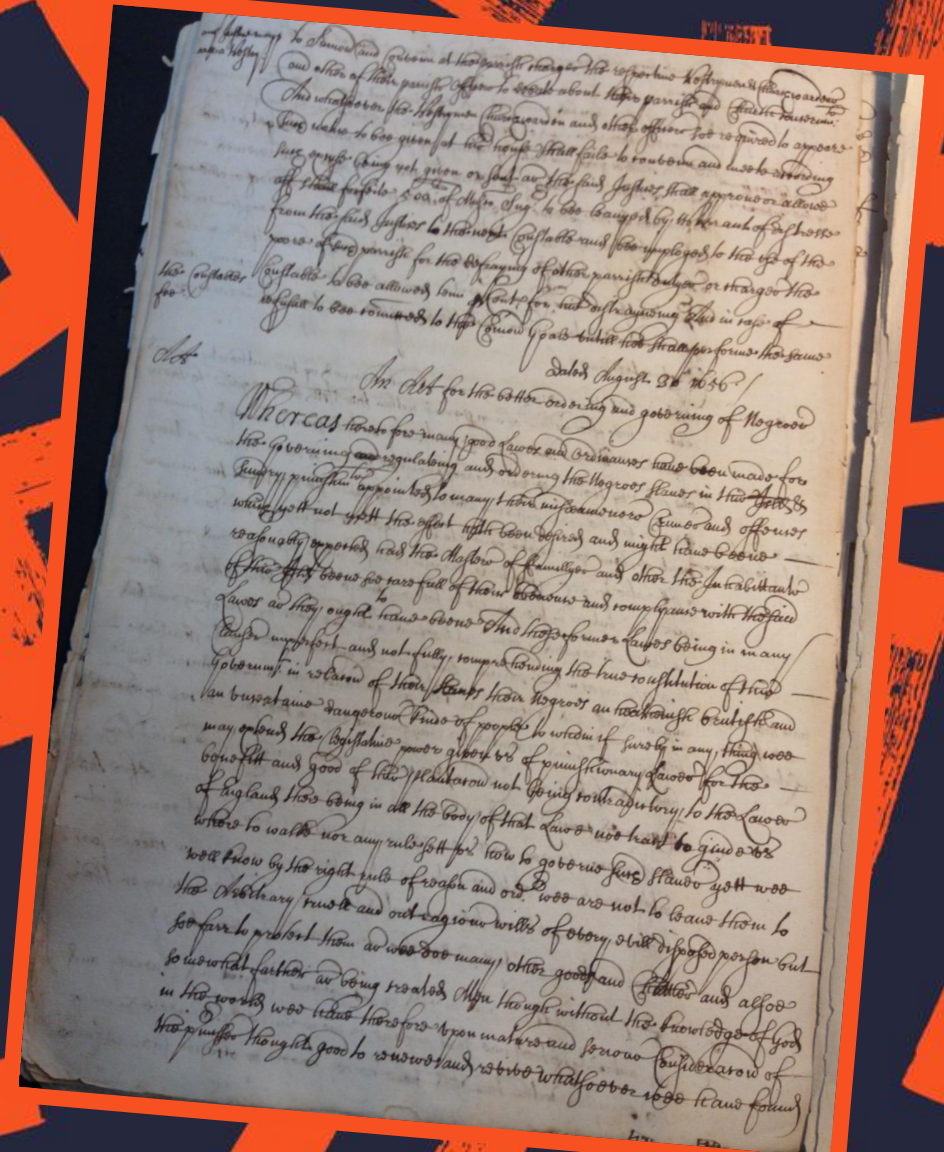



How did British understandings of race change between 1600 and 1807?



The background of the slide is a complex, abstract pattern of overlapping geometric shapes, primarily rectangles and lines, in shades of orange and dark blue. The pattern is dense and layered, creating a sense of depth and complexity. The text is overlaid on a dark blue rectangular area in the upper left portion of the slide.

Why were supposed racial categories needed to sustain the slave trade?

Lesson 2

Learning Intentions

To understand why supposed racial categories were needed to sustain the slave trade.

Success Criteria

- I can describe what the beliefs around race were during the Transatlantic Slave Trade.
- I can explain why racial categories sustained the slave trade.
- I can describe Mary Mitchell's story as a form of resistance to racism.



