

**Hotep!**

**Nubian Link (est.1995 CE) is an independent community organisation based in Nottingham that promotes educational achievement and cultural development amongst people of Afrikan descent.**

**It is managed by a volunteer Steering Group and Council of Elders, and is financed by Steering Group contributions, community donations and income generated from services such as training and workshop facilitation.**

**We are proud to celebrate Afrikan History Season which we consider to run from October through to the last day of Kwanzaa (see <http://www.nubianlink.org.uk/kwanzaa.html> for more info).**

**Those featured are not a definitive list of great Afrikans from ancient or contemporary history, nor has Nubian Link employed any scientific criteria in constructing the list, and as such we welcome any further suggestions or contributions to our “Afrikan History Season Hall of Recognition”.**

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**BENJAMIN BANNEKER** - *mathematician, astronomer, surveyor*

**Earthday: 11/9/1731 Ancestorship: 10/9/1806 CE**

**Birthplace: USA**

Benjamin Banneker has been called the first African American intellectual. Self-taught, after studying the inner workings of a friend's watch, he made one of wood that accurately kept time for more than 40 years. Banneker taught himself astronomy well enough to correctly predict a solar eclipse in 1789.

From 1791 to 1802 he published the Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia Almanac and Ephemeris, which contained tide tables, future eclipses, and medicinal formulas. It is believed to be the first scientific book published by an African American.

Also a surveyor and mathematician, Banneker was appointed by President George Washington to the District of Columbia Commission, which was responsible for the survey work that established the city's original boundaries.

When the chairman of the committee, Pierre Charles L'Enfant, suddenly resigned and left, taking the plans with him, Banneker reproduced the plans from memory, saving valuable time.

A staunch opponent of slavery, Banneker sent a copy of his first almanac to then-Secretary of State Thomas Jefferson to counter Jefferson's belief in the intellectual inferiority of blacks.

**GEORGE WASHINGTON CARVER** - *educator, scientist*

**Earthyear: 1864 Ancestorship: 1/5/1943 CE**

**Birthplace: USA**

After a university in Kansas refused to admit him because he was African American, George Washington Carver attended Simpson College before transferring to Iowa State College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts (now Iowa State University), from which he earned a B.S. degree in agricultural science, and an M.S. degree in 1896.

Carver's fame is closely associated with Tuskegee University (then Tuskegee Normal and Industrial Institute), of which he became the director of agricultural research in 1896, and where he remained until his death in 1943.

Carver revolutionized southern agriculture by introducing peanut, soybean, and sweet potato production to replenish nitrogen in the soil, which had been largely depleted by cotton growth.

When southern farmers grew peanuts and soybeans and found a limited market for them, Carver set to work developing commercial applications for them, creating more than 300 peanut-based products, including milk, cheese, flour, ink, dyes, wood stains, soap, and cosmetics.

In addition he developed 118 sweet potato-based products, including vinegar, molasses, rubber, ink, and postage stamp glue.

Shortly before his death in 1940, Carver donated his entire savings to Tuskegee to found the Carver Research Foundation, for research in agriculture.

### **WILLIAMS, DANIEL HALE - American surgeon**

#### **Earthyear 1858– Ancestorship 1931, Born: USA**

As surgeon of the South Side Dispensary in Chicago (1884–91), he became keenly aware of the lack of facilities for training African Americans like himself as doctors and nurses. As a result he organized the Provident Hospital, the first black hospital in the United States.

In 1893, Williams performed the first successful closure of a wound of the heart and pericardium.

In the same year President Cleveland appointed him surgeon in chief of Freedmen's Hospital, Washington, D.C., and during his five-year tenure there he reorganized the hospital and provided a training school for African American nurses.

From 1899 until his death he was professor of clinical surgery at Meharry Medical College, Nashville, Tenn.

**SARAH BREEDLOVE WALKER** (“Madame C. J. Walker”) - *businesswoman, philanthropist*

**Earthday:** 12/23/1867 Ancestorship: 5/25/1919

**Birthplace:** USA.

After a series of bereavements that left her orphaned at 6 and widowed at 20, she and her daughter A'Lelia moved to St. Louis to start over.

