colitis.²⁵ Believing that death was inevitable, he asked Pitt to present the slave trade resolution in his place. On April 7th, Pitt moved that the House of Commons investigate the trade in the following session.²⁶ Soon after, Wilberforce began to recover with the help of prescribed opium, which he was forced to depend on for the rest of his

²¹Wilberforce, William. “Guide to the William Wilberforce Papers, 1782-1837 and Undated.” *David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library*, library.duke.edu/rubenstein/findingaids/wilberf/#aspace_da1a8e5728e90d198e9ac5c6ebd8d.

²²Belmonte, Kevin Charles. *Hero for Humanity: a Biography of William Wilberforce*. Navpress, 2002.

²³Clarkson, Thomas. “The History of the Rise Progress and Accomplishment of the Abolition.. Vol. I.” *Recovered Histories - Pamphlet*, recoveredhistories.org/pamphlet1.php?catid=653.

²⁴Belmonte, Kevin Charles. *Hero for Humanity: a Biography of William Wilberforce*. Navpress, 2002.

²⁵Knowles, Rachel. “William Wilberforce (1759-1833).” *Regency History*, 10 Apr. 2012, www.regencyhistory.net/2012/04/william-wilberforce-1759-1833.html.

²⁶Lean, Garth. *God's Politician: William Wilberforce's Struggle*. Darton Longman & Todd, 2007.

life.²⁷ He then traveled to Bath, which was well-known for its mineral springs, to “take the waters,” and steadily regained his health.²⁸ Wilberforce’s devastating illness nearly ruined any chance of abolition. Had it not been for the opium, Wilberforce would have died. Although Pitt was willing to take up the cause in his place, he lacked Wilberforce’s passion, and the cause could have quickly deteriorated. The crisis was averted and Wilberforce recovered, enabling him to return to Parliament in November 1788.²⁹

Finally on May 12, 1789, he was able to bring before Parliament his bill to abolish the slave trade. He gave a three-and-a-half-hour long speech describing the tragedies of the slave trade and provided over 850 pages of evidence against the trade.³⁰ Pitt, Charles Fox, and Edmund Burke were wholeheartedly in support, but many others were unsure, believing that abolition of the trade would destroy the economy.³¹ No one thought to question the trade’s morality, because it had existed for so long. When Wilberforce called for the end of the trade, uncertainty filled the House of Commons. They struggled to understand that the moral evils of the trade were worse than the economic drawbacks that could arise from abolition. Wilberforce’s opponents utilized the doubts prevalent in the House to build a stirring defense against abolition. Debating continued until April 18, 1791, when the Commons finally voted on the bill.³² Wilberforce gave

²⁷ Knowles, Rachel. “William Wilberforce (1759-1833).” *Regency History*, 10 Apr. 2012, www.regencyhistory.net/2012/04/william-wilberforce-1759-1833.html.

²⁸ Knight, Eliza. “Taking the Waters,” in Bath, England.” *History Undressed*, 1 Jan. 1970, www.historyundressed.com/2008/04/taking-waters-in-bath-england.html.

²⁹ Hague, William. *William Wilberforce: the Life of the Great Anti-Slave Trade Campaigner*. Harcourt, 2008.

³⁰ “The Speech of William Wilberforce, Esq., Representative for the County of York, on Wednesday the 13th of May, 1789, on the Question of the Abolition of the Slave Trade. To Which Are Added, the Resolutions Then Moved, and a Short Sketch of the Speeches of the Other Members.” *NYPL Digital Collections*, digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/510d47e3-a708-a3d9-e040-e00a18064a99.

³¹ Hague, William. *William Wilberforce: the Life of the Great Anti-Slave Trade Campaigner*. Harcourt, 2008.

