

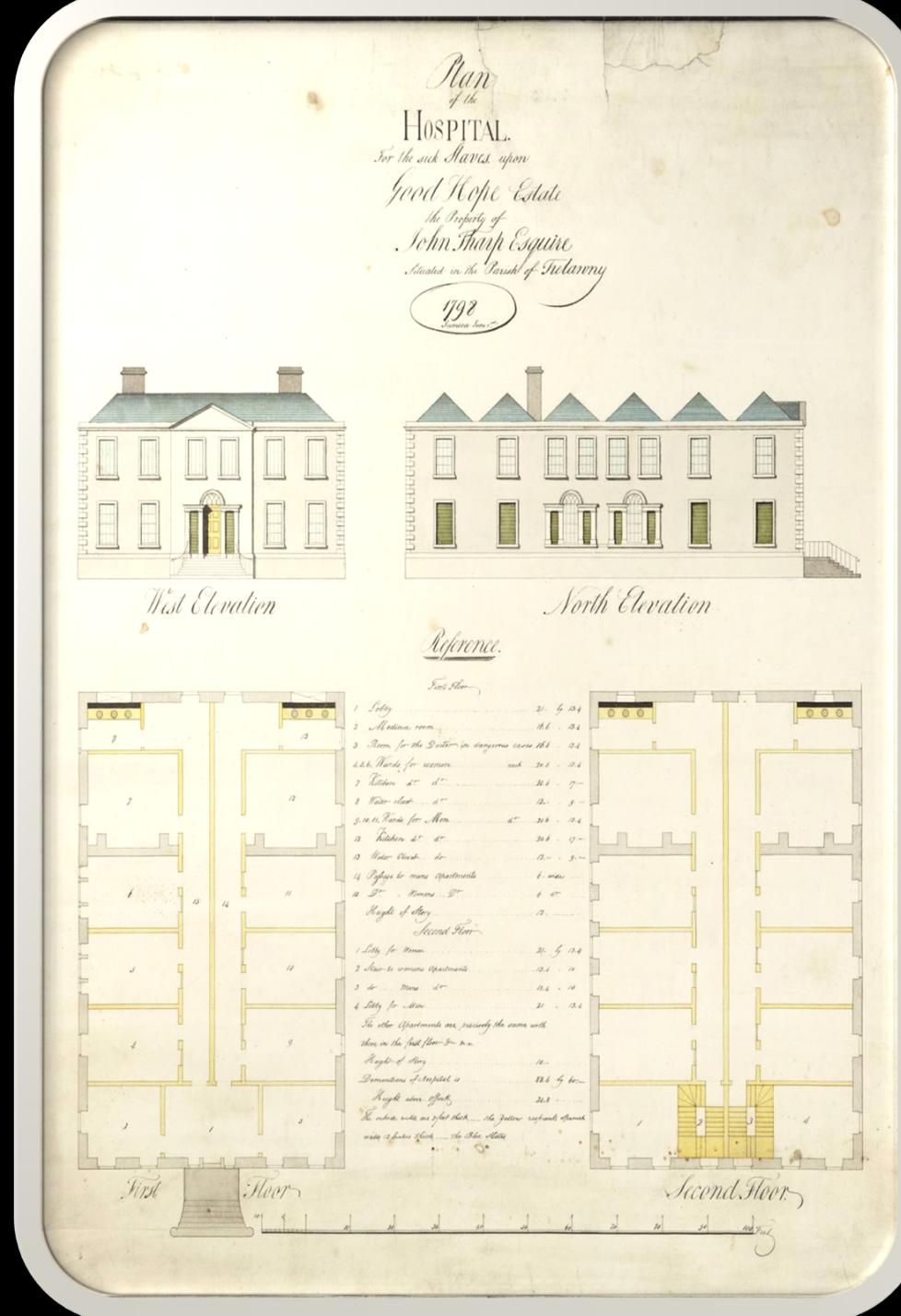
Black disabled People's experience in the UK

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Introduction

- The findings from this research was first presented at Disability Capital in 2007
- To commemorate the bicentenary year of the abolition of the Transatlantic Slave Trade in Britain as a result of the Abolition of the Slave Trade Act (1807)
- To provide a voice of the role disabled people played in the abolishment of Transatlantic slave trade.



Research Questions:

- What was the experiences of disabled enslaved African people?
- What role did disabled enslaved play in their struggle for their freedom?
- Is there a legacy of the experiences of black disabled people and if so are we living in the legacy of slavery in Britain today?
- Why is there a need for this research?

