Global Lives

This is a fascinating and unique account of Britain’s rise as a global imperial power told through the lives of over forty individuals from a huge range of backgrounds. Miles Ogborn relates and connects the stories of monarchs and merchants, planters and pirates, slaves and sailors, captives and captains, reactionaries and revolutionaries, artists and abolitionists from all corners of the globe. These dramatic stories give new life to the exploration of the history and geography of changing global relationships, including settlement in North America, the East India Company’s trade and empire, transatlantic trade, the slave trade, the rise and fall of piracy, and scientific voyaging in the Pacific. Through these many biographies, including those of Anne Bonny, Captain Cook, Queen Elizabeth I, Pocahontas and Walter Ralegh, early modern globalisation is presented as something through which different people lived in dramatically contrasting ways, but in which everyone played a part.

Miles Ogborn is Professor of Geography at Queen Mary, University of London. His previous books include *Spaces of Modernity: London’s Geographies, 1680–1780* (1998) and *Indian Ink: Script and Print in the Making of the English East India Company* (2007).
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Global Lives

Britain and the World, 1550–1800

MILES OGBORN
Global lives: Britain and the world, 1550–1800
Miles Ogborn

Cambridge University Press
The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 8RU, UK

Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York

www.cambridge.org
Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9780521607186

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First published 2008

Printed in the United Kingdom at the University Press, Cambridge

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloguing in Publication data
Ogborn, Miles.
Global lives: Britain and the world, 1550–1800 / Miles Ogborn.
p. cm. – (Cambridge studies in historical geography ; 41)
Includes bibliographical references.
327.41009’03 – dc22 2008025897

ISBN 978-0-521-84501-4 hardback
ISBN 978-0-521-60718-6 paperback

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Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Brian Graham and Catherine Nash for asking me to contribute a chapter on global historical geography to their book Modern Historical Geographies (Longman, 2000) just as I was beginning to think about teaching and writing on the subject. I am very grateful to all those who have said that they found that chapter useful, and even enjoyable. In particular, I owe a debt to Alan Baker who encouraged me to turn the chapter into a book (although unfortunately I was unable to live up to his ambitions for what spans of space and time it might contain). Subsequent thanks are due to my editors at Cambridge University Press: Richard Fisher, who encouraged the project and agreed to a long initial deadline, and Michael Watson who has seen the book to completion. I have appreciated their help, and the comments of the Press’s readers, on the shape the venture should take.

Thanks are also due to the Leverhulme Trust whose Philip Leverhulme Prize (2001) provided the time to write a full proposal and sample chapter. I am very grateful to Edward Oliver for drawing such a large number of maps and diagrams with such speed and skill, to Karen Anderson Howes for her sensitive and careful copy-editing, and to all the libraries, galleries and archives who have allowed me to reproduce material from their collections. Every effort has been made to secure the necessary permissions to reproduce copyright material in this work, though in some cases it has proved impossible to trace copyright holders. If any omissions are brought to my notice, I will be happy to include appropriate acknowledgements in any subsequent edition. I would also like to acknowledge all the final-year students who have taken GEG315 ‘Global Historical Geography, 1492–1800’ at Queen Mary, University of London, in particular, Sam Garnett, Matthew Gent, James Lewis, Mary Madike, Hannane Naciri, Juliz Reddy, Takenori Sato, Deen Sharp, Rajinder Thind and Iain Watson. They are a remarkable group of citizens of the contemporary world who have been willing to take on its past.

Finally, I must thank Catherine once again for her never-ending enthusiasm for the telling of these lives, and her insistence that each life is given its due. And I can now also thank Eve in print for the very first time. She was born the day after the first draft was finished, and she has changed our world.
Brief lives

All of the individuals whose lives are briefly sketched out here are also put together on a timeline on page xx. They all subsequently reappear in the chapters that follow, where their biographies are retold in detail and in relation to Britain’s changing place in the world.