Starter Task

“Beliefs are our brain’s way of making sense of and navigating our complex world. They are mental representations of the ways our brains expect things in our environment to behave, and how things should be related to each other—the patterns our brain expects the world to conform to.” -

What are the dangers of this, if it is applied to other people?

Think about the historical topic we are learning about right now.



Beliefs around race

The beliefs around race were central to the existence of the Transatlantic Slave Trade. Without this belief that mankind was 'divided into races', the Transatlantic Slave Trade would have had no justification for treating black people in such a way.

Today, you will explore what these beliefs were, how they helped the slave trade to continue.



Activity 1: Understanding the views on race during the Transatlantic Slave Trade

- In pairs and using the sources provided, fill out one half of the table to explain the key beliefs of enslavers during the Transatlantic Slave Trade.
- Each member of the pair should look at a different source.
- When you are finished, you must share what you have found with your partner to help them fill out the rest of their table.

Why were racial categories necessary?

If people stopped believing in race, then they had no justification for enslaving Black people.

But over time, there were arguments made which threatened the continuation of the slave trade. Historians argue that, in response, racial categories were changed. By changing what 'race' meant, supporters of enslavement could justify its continuation.



**Try to summarise each of the historian's points
on the following slides in your jotter.**



To prevent working class uprisings

Historian Edmund Morgan explains that in Virginia, at first poor white and black people **joined together against the rich**.

To **stop these rebellions, the rich emphasised racial divisions**, making laws that punished black people more harshly and took away their rights. This included **banning property ownership and interracial relationships**. **Instead of poor white people seeing allies in poor Black people, white people came to see themselves as being on the 'same side' as rich white people.**


As life expectancy increased, slavery became more practical, leading to the mass enslavement of black people. The rich separated black and white workers into different classes and conditions, **taking away black people's civil rights.**

Over time, **poor white people started to believe in these racial differences and supported slavery because they gained more rights** and were rewarded for controlling black slaves. **This division kept the rich in control and prevented more united rebellions.**

Ensuring white superiority

In different parts of the Americas, freed black people were doing well. This questioned that idea that Black people were 'inferior'.

For example, historian Brooke N. Newman talks about Susanna Augier. She was a free, wealthy woman of color from Jamaica. Her white planter father, John Augier, freed her in 1722.



Susanna became rich and respected in the white community through her connections with wealthy merchants in Jamaica.

This shows that being considered upper-class was linked to being white.

However, this changed after Tacky's revolt, where enslaved people fought against their white owners. This rebellion led to the deaths of at least 60 white people and 400 enslaved people.

As a result, Jamaica made new laws to keep white people in power and prevent more revolts.

These laws redefined who could be considered white. **Only people with at least 7/8th European ancestry were legally white and had full rights. This was designed to keep free people of color poor, so that the myth that they were 'inferior' could continue.**

Activity 3: How people of colour resisted

However, some people of colour were able to find loopholes that allowed their children to live free lives as white people despite not being legally 'white' according to the racist laws of the time.

Historian Dr Peggy Brunache recently uncovered a series of records about a woman named Mary Mitchell.



Dr Peggy Brunache, Archaeologist

Activity 3: How people of colour resisted

Jennifer L. Morgan, a Professor of History at New York University has discussed that:

In Virginia in the 1660s, the law said that you inherited the status of your mother.
If your mother was enslaved, you would be too.

This made slavery something that you inherited. Therefore, you would be born enslaved if your mother was enslaved, even if your father had been a white free man.




Dr Jennifer L. Morgan

Activity 3: Mary Mitchell



As you work through the next few sources, can you make the same connections Dr Peggy Brunache did?

Fill out your table on your worksheet, using the hints from your teacher to write about the significance.