³² Lean, Garth. *God's Politician: William Wilberforce's Struggle*. Darton Longman & Todd, 2007.

an eloquent, moving speech, but it was all for naught. The abolitionists lost their bill, eighty-eight to 163.³³

Wilberforce refused to give up. On the contrary, he reformatted his strategy and brought the subject up for a second time in the following year on April 2, 1792.³⁴ During the debate in the Commons, Wilberforce and Pitt delivered brilliant speeches that moved the hearts of those who were already supporting the bill and created enough momentum to inspire even more people to join their cause.³⁵ Just as Pitt finished, the Home Secretary, Henry Dundas, stood up and proposed gradual abolition. The members who were still indecisive seized Dundas' idea, and they voted to gradually abolish the trade by January 1, 1796. Although Wilberforce received accolades from many moderate abolitionists, he and his closest allies were far from satisfied.³⁶ Wilberforce refused to entertain the notion of gradual abolition. Instead, he prepared to continue the fight for immediate abolition of the trade.

Soon after the gradual abolition debate, Wilberforce's life was threatened by two slave ship captains. In April 1792, Captain John Kimber, who had previously murdered a young slave girl, was angry at Wilberforce and began lying in wait for him. Aware of Kimber's violent history, Wilberforce's friends feared for his life and urged him to hire a bodyguard.³⁷ Another slave captain, Robert Norris, whose credibility Wilberforce destroyed during his examinations of the slave trade, also resorted to frequently threatening Wilberforce's life.³⁸

³³Britain., Great. "The Parliamentary Register; or, History of the Proceedings and Debates of the House of Commons [and of the House of Lords] Containing an Account of the Interesting ... Ser.2 V.29 1791." *HathiTrust*, University of Michigan, babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015040119987%3Bview.

³⁴Lean, Garth. *God's Politician: William Wilberforce's Struggle*. Darton Longman & Todd, 2007.

³⁵The Parliamentary Register; Or, History Of the Proceedings and Debates Of the House Of Commons [and Of the House Of Lords] Containing an Account Of the Interesting ... Ser.2 V.32 1792.

Great Britain. - <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015054071264%3Bview>

³⁶"Online Library of Liberty." *The History of the Abolition of the African Slave-Trade, Vol. 2 - Online Library of Liberty*, oll.libertyfund.org/titles/clarkson-the-history-of-the-abolition-of-the-african-slave-trade-vol-2.

³⁷Belmonte, Kevin Charles. *Hero for Humanity: a Biography of William Wilberforce*. Navpress, 2002.

³⁸Lean, Garth. *God's Politician: William Wilberforce's Struggle*. Darton Longman & Todd, 2007.

However, threats were not the only problems facing Wilberforce and abolition. A series of tragic setbacks hit Wilberforce hard in a short amount of time. In February 1793, France declared war on Britain, setting abolition lower on Parliament's list of priorities.³⁹ Also, the House of Commons refused to confirm the gradual abolition vote of 1792.⁴⁰ In 1793 and 1794, Wilberforce tried to bring forward a new bill, the Foreign Slave Bill, which prohibited the carrying of slaves to foreign territories in British ships, but he was defeated both times.⁴¹ Shortly after, Thomas Clarkson, the long-time supporter of Wilberforce, fell into financial and physical ruin, causing him to quit the abolitionist cause.⁴² Wilberforce's campaign against slavery was slowly deteriorating, but he did not give up. He pushed forward and worked to overcome the extreme difficulties he faced.

On March 15, 1796, victory appeared to be in his grasp. A Parliamentary vote was held for total abolition of the trade, and the cause had more supporters than opponents. Wilberforce's opponents realized this, and in an effort to negate the abolitionists' advantage, they gave at least half a dozen free theatre tickets to Wilberforce's supporters. The scheme worked. The supporters failed to show up for the vote; the bill was defeated.⁴³ Repeatedly throughout Wilberforce's struggle, he spent more time gathering evidence against the trade than creating political strategies. Had he worked harder to gain more loyal supporters, rather than throwing statistics at indecisive politicians during lengthy debates, he could have conquered the slave trade much sooner.

³⁹“Online Library of Liberty.” *The History of the Abolition of the African Slave-Trade, Vol. 2* - Online Library of Liberty, oll.libertyfund.org/titles/clarkson-the-history-of-the-abolition-of-the-african-slave-trade-vol-2.

⁴⁰Perry, Gregory W. *Grace Valley Christian Center*, gracevalley.org/teaching/william-wilberforce-the-great-change-and-the-great-object.