Sarah Affir, also known as Affy b. 1767, d. after 1832. An enslaved woman who was born and worked all her life in the fields, house and laundry on the Barham family’s Mesopotamia sugar plantation in Westmoreland parish, Jamaica. She gave birth to six children.

Anonymous, Slave in Revolt, 1789 Date of birth unknown, date of death uncertain. This enslaved African, taken on board from Sierra Leone, was probably killed during the revolt on the American slave ship Felicity in the mid-Atlantic in 1789 during which he himself shot and killed the ship’s captain.

Edward Barlow b. 1642, d. 1706. Seaman who sailed on many naval and merchant vessels in the Atlantic and Indian Oceans and the Mediterranean and Caribbean Seas.

La Belinguere, also known as Marie Mar and Maguimar Dates of birth and death unknown. A powerful Luso-African woman merchant and daughter of a local ruler, who operated around the mouth of the Gambia River in West Africa in the late seventeenth century, trading with both European and other African merchants.

Anne Bonny b. 1698, d. 1782. The Irish-born illegitimate daughter of a lawyer, who grew up in South Carolina and sailed as a pirate from New Providence in the Bahamas in 1720. Though she was captured and tried in Jamaica for piracy, pregnancy saved her from execution and she returned to South Carolina.
Brief lives

Thomas Clarkson b. 1760, d. 1846. English-born anti-slave trade activist and writer who pursued the cause through extensive travels around Britain to gather information from those involved in the slave trade and to generate extra-parliamentary support. Also travelled to post-revolutionary France.

James Cook b. 1728, d. 1779. Yorkshire-born officer of the Royal Navy. Had served in the Seven Years’ War (1756–1763) and undertaken surveying along the St Lawrence River, Canada, before being appointed to command the Endeavour for a voyage to the Pacific (1768–1771). Undertook two subsequent extensive Pacific voyages (1772–1775 and 1776–1779). His voyaging ended when he was killed on a beach in Hawai’i.

Archibald Dalzel (formerly Dalziel) b. 1740, d. 1811. Scottish-born surgeon who worked at the Royal African Company’s slaving fort at Anomabu (Gold Coast) from 1763 and became the director of the fort at Ouidah (Dahomey) in 1767. Retired from the Company in 1770 and worked organising and captaining slaving voyages from London until he was appointed governor of Cape Coast Castle (Gold Coast) in 1791.

William Dampier b. 1651, d. 1715. English-born buccaneer and privateer whose voyages took him around the world three times, including crossing the Pacific from Central America to the Philippines, and a landing on the north Australian coast. Well known for his journal recording plants, animals and indigenous peoples.

Elizabeth I b. 1533, d. 1603. Queen of England from 1558. Her reign involved war with Spain, the beginnings of England’s involvement in the transatlantic slave trade, colonial settlement in Ireland and North America and the establishment of the English East India Company.

Olaudah Equiano, also known as Gustavus Vassa b. c. 1745, d. 1797. A slave of a Royal Navy officer who served in the Seven Years’ War (1756–1763), crossing the Atlantic several times, and also living in London. Sold to a merchant on Montserrat, he bought his freedom and travelled to the Arctic, Turkey, North America and the Caribbean. Became a prominent activist in the movement to abolish the slave trade and travelled extensively in Britain and Ireland promoting the cause via the Interesting Narrative of his life that he first published in 1789.
William Freeman  b. 1645, d. 1707. Caribbean-born plantation-owner, merchant and Royal African Company agent for the Leeward Islands. Moved to London in 1674 to pursue his own mercantile activities and to operate as a commission agent buying and selling for planters and merchants still in the Caribbean.

Briton Hammon Dates of birth and death unknown. An African-American sailor (and later ship’s cook) from New England who sailed on naval and merchant vessels to Virginia, the Caribbean and Europe in the middle of the eighteenth century.

John Hawkins b. 1532, d. 1595. Devon-born merchant, maritime adventurer, slave-trader and naval commander and administrator. Operated in the Atlantic and particularly in the Caribbean in the 1560s.