She worked days as a washerwoman and went to night school before inventing a process for straightening the hair of African-Americans 1905.

Her process, combining her unique formula with brushes and heated combs, caught on, and with the money from her successful business she and her daughter moved to Denver.

She married Charles J. Walker, and began promoting her product and process under the name of Madame C. J. Walker.

She opened a permanent office in Pittsburgh in 1908, which her daughter ran, and in 1910 she formed Madame C. J. Walker Laboratories in Indianapolis, where she developed products and trained her beauticians, known as “Walker Agents.”

The agents and the products were recognized in black communities throughout the U.S. and Caribbean for promoting the philosophy that cleanliness and loveliness could advance the plight of African-Americans.

At her death, the multi-million dollar estate was left to various philanthropic organizations and to her daughter, whose philanthropic endeavors were key to funding the Harlem Renaissance.

### **PHILIP EMEAGWALI (Eme-ag-wali) - Mathematician / Computer Scientist**

**Born:** 23 August 1954 CE

**Birthplace:** Akure, Nigeria

This Nigerian-born supercomputing pioneer won the Gordon Bell supercomputing prize in 1989 for applying the power of networked computers to analysis of oil field reserves.

The child of a poor Nigerian family, Emeagwali was largely self-taught in the sciences until 1974, when he won a scholarship to Oregon State University. During the 1970s and '80s he furthered his education at George Washington University and the University of Maryland, studying mathematics and environmental engineering.

In the 1980s he worked on advanced formulas in networked computers, leading to the Gordon Bell prize.

Emeagwali has won several other awards, including a 1998 Distinguished Scientist Award from the World Bank.

## **VALERIE THOMAS**

Born 1943 CE Valerie Thomas received a patent in 1980 for inventing an illusion transmitter. This once seemingly futuristic invention extended the idea of television, with its images located flatly behind a screen, to having three dimensional projections.

3-D TV technology is becoming increasing popular in developed economic nations across the world today.

Valerie Thomas worked as a mathematical data analyst for NASA after receiving a degree in physics.

She later served as project manager for the development of NASA's image-processing system on Landsat, the first satellite to send images from outer space.

In addition to having worked on several other high-profile NASA projects, Valerie Thomas continues to be an outspoken advocate for African-Americans and other minority group in the USA.

Valerie Thomas received U.S. patent on October 21, 1980 for her illusion transmitter.

## **GRANVILLE T WOODS**

Born in Columbus, Ohio, in April 23, 1856 CE, Granville T Woods dedicated his life to developing a variety of inventions relating to the railroad industry.

Granville T Woods invented more than a dozen devices to improve electric railway cars and many more for controlling the flow of electricity. His most noted invention was a system for letting the engineer of a train know how close his train was to others. This device helped cut down accidents and collisions between trains.

During his youth he also went to night school and took private lessons. Although he had to leave formal school at age ten, Granville T Woods realized that learning and education were essential to developing critical skills that would allow him to express his creativity with machinery.

In 1888, Granville T Woods developed a system for overhead electric conducting lines for railroads, which aided in the development of the overhead railroad system found in cities such as Chicago, St. Louis, and New York City.

In his early thirties, he became interested in thermal power and steam-driven engines. In 1889, he filed his first patent for an improved steam-boiler furnace.

In 1887, he patented the Synchronous Multiplex Railway Telegraph, which allowed communications between train stations from moving trains. Granville T Woods' invention made it possible for trains to communicate with the station and with other trains so they knew exactly where they were at all times.

Success led to law suits filed by Thomas Edison who sued Woods claiming that he was the first inventor of the multiplex telegraph. Woods eventually won, but Edison didn't give up easily when he wanted something. Trying to win Granville Woods over, and his inventions, Edison offered Woods a prominent position in the engineering department of Edison Electric Light Company in New York. Woods declined preferring his independence.

Woods joined the ancestors in 1910 CE

### **GARRETT MORGAN - 1877-1963**

Garrett Morgan was an inventor and businessman from Cleveland who is best known for inventing a device called the Morgan safety hood and smoke protector in 1914.