⁴¹“Online Library of Liberty.” *The History of the Abolition of the African Slave-Trade, Vol. 2* - Online Library of Liberty, oll.libertyfund.org/titles/clarkson-the-history-of-the-abolition-of-the-african-slave-trade-vol-2.

⁴²“Online Library of Liberty.” *The History of the Abolition of the African Slave-Trade, Vol. 2* - Online Library of Liberty, oll.libertyfund.org/titles/clarkson-the-history-of-the-abolition-of-the-african-slave-trade-vol-2.

⁴³“William Wilberforce Biography | .” *Biography Online*, www.biographyonline.net/politicians/uk/william-wilberforce.html.

In April 1796, Wilberforce fell gravely ill for a second time. Completely exhausted, he suffered from a nervous breakdown. The thought of returning to the political fray filled him with anxiety, and he considered retiring.⁴⁴ He consulted John Newton, who used the Biblical story of Daniel to convince Wilberforce to continue fighting for the abolition of the slave trade.⁴⁵ Newton's story reminded Wilberforce of his belief that God had set the "suppression of slavery" before him, and he decided to return to the political arena as soon as he was strong enough.⁴⁶ After years of failed attempts, Wilberforce would have been completely justified in giving up. However, the story of Daniel, and how he continued to trust in God even when it meant he would likely be killed, inspired Wilberforce. Wilberforce remembered his belief that God had called him to combat slavery, and therefore God would take care of him, even if all seemed lost. In 1797, Wilberforce wrote *Real Christianity*, a book describing how the Christian faith is a call to fight for societal good, no matter the cost. He wrote, "Then fix your eye on the glorious prize which is before you [Philippians 3:13-14]; and when your strength begins to fail, and your spirits are well nigh exhausted, let the animating view rekindle your resolutions and call forth in renewed vigor the fainting energies of your soul."⁴⁷ *Real Christianity* reveals how the Bible's inspirational stories and pleas for true justice spurred Wilberforce to persevere through many personal tragedies and setbacks.

It was not until 1806 that Wilberforce again had reason for hope, and this hope sprung from a most unlikely source. After William Pitt's death in January, the new Prime Minister,

⁴⁴Belmonte, Kevin Charles. *Hero for Humanity: a Biography of William Wilberforce*. Navpress, 2002.

⁴⁵Wilberforce, William. *Private Papers of William Wilberforce*, edited by Anna Maria Wilberforce. 2014. The Project Gutenberg, www.gutenberg.org/files/44912/44912-h/44912-h.htm#Page_1. Accessed 3 February 2019.

⁴⁶Belmonte, Kevin Charles. *Hero for Humanity: a Biography of William Wilberforce*. Navpress, 2002.

⁴⁷Wilberforce, William, and Charles W. Colson. *A Practical View of Christianity: Personal Faith as a Call to Political Responsibility*. Edited by Kevin Charles. Belmonte, Hendrickson Publishers, 2011.

William Grenville, and his administration joined forces with Wilberforce in the battle against the slave trade.⁴⁸ Ironically, Wilberforce had previously been at political odds with Grenville and his colleagues on many occasions. Grenville and his colleagues devised a plan Wilberforce believed would work.⁴⁹ They introduced a bill prohibiting financial dealings between any British slave trader and a foreign entity. It was passed on June 24, 1807, and dramatically reduced the financial viability of the slave trade, therefore eliminating any economic drawbacks to abolition.⁵⁰ Because the slave traders no longer held the economic advantage, Grenville was able to move the bill for the abolition of the slave trade. Opponents to abolition delayed the voting for a month before the House of Lords approved the bill on February 3, 1807, and the Commons approved it on February 23.⁵¹ On March 25, the bill received royal assent and ended the fight against the slave trade.⁵² Wilberforce's perseverance, faith, and eloquence of speech, aided by Grenville's quick thinking, paid off, and the slave trade was decisively conquered.

After nearly twenty years of political war against the slave trade and its supporters, William Wilberforce was finally victorious. He sacrificed everything to champion abolition: his emotional and physical well-being, and his personal safety, but in the end, he came out triumphant. On the day the slave trade was abolished, he accomplished more than just defeating the slave trade; he changed the mindset of a nation, leading to change around the world. Wilberforce inspired American abolitionists like Abraham Lincoln and Harriet Beecher Stowe to

⁴⁸Perry, Gregory W. *Grace Valley Christian Center*, gracevalley.org/teaching/william-wilberforce-the-great-change-and-the-great-object.

