



PhD Studentship

Title: Slavery, Health and Society in West Africa in the Nineteenth Century

Closing date: 4 November 2022

Interview date: 7 December 2022.

Supervisory team

[Director of Studies: Professor Suzanne Schwarz, School of Humanities, University of Worcester.](#)

Supervisors:

[Professor Sandra Nicholson, Three Counties Medical School, University of Worcester.](#)

[Professor Paul E. Lovejoy, York University. <https://profiles.laps.yorku.ca/profiles/plovejoy/>](#)

[Research Group: International Studies Research Group:](#)

Collaborating organisations: George Marshall Medical Museum, Worcester; The Infirmary Museum, Worcester.

The Project

Applications are invited for a fully-funded, full-time PhD studentship for the project 'Slavery, Health and Society in West Africa in the Nineteenth Century'.

Context : Between the mid sixteenth and mid nineteenth centuries, an estimated 12.5 million Africans were forcibly shipped as a slave labour force to various destinations in the Americas including North America, Brazil, Cuba, and the Caribbean. For the overwhelming majority of individuals transported in the trade, there is little evidence about their identities and their health. Sierra Leone provides an important exception. British abolitionist intervention at Freetown in the nineteenth century led to the creation of numerous written sources on the health of formerly enslaved Africans and their descendants. This evidence about morbidity and mortality in Sierra Leone is contained in a long-running series of censuses and birth and death registers and, most importantly, this evidence discusses health by reference to named individuals. From 1808, records were created of the names and physical characteristics of over 100,000 enslaved

Africans released from slave ships by Royal Navy patrols. Schwarz's research draws attention to the rich potential of the Registers of Liberated Africans. In these registers, the column headed 'Descriptions' provides information on the physical characteristics of the individuals released and these descriptions include reference to smallpox markings and other indicators of disease and injury.

Aims and Objectives

This research project will analyse the state of health of the population in Sierra Leone, c. 1790-1900 using available archival sources. This involves assessing patterns of illness and disease, causes of morbidity and mortality and variations in illness and mortality according to gender, age, and geographical origins. The project offers scope to assess developments in the understanding of tropical medicine in Sierra Leone in the nineteenth century.

Indicative methodology

This research involves using a wealth of relevant manuscript and printed evidence surviving in archives in Britain and West Africa. A large body of evidence relevant to this research proposal has already been digitised through a series of British Library Endangered Archives Major Awards led by Professor Schwarz and Professor Lovejoy. Consequently, the student will have access to a substantial body of archival evidence from the Sierra Leone Public Archives containing tens of thousands of entries relating to the life events and health experiences of individuals. The research library and collections at the George Marshall Medical Museum also hold relevant sources for this topic.

References:

Richard Anderson and Henry B. Lovejoy, eds., *Liberated Africans and the Abolition of the Slave Trade 1807-1896* (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2020);

Manuel Barcia Paz, *The Yellow Demon of Fever: Fighting Disease in the Nineteenth-Century Transatlantic Slave Trade* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2020);

Suzanne Schwarz, 'Reconstructing the Life Histories of Liberated Africans: Sierra Leone in the Early Nineteenth Century', *History in Africa*, 39 (2012), pp. 175-207;

Suzanne Schwarz, 'Extending the African Names Database: New Evidence from Sierra Leone', *African Economic History*, ed. José Curto and Paul E. Lovejoy, 38 (2010), pp. 137-62.

Details of the studentship

The studentship is offered for a 4-year period on a full-time basis. The studentship is campus based. During the period of your studentship you will receive the following:

- a tax-free bursary of £15,609 for 3 years
- a fee-waiver for 4 years (expectation that full time students complete in 3 years. If student enters year 4, bursary stops but fees waived)
- a budget to support your direct project costs including dissemination costs
- a laptop and other IT equipment and software as appropriate to the project
- use of the Research School facilities

You will be expected to play an active role in the life of both the Research School and of your academic School. You will be given opportunities to gain experience in learning and teaching within the School under the guidance of your Director of Studies. There will also be the opportunity to work with local museums.

Application Process

To begin the application process for this studentship please go to <http://www.worcester.ac.uk/researchstudentships> and click 'apply now' next to the project you wish to apply for. It is expected that applicants will have the following qualifications:

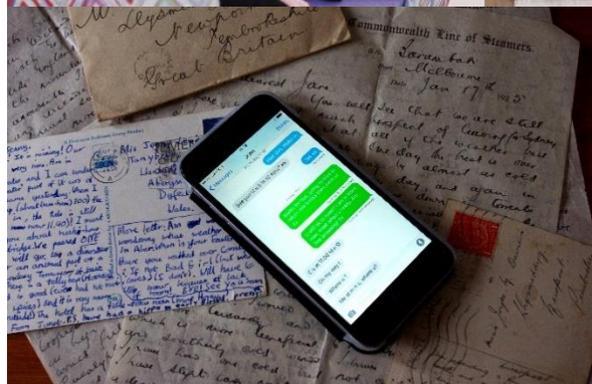
- A Masters in the area of History or Medical History or equivalent professional experience.
- A First or Upper Second Honours Degree