The son of former slaves, Garrett Morgan was born in, Kentucky USA on March 4, 1877.

Although Garrett Morgan's formal education never took him beyond elementary school, he hired a tutor while living in Cincinnati and continued his studies in English grammar.

In 1907, the inventor opened his own sewing equipment and repair shop. It was the first of several businesses he would establish.

In 1909, he expanded the enterprise to include a tailoring shop that employed 32 employees. The new company turned out coats, suits and dresses, all sewn with equipment that Garrett Morgan himself had made.

On July 25, 1916, Garrett Morgan made national news for using his gas mask to rescue 32 men trapped during an explosion in an underground tunnel 250 feet beneath Lake Erie.

Morgan and a team of volunteers donned the new "gas masks" and went to the rescue. After the rescue, Morgan's company received requests from fire departments around the country who wished to purchase the new masks.

Two years later, a refined model of his early gas mask won a gold medal at the International Exposition of Sanitation and Safety, and another gold medal from the International Association of Fire Chiefs.

In 1920, Garrett Morgan moved into the newspaper business when he established the *Cleveland Call*.

As the years went on, he became a prosperous and widely respected business man, and he was able to purchase a home and a car. Indeed it was Morgan's experience while driving along the streets of Cleveland that inspired him to invent an improvement to traffic signals.

After witnessing a collision between an automobile and a horse-drawn carriage, Garrett Morgan took his turn at inventing a traffic signal.

Other inventors had experimented with, marketed, and even patented traffic signals, however, Garrett Morgan was one of the first to apply for and acquire a U.S. patent for an inexpensive to produce traffic signal. The patent was granted on November 20, 1923. Garrett Morgan also had his invention patented in Great Britain and Canada.

Garrett Morgan died on August 27, 1963, at the age of 86. His life was long and full, and his creative energies have given us a marvelous and lasting legacy.

### **BESSIE BLOUNT - Physical Therapist**

"A black woman can invent something for the benefit of humankind" - Bessie Blount

Bessie Blount, was a physical therapist who worked with soldiers injured in W.W.II. Bessie Blount's war service inspired her to patent a device, in 1951 that allowed amputees to feed themselves.

The electrical device allowed a tube to deliver one mouthful of food at a time to a patient in a wheelchair or in a bed whenever he or she bit down on the tube. She later invented a portable receptacle support that was a simpler and smaller version of the same, designed to be worn around a patient's neck.

Bessie Blount was born in Hickory, Virginia in 1914. She moved from Virginia to New Jersey where she studied to be a physical therapist at the Panzar College of Physical Education and at Union Junior College and then furthered her training as a physical therapist in Chicago.

In 1951, Bessie Blount started teaching Physical Therapy at the Bronx Hospital in New York.

She was unable to successfully market her valuable inventions and found no support from United States Veteran's Administration, so she gave the patent rights to the French government in 1952. The French government put the device to good use helping to make life better for many war vets.

Bessie Blount's patent was filed under her married name of Bessie Blount Griffin.

**OTIS BOYKIN** born on August 29, 1920 CE in Dallas, Texas.

Otis Boykin invented an improved electrical resistor

Otis Boykin is best known for inventing an improved electrical resistor used in computers, radios, television sets and a variety of electronic devices. His resistor helped reduce the cost of those products.

Boykin also invented a variable resistor used in guided missile parts, a control unit for heart stimulators, a burglar-proof cash register and a chemical air filter. In total, Otis Boykin patented twenty-eight electronic devices.

In 1941, after graduating from Fisk University, Otis Boykin was employed as a laboratory assistant for the Majestic Radio and TV Corporation of Chicago, testing automatic controls for airplanes.

He later became a research engineer with the P.J. Nilsen Research Laboratories, and eventually founded his own company Boykin-Fruth, Incorporated

Otis Boykin died of a heart failure in 1982.

## **GEORGE CARRUTHERS**

### Far-Ultraviolet Camera and Spectrograph

George Carruthers has gained international recognition for his work which focuses on ultraviolet observations of the earth's upper atmosphere and of astronomical phenomena. Ultraviolet light is the electromagnetic radiation between visible light and x-rays. George Carruthers first major contribution to science was to lead the team that invented the far ultraviolet camera spectrograph.