⁴⁹Wilberforce, William. *Private Papers of William Wilberforce*, edited by Anna Maria Wilberforce. 2014. The Project Gutenberg, www.gutenberg.org/files/44912/44912-h/44912-h.htm#Page_1. Accessed 3 February 2019.

⁵⁰“Online Library of Liberty.” *The History of the Abolition of the African Slave-Trade*, Vol. 2 - Online Library of Liberty, oll.libertyfund.org/titles/clarkson-the-history-of-the-abolition-of-the-african-slave-trade-vol-2.

⁵¹“Online Library of Liberty.” *The History of the Abolition of the African Slave-Trade*, Vol. 2 - Online Library of Liberty, oll.libertyfund.org/titles/clarkson-the-history-of-the-abolition-of-the-african-slave-trade-vol-2.

⁵²“SLAVE TRADE ABOLITION BILL.” (Hansard, 2 March 1916), api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons/1807/feb/23/slave-trade-abolition-bill.

persevere in the fight for abolition in their own nation.⁵³ Speaking of the British abolition of the trade, Frederick Douglass said, “The stimulus it gave to the American anti-slavery movement was immediate, pronounced, and powerful. British example became a tremendous lever in the hands of American abolitionists.”⁵⁴ Before the trade was abolished in Britain, even those who considered themselves to be civilized regarded slavery as natural, and few saw it as immoral. Eric Metaxas, a Wilberforce biographer, described the feelings perfectly: “The roots of the thing Wilberforce was trying to uproot had been growing since humans first walked on the planet, and if they had been real roots they would have reached to the molten core of the earth itself. They ran so deep and so wide that most people thought that they held the planet together.”⁵⁵ Wilberforce did uproot it. Due to his perseverance and faith, slavery is largely recognized as a barbaric injustice. Wilberforce accomplished more than abolishing an abhorrent institution on that night in 1807, he challenged the backwards assumptions of an entire empire, and he emerged triumphant.

⁵³Metaxas, Eric. *Amazing Grace: William Wilberforce and the Heroic Campaign to End Slavery*. Authentic Media, 2013.

⁵⁴Douglass, Frederick, and John Lobb. “Online Library of Liberty.” *The Life and Times of Frederick Douglass: From 1817-1882 - Online Library of Liberty*, oll.libertyfund.org/titles/douglass-the-life-and-times-of-frederick-douglass-from-1817-1882.

⁵⁵Metaxas, Eric. *Amazing Grace: William Wilberforce and the Heroic Campaign to End Slavery*. Authentic Media, 2013.

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An Appeal To the Religion, Justice, and Humanity Of the Inhabitants Of the British Empire, in Behalf Of the Negro Slaves in the West Indies [microform] :

Wilberforce,

William, 1759-1833 : Free Download, Borrow, and Streaming
https://archive.org/details/cihm_42789/page/n7.

This is an essay written by Wilberforce in 1823. In the paper he urged the citizens of Britain to understand the unethical practice of slavery. It describes in detail the lengths Wilberforce went to in order continue to fight against slavery, even after the slave trade was abolished.

Britain., Great. "The Parliamentary Register; or, History of the Proceedings and Debates of the House of Commons [and of the House of Lords] Containing an Account of the Interesting ... Ser.2 V.29 1791." *HathiTrust*, University of Michigan,
babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015040119987%3Bview.

The source is the registry of every debate of the Houses of Commons and Lords in 1791. It explains what exactly Wilberforce accomplished, or rather, did not accomplish in the debates of that year.

"British Influence on the Abolition Movement in America." The Gilder Lehrman Center for the Study of Slavery, Resistance, and Abolition,
glc.yale.edu/british-influence-abolition-movement-america.

This source is a speech given by Frederick Douglass, that he delivered to a group of British subjects, explaining how different British abolitionists greatly influenced abolition in America. It provided crucial details of the impact Britain had on America's abolition efforts.