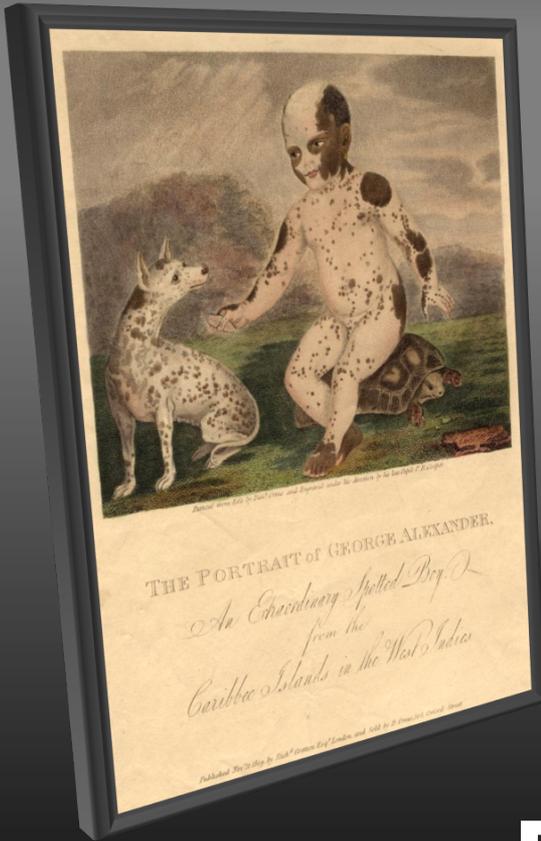
Key Findings





Slaves thrown overboard at sea. One hundred thirty-two such murders on the ship *Zong* set in motion the chain of events that ignited a movement





Freak shows

Black Disabled Poor of London



Fig. 1: Billy Waters was a famous street entertainer that regularly performed outside Adelphi House in London

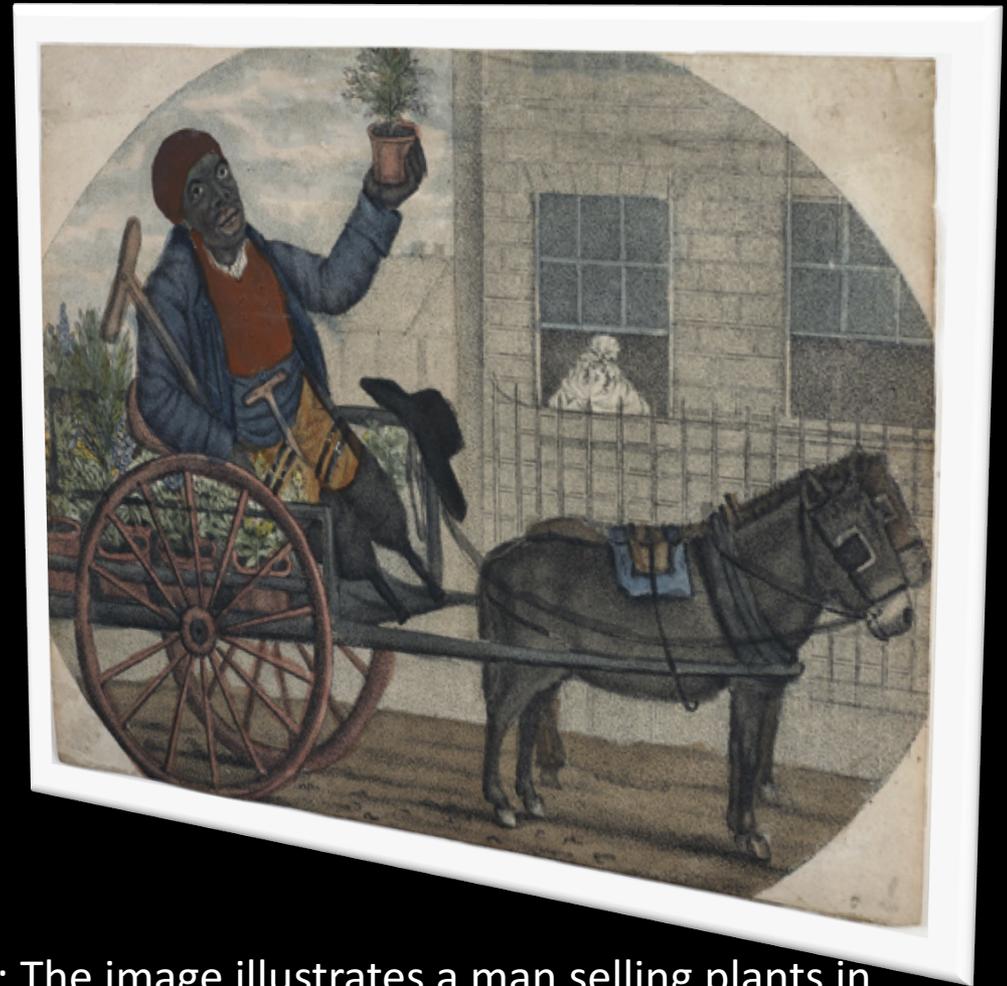


Fig. 2: The image illustrates a man selling plants in London. By the 18th century begging and buskin by Black poor had increased on the streets of London.