Dr. George Carruthers received a patent for his invention the "Image Converter for Detecting Electromagnetic Radiation specially in Short Wave Lengths" on November 11, 1969

He has been the principal investigator for numerous NASA and DoD sponsored space instruments including a 1986 rocket instrument that obtained ultraviolet image of Comet Halley.

George Carruthers was born in Cincinnati Ohio on October 1, 1939 and grew up in South Side, Chicago. At the age of ten, he built a telescope, however, he did not do well in school studying math and physics but still went on to win three science fair awards.

Dr. Carruthers graduated from Englewood High School in Chicago. He attended the University of Illinois in Urbana-Champaign, where he received a bachelor of science degree in aeronautical engineering in 1961.

Dr. Carruthers also obtained his graduate education at the University of Illinois, completing a master's degree in nuclear engineering in 1962 and a doctorate in aeronautical and astronautical engineering in 1964.

In 1993, Dr. Carruthers was one of the first 100 recipients of the Black Engineer of the Year award honored by US Black Engineer.

### **IMHOTEP, “The Great”**

Imhotep was the royal advisor to King Zoser (Zo-zer) during the Third Dynasty of Kemet, Ancient Egypt.

Regarded as the world's first recorded multi-genius, Imhotep was an architect, astronomer, philosopher, poet and physician. As an architect he was responsible for designing the Step Pyramid and the Saqqara Complex.

During his lifetime he was given a host of titles, among them:

- Chancellor of the King of Lower Kemet;
- the First after the King of Upper Kemet,;
- High Priest of Heliopolis; and
- Administrator of the Great Palace.

As a physician, Imhotep is believed to have been the author of the stolen and so-called “Edwin Smith” Papyrus in which more than 90 anatomical terms and 48 injuries are described.

This is well over 2,200 years before the so-called Western Father of Medicine Hippocrates is born.

Some 2,000 years after his death, Imhotep was deified by the inhabitants of Kemet (Ancient Egypt) and was known later as Asclepius, God of Medicine, to the Greeks. His very name, Im-Hotep, translates as ‘He who comes in Peace’ or ‘the Prince of Peace’.

His tomb near Memphis became a sacred place and the site of pilgrimages for those seeking a cure.

As a philosopher and poet, Imhotep's most remembered phrase is: "Eat, drink, and be merry for tomorrow we shall die."

## **RAMSES II THE GREAT**

King Ramses II reigned for 67 years during the 19th dynasty of the 12th century BCE, was known as "Ramses the Great".

He is known as one of Egypt's greatest warriors, but also as a peace-maker and for the monuments he left behind all over Egypt.

He was the first king in history to sign a peace treaty with his enemies, the Hittites, ending long years of wars and hostility.

King Ramses reigned for 67 years (1292–1225 B.C.E). Under him Egypt acquired unprecedented splendour.

King Ramses left monuments throughout Egypt. The principal ones are:

- temple at Karnak
- the Rameseum,
- his mortuary temple, at Wa'set; and
- the great rock temple at Abu Simbel with four seated figures of the king on the facade.

Ramses II came to the throne at the age of about 20 and ruled for 67 years.

Married to Nefertari, whose tomb is considered the most beautiful in Egypt. Ramses The Great was an ambitious builder, a successful general and a popular ruler. He was believed to have fathered 100 children during his life.

## **YAA ASANTEWAA 'YAA ASANTAY-WAA' (C.1850-C.1920 CE)**

Yaa Asantewaa was the queen mother of the Edweso (Ed-weh-so) tribe of the Asante (Ashanti) in what is modern Ghana.

At the time, Ghana was under the British so-called protectorate.

The British supported their campaigns against the Asante with taxes levied upon the local population.

In addition, they took over the state-owned gold mines thus removing considerable income from the Asante government. Missionary schools were also established and the missionaries began interfering in local affairs.

When the Asante began rebelling against the British rule, the British attempted to put down the unrests.

Furthermore, the British governor, Lord Hodgson, demanded that the Asante turn over to them the Golden Stool, i.e. the throne and a symbol of Asante power and independence.