Clarkson, Thomas. "The History of the Rise Progress and Accomplishment of the Abolition.. Vol. I." *Recovered Histories - Pamphlet*,
recoveredhistories.org/pamphlet1.php?catid=653.

Thomas Clarkson wrote an account of all of his experiences, which explained firsthand what horrors he saw as he traveled gathering people to testify against the slave trade. It was useful in understanding the overwhelming amount of evidence Wilberforce and other

abolitionists had acquired to fight the slave trade.

Collyer, Joseph. "Abolition of the Slave Trade." Royal Museums Greenwich, National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London, Michael Graham-Stewart Slavery Collection., collections.rmg.co.uk/collections/objects/254736.html.

This a painting, created by Joseph Collyer, soon after the slave trade was abolished. It was a clear depiction of the horrors of the trade, then the extreme jubilation felt by not only Wilberforce, but also all abolitionists after the trade was abolished.

Douglass, Frederick, and John Lobb. "Online Library of Liberty." The Life and Times of Frederick Douglass: From 1817-1882 - Online Library of Liberty, oll.libertyfund.org/titles/douglass-the-life-and-times-of-frederick-douglass-from-1817-1882.

This source is a book written by Frederick Douglass. It provided crucial information regarding Wilberforce and other British abolitionists' influence on American abolition.

"Extracts from John Newton's Journal." National Museums Liverpool, www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/ism/slavery/middle_passage_john_newton.aspx.

The mentioned source is a journal of the slave-captain turned abolitionist John Newton. It gave insight into the immorality and greed that was ingrained into the hearts of the slave captains, making it easier to understand how willing the slave-captains were to protect the trade against abolitionists.

A Letter on the Abolition Of the Slave Trade : Addressed To the Freeholders and Other Inhabitants Of Yorkshire. : Wilberforce, William, 1759-1833 : Free Download, Borrow, and Streaming <https://archive.org/details/ASPC0002373800/page/n9>.

Soon after the slave trade abolished, Wilberforce wrote the mentioned source, a letter to the people of Yorkshire, describing the details of what evils he was fighting against in his struggle against the slave trade. It gave insight into Wilberforce's emotional struggles and what pushed him to persevere throughout his fight.

**The National Archives. “Slavery - Source 1.” The National Archives, The National Archives, 24 Apr. 2014,
www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/education/resources/slavery/source-1/.**

The primary source mentioned is a document and transcript of a slave trader’s log of misdemeanors and punishments. It gave insight to the cruel and demeaning nature of the slave trade. It provided background information on the harsh cruelties and racial injustices ingrained in the trade.

**“Olaudah Equiano - Life on Board.” *National Museums Liverpool*,
www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/ism/slavery/middle_passage/olaudah_equiano.aspx.**

Olaudah Equiano’s personal experiences on board of a slave ship was critical to understanding the terrifying and tragic nature of the treatment of slaves captured into the slave trade. It was critical in understanding the emotional effect it had on the slaves that were captured.

**“Online Library of Liberty.” *The History of the Abolition of the African Slave-Trade*, Vol. 2 - Online Library of Liberty,
oll.libertyfund.org/titles/clarkson-the-history-of-the-abolition-of-the-african-slave-trade-vol-2.**

The indicated source was a book written by Thomas Clarkson discussing all that had been done to make the slave trade illegal, and what steps needed to be taken to enforce the new laws. It was helpful to understand all of the effort that needed to still be put into the cause, and that the abolitionists were ready to continue their fight to the very end.

**OpenStax. “United States History I.” Lumen Learning, Lumen,
courses.lumenlearning.com/ushistory1os/chapter/primary-source-images-british-north-america/.**

The mentioned primary source is a diagram of the slave ship *Brookes*. It was critical in understanding the layout of slave ships, and how each slave packed next to each other in perfect lines, leaving no space for any kind of movement.

The Parliamentary Register; Or, History Of the Proceedings and Debates Of the House Of Commons [and Of the House Of Lords] Containing an Account Of the Interesting ...Ser.2 V.32 1792. Great Britain. -
<https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015054071264%3Bview>

The indicated source is the Parliamentary Registry of Debates in Parliament during 1792. It provided necessary information regarding the supporters and opponents of abolition, and the details of gradual abolition.