William Hodges b. 1744, d. 1797. Artist trained in Richard Wilson’s studio who was employed on Cook’s second voyage to the Pacific (1772–1775). Completed a range of pictures during and after the voyage, from small sketches to large oil paintings shown at the Royal Academy. Later travelled extensively as an artist in British India (1780–1783).

John Jea b. 1773, d. after 1815. Born in Old Calabar, West Africa, and sold into slavery in New England, he gained his freedom and became a preacher. Travelled as a ship’s cook and preacher along the North American coast, through the Caribbean and to Europe.

William Jones b. 1746, d. 1794. Barrister and later judge in both Britain and British India, including appointment to the Bengal Supreme Court. Tutor and scholar of classical and ‘Oriental’ languages. Founder of the Asiatick Society of Bengal (1784).

Robert Keayne b. 1595, d. 1656. Puritan merchant tailor who migrated from London to Massachusetts in 1635. Became a prominent Boston merchant who imported goods from Europe and traded with the Caribbean.

William Kidd b. c. 1645, d. 1701. A Scottish-born buccaneer in the late seventeenth-century Caribbean who set sail from New York in 1696 to capture the pirates who were disrupting shipping in the Indian Ocean. He was himself hanged for piracy in London in 1701.
Mai, also known as Omai b. c. 1753, d. c. 1780. Born on the island of Ra’iatea in the Pacific, moved to Tahiti after dispossession by invaders from Borabora. Joined Cook’s companion ship Adventure at Huahine on the second voyage and sailed to Britain where he stayed for two years (1775–1776). Was introduced to the king and to high society and travelled around the country. Returned to Tahiti to stay on the third voyage.

Streynsham Master b. 1640, d. 1724. English East India Company employee who served in Ahmedabad and Surat and traded to the Persian Gulf. He later travelled back to India to become the governor at Fort St George (Madras), charged with reorganising the company’s business, before losing his position in 1681.

Hannah More b. 1745, d. 1833. English-born author of plays, poetry and educational tracts who was known as ‘Saint Hannah’. Published Slavery: A Poem (1788) as a contribution to the movement for the abolition of the slave trade. Later published conservative tracts to counter the radical political ideas of the 1790s.

Essa Morrison Dates of birth and death unknown. Inhabitant of a Wapping lodging house near the banks of the River Thames in London. Convicted at the Old Bailey in 1765 of the theft of money from a sailor and transported to North America.

Hugh O’Neill (Aodh Ó Néill), Second Earl of Tyrone b. c. 1550, d. 1616. Lord of extensive lands in Ulster, courtier and leader of an extensive but unsuccessful rebellion against English authority in Ireland (1595–1604).

Richard Oswald b. c. 1705, d. 1784. Scottish-born merchant who worked in Glasgow, Virginia and Jamaica before moving to London in 1746. With a group of associates he operated a very extensive and lucrative set of trading, shipping, planting, slaving and military supply operations around the Atlantic world.

Pocahontas, also known as Matoaka, Amonute and Rebecca Rolfe b. c. 1596, d. 1617. Daughter of the paramount chief Powhatan, and go-between for the Jamestown colony (Virginia). Kidnapped by the English colonists. Married an Englishman, John Rolfe. Travelled to England where she died.
Charles Price b. 1708, d. 1772. Jamaican sugar plantation-owner, speaker of the Jamaican Assembly and judge of the Supreme Court. Born in Jamaica, educated in England, returned to Jamaica in 1730. Became probably the largest land-owner and slave-holder in Jamaica after the Seven Years’ War (1756–1763).

Walter Prideaux b. 1676, date of death unknown. Born in Devon into a family that included merchants and sea captains. Undertook one slave-trading voyage from 1700 to 1701 as merchant in charge of the cargo of the Daniel and Henry from Dartmouth to the Gold Coast to Jamaica and back to Dartmouth.