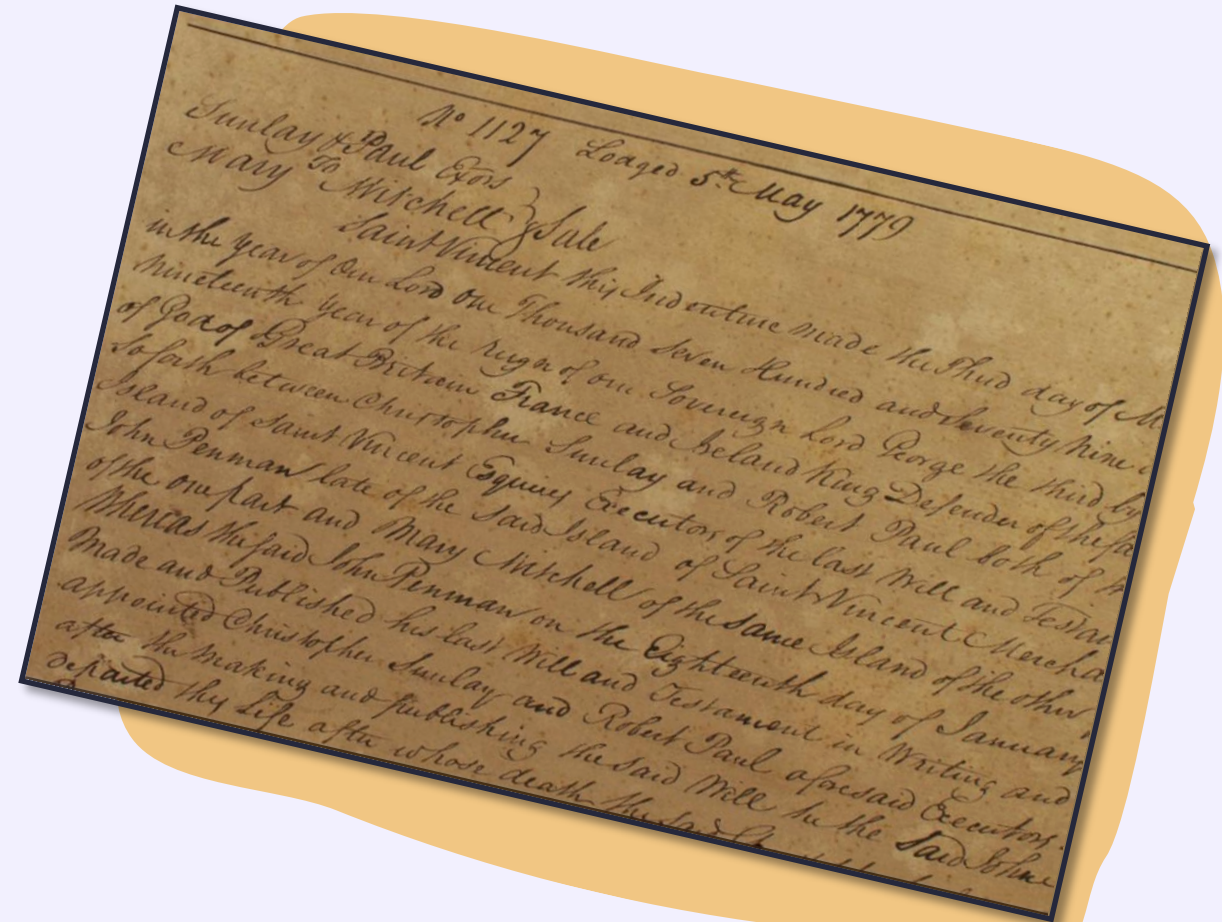


Source A

We first come across **Mary** in the Deed Book of St Vincent in a record written on the **5th of May, 1779**.

The Deed Book was a record of all land and property transactions.

Mary Mitchell is mentioned in the **will** of a man who passed away, named John Penman. She was handled unfinished business with his solicitors (**a purchase**) after his untimely passing.



