

KS3 History

Lesson 3 of an enquiry of 4 lessons

The 1807 and 1833 Acts

Enquiry: How successful were efforts to abolish slavery in the nineteenth century?

Mr Madeley



Reasons behind 1807 Abolition of the Slave Trade Act

At the start of the nineteenth century the campaign for the abolition of the slave trade was growing in force. The successful rebellion of enslaved people against the French in Saint Domingue and the subsequent British failure to capture the island, proved that force alone could not guarantee plantation owner's safety.

Also, in Britain, the anti-slavery societies tirelessly petitioned the people and Parliament. They built an overwhelming case to show the horrors of the slave trade. At the same time, there was a decline in the amount of money to be made from enslaving people. The time was approaching where slavery could be challenged and potentially ended.



1807 Abolition of the Slave Trade Act

The Abolition of the Slave Trade was the consequence of the 1806 Foreign Slave Trade Abolition Act. The 1807 Act stopped all British ships from taking part in the slave trade throughout the British Empire. It was believed that by removing the ability to trade enslaved people, the British involvement in enslavement and slavery would gradually end. Unfortunately, this was not the case.

The 1807 Act was an important step towards abolishing Britain's role in enslaving people. But it would take many years before the complete abolition of slavery was to become a reality.



Enforcing the 1807 Act

To enforce the 1807 Act, the Royal Navy was sent to patrol off the West African coast. The West African Squadron became known as the 'protective squadron'. At first, due to the **Napoleonic War**, the Royal Navy could do very little to halt the enslavement of West African people. After the war, the Royal Navy found it difficult to stop all foreign **merchantmen** and search their ships to stop the slave trade. This was because America, Portugal, Brazil, Spain and France still relied on the income created from enslaving people. However, over time, new **treaties** with these countries were agreed. These treaties allowed the West African Squadron to search for equipment used in the slave trade. Gradually, this began slow the Transatlantic slave trade.



1833 Slavery Abolition Act

After the 1832 Great Reform Act, the amount of people in Britain who could vote increased. One result of this was that a clear majority of voters now opposed slavery. Religious groups continued to demand that Britain fully abolish the slave trade. Furthermore, there was a collapse in the amount of money to be made using enslaved labour. However, the **Baptist War** in Jamaica may have been the vital part in forcing through the Slavery Abolition Act.

The 1833 Slavery Abolition Act ended slavery in the British Empire. However, it did not free the enslaved people immediately. The formerly enslaved people were to become '**apprentices**' for six years. Perhaps most shockingly, **compensation** was paid to the former owners of enslaved people as well.



Glossary

Napoleonic War - A war between Britain and her allies against France. The Napoleonic War ended in 1815

War of 1812 - A war between America and Britain from 1812-1814

Merchantmen - People who buy and sell goods

Treaty - Agreements signed between countries

Baptist War - An uprising of enslaved people in Jamaica

Apprentice - Someone who is paid a lower wage whilst they learn to do a certain skilled job

Compensation- Money given to someone who has been forced to lose something



Comprehension Questions

1. What did the 1807 Abolition of the Slave Trade Act change?
2. Why did the 1807 act fail to end the slave trade?
3. How did Britain try to stop the enslavement of West African people after 1807?
4. Explain why the 1833 Slavery Abolition Act was passed?
5. What did the 1833 Slavery Abolition Act change?

Extension Question

What was the main reason for the abolition of the slave trade?