Ramsay, James. "An Essay on the Treatment and Conversion of Slaves in the British Sugar Colonies." Recovered Histories - Pamphlet, recoveredhistories.org/pamphlet1.php?catid=82.

James Ramsay's essay is a firsthand account of the cruel and harsh treatment of slaves in British colonies. It not only provided information regarding the unjust treatment of the slaves, it also provided crucial information regarding the legal actions needed to be taken in order to put an end to the slave trade and slavery itself.

"SLAVE TRADE ABOLITION BILL." (Hansard, 2 March 1916),
api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons/1807/feb/23/slave-trade-abolition-bill.

The mentioned article is an account of the speeches and arguments made on February 23, 1807. It provided a better understanding of the words, thoughts, and emotions of all in the Houses of Parliament on that day.

"The Speech of William Wilberforce, Esq., Representative for the County of York, on Wednesday the 13th of May, 1789, on the Question of the Abolition of the Slave Trade. To Which Are Added, the Resolutions Then Moved, and a Short Sketch of the Speeches of the Other Members." *NYPL Digital Collections*, digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/510d47e3-a708-a3d9-e040-e00a18064a99.

The mentioned source is Wilberforce's first speech against the slave trade, and it provided crucial insight into the emotions he felt concerning the slaves tragic circumstances.

Wesley, John. Booker T. Washington, 1856-1915. An Autobiography. The Story of My Life and Work, docsouth.unc.edu/church/wesley/wesley.html.

John Wesley, an Anglican clergyman, evangelist, and abolitionist, wrote the mentioned paper declaring the evils of the slave trade and describes the torture inflicted on the slaves. It provided a better understanding of how John Wesley and his writings influenced Wilberforce and his fight against the slave trade.

Wilberforce, William, and Charles W. Colson. A Practical View of Christianity: Personal Faith as a Call to Political Responsibility. Edited by Kevin Charles. Belmonte, Hendrickson Publishers, 2011.

This source is a book written by Wilberforce, describing his views on Christianity. It provided an extremely useful explanation of the impact his faith had on him, and how it propelled him through the countless setbacks he endured.

Wilberforce, William. "Guide to the William Wilberforce Papers, 1782-1837 and Undated."

David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library,
library.duke.edu/rubenstein/findingaids/wilberf/#aspace_da1a8e5728e90d198e9ac5c6ebd8d.

The mentioned source is a guide to Wilberforce's correspondence. It provided a clear depiction of how Wilberforce interacted with his friends, fellow abolitionists, and opponents.

Wilberforce, William. Private Papers of William Wilberforce, edited by Anna Maria Wilberforce. 2014. The Project Gutenberg, www.gutenberg.org/files/44912/44912-h/44912-h.htm#Page_1. Accessed 3 February 2019.

The mentioned source contained many of the private papers of Wilberforce, especially letters. It gave a better understanding of Wilberforce's personality and personal life.

Secondary Sources

“The Abolition Project.” *Petitioning and Lobbying Parliament: The Abolition of Slavery Project*, abolition.e2bn.org/campaign_16.html.

The mentioned source is a short overview of abolition, and provided a clear outline of when certain events took place as well as their significance and impact on abolition.

“The Abolition Project.” *Women & Women's Groups: The Abolition of Slavery Project*, abolition.e2bn.org/people_38.html.

The indicated source explained the role of women in abolition, and was most helpful in providing information concerning Lady Middleton’s assistance in convincing Wilberforce to take abolition to Parliament.

Aspinall, Arthur C.V.D. “William Pitt, the Younger.” *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., 19 Jan. 2019, www.britannica.com/biography/William-Pitt-the-Younger.

The mentioned article explains the life of William Pitt, Wilberforce’s lifelong friend. It was provided crucial comparisons of Pitt and Wilberforce’s life, majorly during Wilberforce’s fight against the slave trade.

“BBC World Service | The Story of Africa.” BBC, BBC, www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/specials/1624_story_of_africa/page53.shtml.

The mentioned source contained pertinent information on the conditions of the slave ships. It also provided understanding of the beginnings of the slave trade, and contained multiple statistics relating to the amount of slaves sent around the world.