Source B

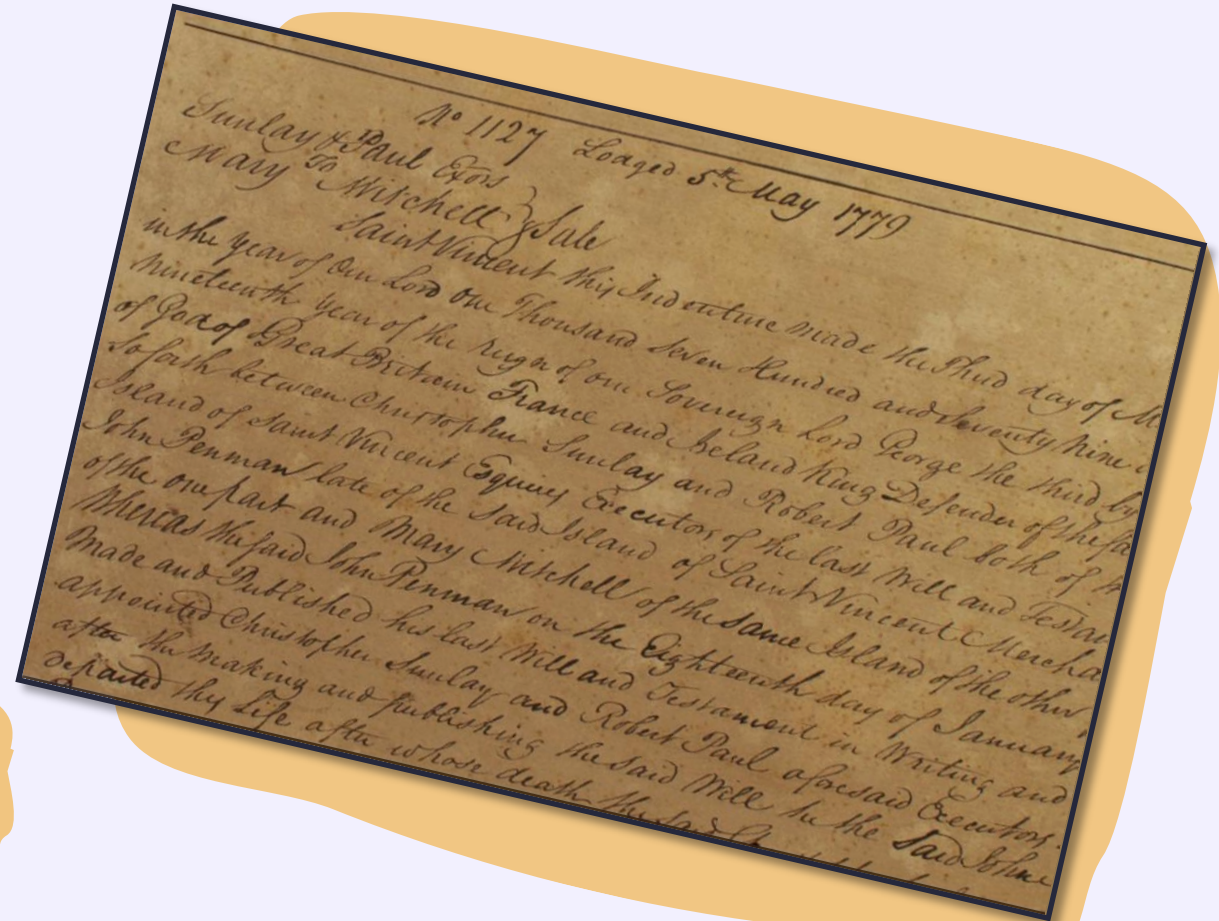


On the **23rd of February, 1787**, Mary Mitchell's **race is first mentioned** on record. They use an old term—'mustee'—which means that she was **1/8th African descent**.

Here, she has had the rights to two pieces of land signed over to her by a carpenter named **'William Richardson'**.



Remember this **surname**, as it's going to reappear.



Source C



In the next record, on the **17th of August 1792**, Mary Mitchell seems to be **doing business with a William Richardson**, who is noted as a shipwright (**carpenter** on a ship).

(243) Ant. 20th August 1792
This Indenture made the seventeenth Day of August in
the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and Ninety two
Between Mary Mitchell of the Island of Saint Vincent a Free
Mustaf Woman of the one part and Alexander Richardson and Peter
Scott of the same Island Ship Wrights of the other Part Witnesseth
that for and in consideration of the Sum of One hundred and fifty
five pounds two shillings Current Money to her the said Mary
Mitchell in hand well and truly paid by the said Alexander
Richardson and Peter Scott at or before the enscaling and Delivers
of these presents the receipt whereof she the said Mary Mitchell
Doth hereby acknowledge and thereof and of every part thereof

Source D



Our 4th record takes us back two years to January 1790. It's a record of Mary Mitchell's mother's death (who was a free woman of colour just like Mary). Here, Mary seems to have an **alternative name** - Mary **Richardson**.

1790

1 Ann Cox	a free Woman of Colour Mother of Mary Richardson alias Mitchell
by 19 Jane Thomas	a free black Woman formerly belong to Doctor Gilbert
23 Mr William Paul	a relation of the Hon ^{ble} Robert Paul Esq ^r
28 " " "	a sailor for the Ship Brothers David Williams Master for Bristol but last from Africa

Source E



Our final record - Mary's will - is recorded on the **8th December 1801**.

Within in it, **she leaves much of her property to David Richardson**, a sadler living in London, and **Alexander, and William Richardson**, carpenters from St Vincent. This property is both money and enslaved people. There is **no mention of the relationship** between Mary and these men.