After going from village to village with no success, The British found at the village of Bare (Ba-reh) only the children who said their parents had gone hunting.

In response, the children were beaten. When their parents came out of hiding to defend the children, they were bound and beaten too.

This brutality was the instigation for the Yaa Asantewaa War for Independence which began on March 28, 1900.

Yaa Asantewaa mobilized the Asante troops and for three months laid siege to the British mission at the fort of Kumasi.

In retaliation, the British troops plundered the villages, killed much of the population, confiscated their lands and left the remaining population dependent upon the British for survival.

They also captured Queen Yaa Asantewaa and exiled her along with her close companions to the Seychelle Islands off Africa's east coast, while most of the captured chiefs became prisoners-of-war.

Yaa Asantewaa remained in exile until her death twenty years later.

### **BERNIE GRANT (1944-2000 CE)**

Bernie Grant, died aged 56 in 2000 CE was one of Britain's first black MPs.

Bernard Alexander Montgomery Grant was born in Guyana, the son of two schoolteachers, who named him after two generals who were then fighting the Second World War.

He had a reputation for being anti-police, believing that they treated black people unfairly, and the same year, after the Broadwater Estate riots, in which PC Blakelock was murdered, he made his famous remark: "What the police got was a bloody good hiding."

Mr Grant protested that the remark had been reported out of context, but apologised to PC Blakelock's family for the distress it had caused.

After the riots, the Tottenham MP campaigned for the release of Winston Silcott who had been convicted for PC Blakelock's murder.

His conviction was eventually quashed.

After the 1987 General Election, he was one of the first three black MPs in the Commons, and made his mark almost immediately by wearing a traditional Ghanaian robes at the State Opening of Parliament.

As a working MP he maintained his reputation as a firebrand, backing demands for black sections in the Labour Party, urging the exemption of Rastafarians from the poll tax, and defying convention by disrupting the Chancellor's Budget speech in 1988, shouting "shame, shame".

Bernie Grant almost trebled his majority in the 1992 General Election, and stood for the deputy leadership of the Labour Party, backed by the far left Campaign group.

In 1993, after years of being labelled anti-police, he helped to defuse a potentially explosive situation following the death of Jamaican immigrant Joy Gardener while police were trying to arrest her for deportation.

Last year, he called for Metropolitan Police Commissioner, Sir Paul Condon, to take early retirement after a damning report into the inquiry on the Stephen Lawrence murder.

### **LENFORD (KWESI) GARRISON (13 JUNE 1943 – 18 FEBRUARY 2003) 'LEN GARRISON'**

Academic, community activist and co-founder of the Black Cultural Archives

Len Garrison successfully combined academic pursuit with community activism. His search for a black identity emerged through his poetry, photography, essays and political activism in the black community.

His work embraced all aspects inherent in the African-Caribbean experience of the new black presence in Britain.

Born in in the parish of St Thomas Jamaica, he migrated to England to further his schooling and pursue an academic career, graduating from Sussex University in African and Caribbean History. He also went to Ruskin College, Oxford, where he gained a diploma in Development Studies and Leicester University where he acquired an MA in Local History.

Len Garrison's achievements were many, with examples such as:

- a founder member of the International Social Group in the mid sixties;
- founder of the Afro-Caribbean Resource Project (ACRP) to publish and produce learning materials drawn from the black British experience for use in the school curriculum;
- establishment of the Black Young Writers Award scheme;
- represented Britain at the 1977 Festival of Arts and Culture in Nigeria;
- set up the ACFF Education and Culture Centre in Nottingham; and

- co-founded the Black Cultural Archives (BCA) in 1981

Details of Len's achievements are published in a book celebrating the successes and achievements of people of African heritage called Black Success Stories.

Len's challenge was to continue to create an ever-expanding awareness, perhaps daunting to some, but an exciting challenge for Len, as he believed with certainty that a positive, sustainable future could be achieved by Africans 'abroad' in Britain.

**NANA BONSU** - Community leader, born June 25<sup>th</sup> 1930 CE; died March 15 2003 CE

Nana Bonsu was born with the name Beresford Edwards in Guyana.