Belmonte, Kevin Charles. *Hero for Humanity: a Biography of William Wilberforce*. Navpress, 2002.

Hero for Humanity was a detailed account of Wilberforce’s life and provided deeper understanding of all that Wilberforce went through in order to bring triumph over the slave trade.

**“Britain and the Slave Trade.” *The National Archives*,
www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/slavery/pdf/britain-and-the-trade.pdf.**

The mentioned article explained the beginnings of the trade and the control it held within the British industry. It also provided key information on the economical effects of ending the slave trade in Britain.

“British Involvement in the Transatlantic Slave Trade.” Thomas Clarkson - Key Events: The Abolition of Slavery Project, abolition.e2bn.org/slavery_45.html.

The information provided key descriptions of the lives of slaves on board slave ships, and the amount of slaves Britain transported during the time the slave trade was alive. It also provided information concerning Wilberforce’s life while fighting against abolition.

**Christie, Vance. “William Wilberforce's ‘Great Change.’” *VanceChristie.com*, 31 Aug. 2016,
vancechristie.com/2016/08/31/william-wilberforces-great-change/.**

The mentioned article provided crucial details concerning Wilberforce’s ‘Great Change,’ his long search for Christ and rediscovery of his purpose. It also went into great detail the outward changes he experienced.

**Curtis, Ken. “William Wilberforce.” *Romans 5 - Matthew Henry's Bible Commentary (Concise) - Bible Commentary*,
www.christianity.com/church/church-history/timeline/1801-1900/william-wilberforce-11630357.html.**

The indicated article described the impact Wilberforce’s faith had on his ability to persevere through the fight against the slave trade. It also mentioned John Newton’s influence on Wilberforce and how crucial said influence was in making sure Wilberforce continued his political career.

Furneaux, Robin. *William Wilberforce*. Regent College Pub., 2005

William Wilberforce gave insight into the life, beliefs and passions of Wilberforce. It provided descriptions of the beginnings of slavery and abolition in England, which was

imperative to understanding the struggles of Wilberforce in his movement to end slavery.

Hague, William. *William Wilberforce: the Life of the Great Anti-Slave Trade Campaigner*. Harcourt, 2008.

William Wilberforce was a very fascinating description of Wilberforce's personality and faith, and provided a better of understanding of how those aspects of his life kept him fighting in the face of adversity.

"History - William Wilberforce." *BBC*, BBC, www.bbc.co.uk/history/historic_figures/wilberforce_william.shtml.

The information here helped me gain a general outline of the life of William Wilberforce. It was a useful cross-reference for the series of events mentioned in books about Wilberforce.

Knight, Eliza. "Taking the Waters," in Bath, England." *History Undressed*, 1 Jan. 1970, www.historyundressed.com/2008/04/taking-waters-in-bath-england.html.

"Taking the Waters" gave insight into the significance of going to Bath for health reasons, as Wilberforce did, and explained why the minerals in the ground helped the seriously ill to recuperate.

Knowles, Rachel. "William Wilberforce (1759-1833)." *Regency History*, 10 Apr. 2012, www.regencyhistory.net/2012/04/william-wilberforce-1759-1833.html.

The mentioned source went into detail about Wilberforce's illness, and how he struggled with stress-related conditions for his whole life. It gave insight into the struggles Wilberforce endured while simultaneously fighting against the slave trade.

Lean, Garth. *God's Politician: William Wilberforce's Struggle*. Darton Longman & Todd, 2007.

God's Politician was a shorter book, that was easy to read and understand, especially for an American reader, as it explained some of the different positions and systems of Parliament. It also stayed in the order of events almost perfectly, rarely skipping forward or backward in the timeline, making it less confusing than other sources.

**“Life on Board Slave Ships.” *National Museums Liverpool*,
www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/ism/slavery/middle_passage/.**

The information provide a clear depiction of the horrors of the British slave trade and how tragic the impact it held on everyone involved.

**“Madness in the Methadone.” *The Telegraph*, Telegraph Media Group, 8 Dec. 2001,
www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/4726920/Madness-in-the-methadone.html.**

The mentioned source described the popularity of opium in Wilberforce’s age, and it also described Wilberforce’s dependence on it. The article gave insight into the knowledge, or lack thereof, doctors had about medicine like opium, and the effect it had on people like Wilberforce.