85) I GIVE and bequeath unto David Richardson of the City of London Sadler -
Twenty Guineas to be paid him within three months after my decease. Item
I give devise and bequeath unto Alexander Richardson of the said Island
of Saint Vincent Carpenter my Negro Slaves named David and Fanny But
in case the said Alexander Richardson should die without lawful Issue
I give and bequeath the said Negroes David and Fanny after his Decease
to William Richardson of Great Britain Esquire Past Justice of the
said Island of Saint Vincent. Item I direct that all my wearing
Apparel and Clothes shall be equally divided among the said Negroes
whom I have heretofore manumitted. And as to the rest and residue
of my real and personal Estate of what nature or kind soever and
wherever situated I give devise and bequeath the same and every Part
thereof unto the said William Richardson his Heirs Executors Administrators
and assigns for ever AND I do hereby appoint the said William
Richardson sole Executor of this Last Will and Testament. In
Witness whereof I have hereunto set my Hand and Seal this 8
Eighth day of October in the year of our Lord one thousand Seven
Hundred and Ninety Three

Mary Mitchell's Story

Dr Peggy Brunache has theorised that **Mary Mitchell was in a secret relationship with the shipwright, William Richardson.**

David and Alexander, who she leaves her property and enslaved persons to in her will, are **most likely her sons**. William, mentioned in her will, **is most likely her partner.**

Notice how, even in her will, **she does not mention their relationship.** This is most likely because **her son David, living in London, passed as a white person. For her to state that she was his mother would have meant they would have had the rights of a white person removed from him.**

If the theory that Alexander is Mary's son is correct, this is the possible explanation for why he didn't go to London - **Alexander's complexion was not fair to pass for White.**

Activity 3: The legacy of Mary Mitchell's story

Answer in your jotter: How might this be considered 'resistance'?

- Resistance: the refusal to accept or comply with something.

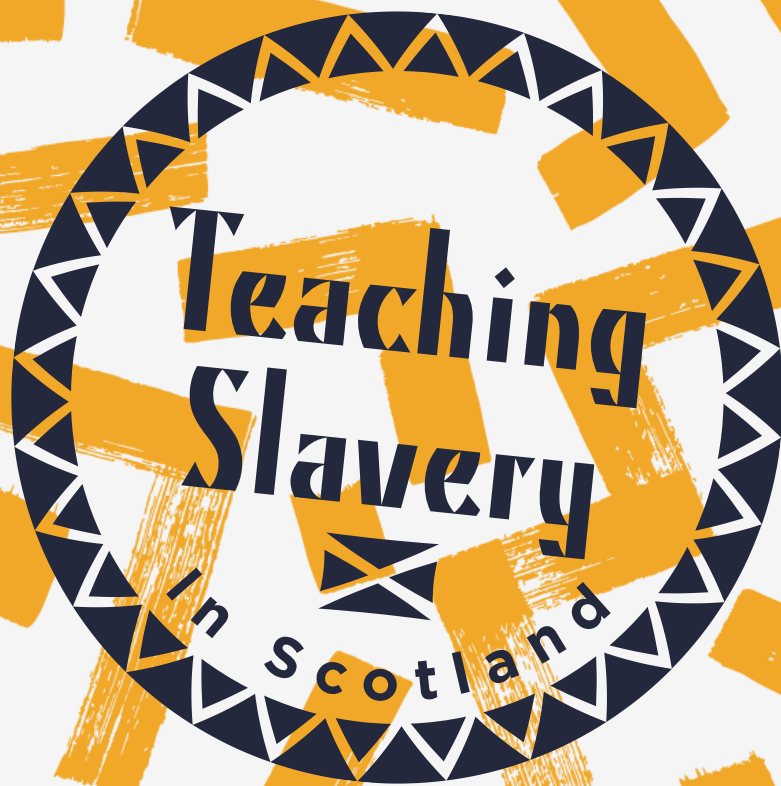
She actively managed to find a way to ensure that her children were able to live life as free men, despite the laws put in place to try and ensure the opposite.

- This is most likely part of the reason why laws were later brought in to ensure free people of colour could not own enslaved people - as it meant they could no longer free their families.

Plenary

Based on the activities you have completed this lesson, answer the following question:

Why were supposed racial categories needed to sustain the slave trade?



**Teaching
Slavery**

**in
Scotland**