In his youth he was a keen sportsman and represented his country on a number of occasions.

He immigrated to Britain in 1960. Inspired by Marcus Garvey, he quickly became involved in community issues, fighting to better the lives of his community through empowerment, education, better housing and political awareness.

The promotion and understanding of African History was close to his heart and he was the Manchester Branch Chairman of the PACM (Pan African Congress Movement). Its forerunner, the Pan African Congress (PAC) organised the 1945 Fifth Pan African Conference in Manchester. Decisions taken at this Conference fuelled the liberation of African Countries starting with Ghana in 1957 CE.

Bonsu was the regional secretary for CARD (Campaign Against Racial Discrimination), which helped make the Government bring in the 1976 Race Relations Act.

Beresford was a firm believer in nurturing our children educationally and holistically for the future, often saying, "You can only know where you're going, if you know and respect where you come from."

For nearly 40 years Beresford was a leading member of the WIOCC (West Indian Organisations Coordinating Committee) and with his guidance and support, the WIOCC organised many youth projects, Saturday Schools, training seminars and

Culture Week. He was Chairman of the Guyanese Association and also involved with many other organisations.

Bonsu enjoyed lecturing on the lessons he had learned from his work in Manchester. He spoke to enthusiastic audiences in Egypt, Israel, Burkina Faso, Ghana and throughout the Americas.

## **MARY PRINCE**

Mary Prince, the daughter of enslaved Afrikans, was born at Brackish Pond, Bermuda, in about 1788. Her father was a sawyer and her mother a house-servant.

When Mary was twelve years old she was sent out to another plantation five miles away from her family to work as a domestic slave and in the fields.

In 1818 Mary Prince was sold to John Wood, a plantation owner who lived in Antigua, for \$300.

Mary Prince began attending meetings held at the Moravian Church. She later wrote: "The Moravian ladies taught me to read in the class; and I got on very fast. In this class there were all sorts of people, old and young, grey headed folks and children; but most of them were free people.

While in Antigua she met the widower, Daniel Jones, a former black slave who had managed to purchase his freedom.

Jones now worked as a carpenter and cooper and asked Mary to marry him. This she agreed to do and got married in the Moravian Chapel in December 1826.

John Wood was furious when he found out about the marriage and Mary had to endure a severe beating with a horsewhip.

Wood and his wife took Mary as their servant to London. Soon after arriving in England in 1828 Mary ran away and went to live at the Moravian Mission House in Hatton Gardens. A few weeks later she went to work for Thomas Pringle, a member of the Anti-Slavery Society.

In 1831 Pringle arranged for her to publish her book, *The History of Mary Prince, A West Indian Slave*. *The History of Mary Prince* (1831) was the first life of a black woman to be published in Britain.

This extraordinary testament of ill-treatment and survival was a protest and a rallying-cry for emancipation that provoked two libel actions and ran into three editions in the year of its publication.

It is thought that Prince remained in England after 1833, perhaps continuing to work as a servant. Her *History* is an important contribution to early black writing, and it offers a glimpse into the lives of enslaved men and women whose life stories cannot be traced.

### **MARY SEACOLE (1805-1881 CE)**

Mary Seacole - Crimean war veteran nurse and original lady of the lamp

Mary Seacole's reputation after the Crimean War (1853-1856) rivalled Florence Nightingale's.

A born healer and a woman of driving energy, she overcame official indifference and prejudice. She got herself out to the war by her own efforts and at her own expense; risked her life to bring comfort to the wounded and dying soldiers; and became the first black woman to make her mark on British public life.

Mary Seacole was born in Kingston, Jamaica in 1805. Her father was a Scottish soldier, and her mother was a practitioner of traditional Jamaican medicine and had a boarding house where she cared for invalid soldiers and their wives.

Mary learned about medicine from her mother, soon gaining her own reputation as a 'skilful nurse and doctress'.

She was widely praised for her work in treating cholera, and returned to Jamaica in 1853, where there was a yellow fever epidemic. The medical authorities came to her to provide nurses to care for the sick soldiers. She travelled again to London, where she heard about the Crimean war and how the nursing system there had collapsed.