Metaxas, Eric. *Amazing Grace: William Wilberforce and the Heroic Campaign to End Slavery*. Authentic Media, 2013.

The book *Amazing Grace* was an invaluable starting point for the project. It created a clear outline of the history of not only Wilberforce’s life, but the history of the abolition movement in England.

**“National 5 History - The Abolitionist Campaigns - Revision 4.” *BBC News*, BBC,
www.bbc.com/bitesize/guides/z2bmn39/revision/4.**

The said article provided insight into Wilberforce’s campaign against the slave trade, and was especially descriptive concerning the end of the struggle. It highlighted the assistance Wilberforce received from his supporters, and how the collaboration between Wilberforce and his supporters helped them to push through in the end.

**Oldfield, Dr John. “History - British History in Depth: British Anti-Slavery.” *BBC*, BBC,
 17 Feb. 2011, www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/empire_seapower/antislavery_01.shtml.**

Dr. John Oldfield’s article provided an overview of the timeline of the abolition of the slave trade, which helped to cross reference with other books and confirm information already gathered.

**Perry, Gregory W. *Grace Valley Christian Center*,
gracevalley.org/teaching/william-wilberforce-the-great-change-and-the-great-object.**

The mentioned article provided an explanation of how Wilberforce's faith motivated Wilberforce through his struggle. It also gave a more detailed account of the faith-related events of Wilberforce's life, and quoted his thoughts on religion.

Pollock, John Charles. *Wilberforce*. Lion, 1986.

Wilberforce was a fascinating biography that gave a better understanding of Wilberforce's personal life, especially concerning his health, character, extreme psychological strength, self-control and perseverance.

Pressman, Edward R., et al. *Amazing Grace*. Samuel Goldwyn Films, 2006.

The movie *Amazing Grace* was a supplement to the book *Amazing Grace*, and was another starting point for the paper. It provided an visual of the main events in the fight against the slave trade.

Simkin, John. Spartacus Educational, Spartacus Educational, spartacus-educational.com/REwilberforce.htm.

The indicated article was a short detailed biography that provided key information concerning the life of William Wilberforce, specifically in his fight against the slave trade, in a well-organized setting.

TheFamousPeople.com, Editors. "Who Was William Wilberforce Everything You Need to Know." Childhood, Life Achievements & Timeline, 26 Sept.2017, www.thefamouspeople.com/profiles/william-wilberforce-3227.php.

This source provided a specific order of events of Wilberforce's struggle against the slave trade, and kept a clear outline of his life. It was easier to discover the exact timeline of the battle against the slave trade.

Watson, John Steven. "George III." *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., 14 Dec. 2018, www.britannica.com/biography/George-III.

The mentioned source explained the life of King George III, and the timeline of his rule. It applied to my paper as I was able to understand why Wilberforce was occasionally unable to bring up abolition because of other pressing matters.

"Wilberforce Makes the Case." UK Parliament, www.parliament.uk/about/living-heritage/transformingsociety/tradeindustry/slave-trade/overview/wilberforce-makes-the-case/.

This source divided its information into sections that provided specific dates of many important events throughout the abolition of the slave trade. It simplified looking back and double-checking information gathered for this paper.

"William Wilberforce Biography | ." *Biography Online*, www.biographyonline.net/politicians/uk/william-wilberforce.html.

The mentioned article was a short biography on Wilberforce, and was helpful in cross-referencing with other sources and their information, especially regarding important dates.

"William Wilberforce." *ReligionFacts*, 22 Nov. 2016, www.religionfacts.com/william-wilberforce.

The mentioned article focused partially on the legacy left by Wilberforce, and how his sons strived to protect that legacy through their books about his life. It gave new insight into the impact he not only had on the world, evident through the respect and preservation of his legacy.

"William Wilberforce." William Wilberforce, www.cs.mcgill.ca/~rwest/wikispeedia/wpcd/wp/w/William_Wilberforce.htm.

The mentioned source was an university article about Wilberforce, providing information on his political career and elections, specifically when he was elected.