Radhakanta Tarkavagisa Date of birth unknown, d. 1803. Scholar of Sanskrit texts on history, botany, chess, drama, religion and law who worked in Bengal under both Indian and British patronage. Appointed as a legal expert for the civil courts in British Bengal.

Walter Ralegh b. 1554, d. 1618. Soldier, courtier, adventurer and writer. Fought in France and Ireland, attempted to found a colony in Virginia and undertook expeditions up the Orinoco River in South America in 1595 and 1616.

Bartholomew Roberts b. c. 1682, d. 1722. Welsh-born pirate captain who is said to have captured four hundred merchant ships in a two-year (1720–1722) campaign of terror from Newfoundland to Brazil, and from the West African coast to the Caribbean. He was killed in an engagement with a Royal Navy ship off the African coast.

Ancona Robin Robin John Dates of birth and death unknown. Member of the Efik ruling family in the Old Town slave-trading centre of Old Calabar (Bight of Biafra). Enslaved in 1767 along with his kinsman Little Ephraim Robin John, and lived as a slave in Dominica and Virginia before being taken to Bristol in 1773. Gained his freedom and returned to Old Calabar in 1774.

Little Ephraim Robin John Dates of birth and death unknown. Member of the Efik ruling family in the Old Town slave-trading centre of Old Calabar (Bight of Biafra). Enslaved in 1767 along with his kinsman Ancona Robin Robin John and lived as a slave in Dominica and Virginia before being taken to Bristol in 1773. Gained his freedom and returned to Old Calabar in 1774.
Brief lives

John Sassamon  b. c. 1620, d. 1675. Interpreter, translator, scribe, preacher, teacher and go-between for both New England colonists and Amerindians.

John Smith  Bap. 1580, d. 1631. Fought as a soldier for various armies across Europe, captured and enslaved by the Turks. Went as a colonist to Virginia in 1607, became a cartographer, governor of Jamestown, and promoter in print of North American colonisation.

William Spavens  b. 1735, d. 1799. English-born seaman who sailed merchant vessels to northern Europe and the East Indies, and served in the Royal Navy around the Atlantic world during the Seven Years’ War (1756–1763).

Tacky  Date of birth unknown, d. 1760. An enslaved African of Akan origin, and almost certainly born in Africa, who led an extensive slave revolt on Jamaica in 1760. He was killed by a maroon sharpshooter during the revolt.

Thomas Thistlewood  b. 1721, d. 1786. Born in Lincolnshire and settled in Jamaica in 1750. Worked for thirty-six years as an overseer and slave-owner on sugar plantations and livestock pens in St Elizabeth’s and Westmoreland parishes, first for others, then on his own land.

Toussaint L’Ouverture, also known as Toussaint Bréda  b. 1743, d. 1803. A former slave on Saint Domingue who became the leader of a successful slave rebellion that began in 1791. He was a formidable military strategist whose troops fought off both the British army and the French army. Tricked by the French, he died a captive in France the year before the Republic of Haiti was proclaimed.

Tupaia  Date of birth unknown, d. 1770. A navigator, high priest, warrior and artist from the island of Ra’iatea who was displaced to Tahiti in about 1760 and formed an alliance with politically powerful Tahitians. He joined Cook’s ship Endeavour intending to go to England, and travelled with Cook to the Society Islands, New Zealand and Australia. He died at Batavia (Indonesia).

Kasi Viranna, also known as Hasan Khan  Date of birth unknown, d. 1680. Merchant, property-owner, judge and tax-farmer operating from Madras. Had extensive mercantile investments and connections across the Indian Ocean trading world, and conducted substantial trade with the English East India Company.
Eunice Williams, also known as Marguerite, Waongote and Kanenstehawii b. 1696, d. 1785. Daughter of the Deerfield (Massachusetts) minister John Williams. Taken captive aged seven by Mohawks from Kahnawake (Canada) in a raid in 1704. Married a Mohawk and made her life at Kahnawake.