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MARY PRINCE
The History of Mary Prince

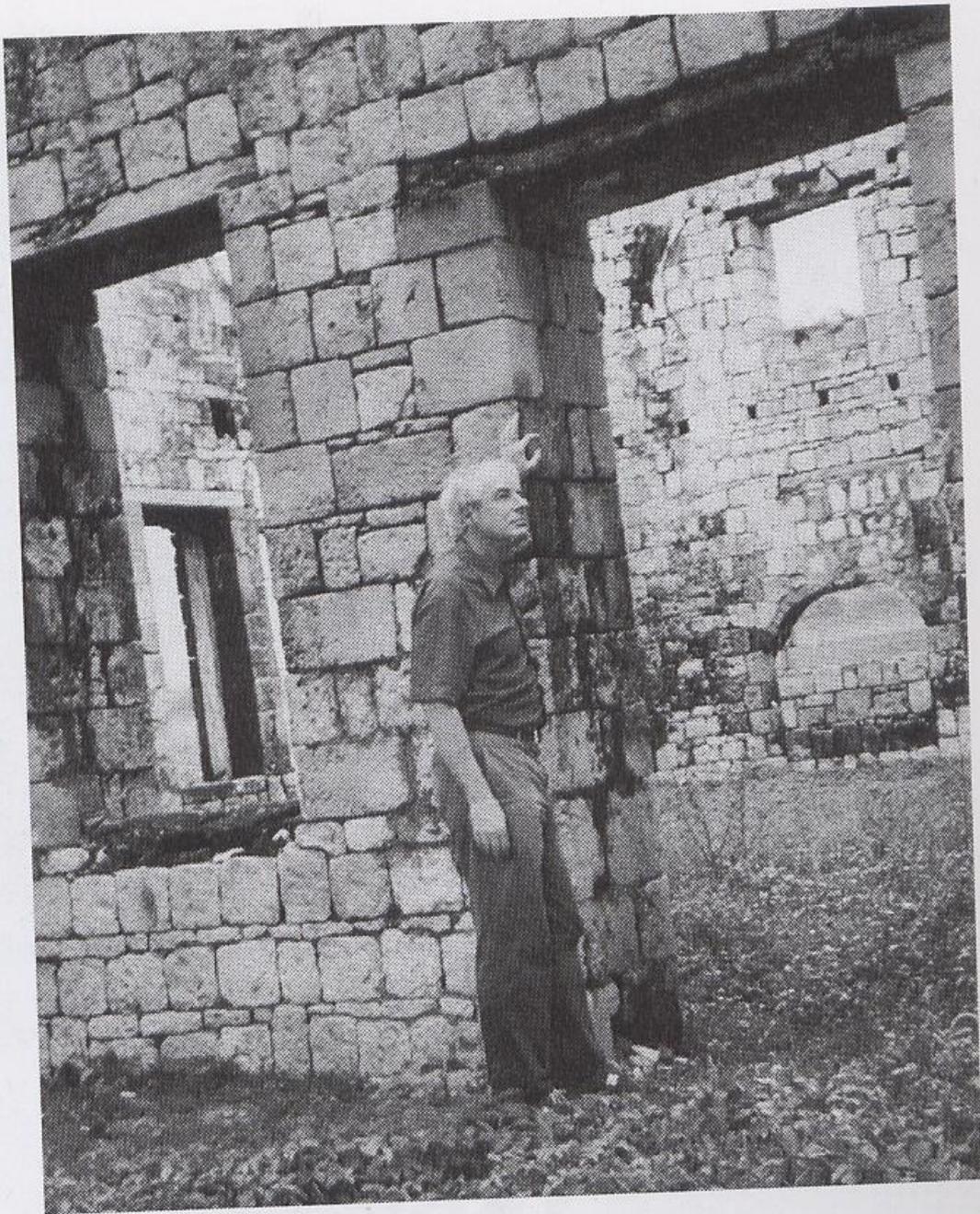
African slaves defined as 'useless' chronically sick, aged or disabled, and they were assigned tasks such as looking after the young, sick or animals (Walvin, 2001).

Mary prince who was a disabled slave said "Sick or well, it was work – work –work!" (Prince, 2005, p. 20).

Health treatment

- The British Government in the 18th century became concerned about the treatment of slave's health. "... Privacy Council committee put the following question to witness:
"...what Care is taken of the slaves in Sickness?
Are there any Laws or Regulations for that purpose? What Provision is made for them when old or disabled?..."

The author at a 1797
slave hospital at
Orange Valley plan-
tation, Jamaica.



Disabled Slaves challenges our understanding of freedom (Downs, 2008)

Downs believes that the notion of freedom was consistently tied to a persons ability to work. He continues to argue that only slaves who could work or those who were connected to wage-earning achieved freedom. Whereas disabled slaves were left in the plantation (2008). This raises the following question:

Final thoughts

- Clearly capitalism framework influenced productivity to reproduce. Therefore to what extent are these values still prevalent in today's society?

Reference

1. Walvin, J. (2001) (2nd Edition). Black Ivory: Slavery in the British Empire. Blackwell, UK
2. Prince, M. (2005) (Ed). The History of Mary Prince: A West Indian Slave. Penguin Classics, England
3. Down, J. (2008). The Continuation of Slavery: The Experience of Disabled Slaves during Emancipation. by the Society for Disability Studies. Accessed from: <http://www.dsqsds.org/article/view/112/112> last visited on: September 19, 2011