It is also expected that applicants will be able to demonstrate the following:

- A sound understanding of and interest in both the project and the wider subject area
- Experience of relevant research methods and skills
- Ability to contribute to the research design of the project
- Proficiency in oral and written English
- Proficiency in IT relevant to the project
- Ability to organise and meet deadlines
- Good interpersonal skills
- Ability to work independently
- Ability to work as part of a team

The Interview

The interview will provisionally be held on Teams on Wednesday 7 December 2022. Shortlisted candidates will be given at least 7 day's-notice of interview. As part of the interview and selection process, you will be asked to write a short reflective review of a journal article. You will be advised about the subject matter of this review if you are selected for interview. Alongside the interview, shortlisted candidates will also be asked to give a 10 minute presentation on a related topic.





Research at the University of Worcester

Research at the University of Worcester has grown significantly over the last 10 years. The outcomes of the Research Excellence Framework 2014 (REF 2014) showed that Worcester was the most improved University in the UK based on Research Fortnight's "Research Power" measure. The University's continued progress was shown in the outcomes of REF 2021 which demonstrated that both the scale and quality of our research has further increased, with over 40% of our research recognised as world-leading or internationally excellent.

The University has been successful in winning funding from a wide range of major funders: Research Councils such as AHRC, BBSRC, ESRC and NERC; major charities such as the Leverhulme Trust, the Alzheimer's Society and the British Academy; health-research funders such as the NIHR, the Department of Health and local NHS Trusts; European funding through Horizon 2020 and Erasmus+; and funding from local, national and global businesses.

The University is focused on research which addresses real world challenges and provides solutions to these challenges:

- [Human Health and Wellbeing](#)
- [Sustainable Futures](#)
- [Digital Innovation](#)
- [Culture, Identity and Social Exclusion](#)
- [Professional Education](#)

The University continues to provide a robust infrastructure for research. It has a well-established Research School which houses its growing research student body and which provides a comprehensive programme of researcher development for staff and students. It has a well-established Research Office, responsible for research funding, governance and strategy. The University is committed to further developing its research profile, through a strategic approach to its support for and investment in research. Its fully-funded studentships are part of this investment.

Research School

The Research School is a focal point for all our research students. It provides:

- day-to-day support for our students, both administrative and practical, through our dedicated team
- a Research Student Study Space with both PCs and laptop docking station
- a comprehensive Researcher Development Programme for students and their supervisors
- a programme of student-led conferences and seminars

School of Humanities

Humanities at Worcester encompasses subject areas including English, Media and Culture, History, Sociology, Politics, Law and Criminology.

As an academic community, we are ambitious for our achievements and their impact upon individuals' lives and career prospects. We place a great value on the individual, and creating a friendly and supportive environment in which to work and learn.

By sharing our academic work and collaboration with partners, we aim to make a distinctive contribution to public life in the region, and to international knowledge in our academic subjects. Dynamic interaction with associated professional worlds underpins the day-to-day environment in which learning, teaching and research take place.

We are a community of historians, theorists and practice-led researchers.

Research processes are fundamental to the work and development of our undergraduate and postgraduate students, whose teaching is enriched by the research activity and interests of doctoral and postdoctoral researchers, all of whom are also experienced and committed teachers.

Our academics regularly achieve national and international peer recognition for their contributions to knowledge, and we are committed to sharing the outcomes of their work publicly, and engaging in knowledge transfer, to the benefit of communities within our region. Much of our activity involves partnerships with colleagues based in other universities and with professional organisations and companies.

Our research in English Studies ranges from original poems and performances, to literary criticism and cultural theory, to ethnographic language studies and computer-assisted linguistic analysis. Striving for excellence in all areas therefore entails the celebration of diversity in 'English Studies', and a commitment not only to pure subject specialisation, but also to the interdisciplinary work which challenges traditional boundaries.

Historical research in the School spans early modern Britain, pre-colonial West Africa, and modern Britain, Ireland, and the USA. Areas of thematic strength in research include gender, imperialism, slavery, political culture, and religious history.

Widening Participation

As part of its mission statement the University is committed to widening participation for its higher degrees. Although most candidates will have an undergraduate and/or a Masters degree, the University is happy to accept applications from candidates with relevant professional qualifications and work related experience.



For further information or an informal discussion on this project, please contact Professor Suzanne Schwarz (Director of Studies) via email at s.schwarz@worc.ac.uk

Applications can be made at:
<http://www.worcester.ac.uk/researchstudentships>