She made applications to the War Office, the army medical department, and the secretary of war to be allowed to go to the Crimea and tend to the sick and wounded. She pointed out that she had extensive experience, excellent references and knew many of the soldiers and regiments, having nursed them while they were stationed in Jamaica.

But she was turned away by everybody, including one of Florence Nightingale's assistants.

A distant relative of hers, called Day, was going to Balaclava on business, and they agreed to launch a firm called Seacole and Day, which would be a general store and hotel near the British camp in the Crimea.

So, at the age of 50, with her large stock of medicines, Mary went to the battle zone as a sutler - a person who follows the army and sells provisions to the troops. The moment she arrived in Balaclava there were sick and wounded to attend to.

Soon the entire British army knew of 'Mother Seacole's'. The soldiers were her 'sons' and she was their 'mother'.

It was W.H. Russell, the first modern war correspondent, who made Mary Seacole famous. He described her as 'a warm and successful physician, who doctors and cures all manner of men with extraordinary success. She is always in attendance near the battle field to aid the wounded, and has earned many a poor fellow's blessings'.

At the end of the war left Seacole and Day with expensive and unsaleable stores on their hands. They went bankrupt, and Mary returned to England a financially ruined woman. The Times demanded how could anyone forget the amazing things that Mary had done, and praise only Florence Nightingale?

In 1857, Mary published her autobiography, an outstandingly vivid piece of writing called *The Wonderful Adventures of Mrs Seacole in many lands* which was prefaced by WH Russell: 'I trust that England will not forget one who nursed her sick, who sought out her wounded to aid and succour them, and who performed the last offices for some of her illustrious dead'.

## **JOHN ARCHER (1863-1931 CE)- First black mayor in UK**

John Archer was the first person of African descent to hold civic office in London. He was also the first British black person to represent his country at an international conference abroad, and the first black person to become an election agent for a constituency Labour Party.

He was born on the 8th June 1863, in Liverpool. His father, Richard, was a ship's steward from Barbados, and his mother Mary Theresa, was Irish.

Very little is known of his early life. He was in his late 20s when he and his wife, a black Canadian, set up home at the south end of Battersea Park.

Archer earned his living as a photographer, with a studio in Battersea Park Road; he appears to have been successful as a photographer, for his work won many prizes.

He then turned his interest to local politics, and was elected to the borough council in 1906, as one of the six councillors for the Latchmere ward, where he topped the poll with 1,051 votes. He lost his seat in 1909, but won it again three years later.

On 10th November 1913, he was elected mayor of Battersea. The population at the time was 167,000 and the council's annual income from rates was over £400,000. The newly elected mayor told the council, "You have made history tonight...Battersea has done many things in the past, but the greatest thing it has done is to show that it has no racial prejudice, and that recognises a man for the work he has done"

Archer received letters of congratulations from leading members of the black community in the United States, and was featured in WEB DuBois's journal *The Crisis*, with photographs of Archer and his wife in their mayoral robes.

He successfully defended his seat in 1919, and then became a successful political agent and alderman. He returned to the council in 1931, and died suddenly.

## **CLAUDIA JONES (1915-1964 CE)**

Founder of Britain's first black weekly newspaper "The Westindian Gazette", also known as the mother of the Notting Hill Carnival

The diversity of her political affiliations clearly illustrated her multifaceted approach to the struggle for equal rights in the 20th century.

She was born in Belmont, Port-of-Spain, Trinidad in 1915 and at the age of eight moved to Harlem, New York with her parents and three sisters. Her education was cut short by Tuberculosis and the damage to her lungs as well as severe heart disease plagued Claudia for the rest of her life.

For over 30 years she lived in New York and during this time became an active member of the American Communist party, an organisation in which her journalistic and community leadership skills were maximised.

By 1948 she had become the editor of Negro Affairs for the party's paper the Daily Worker and had evolved into an accomplished speaker on human and civil rights.

In 1955 she was deported from the US and given asylum in England, where she spent her remaining years working with London's African-Caribbean community.

Claudia Jones lasting legacy is undoubtedly the Notting Hill carnival, which she helped launch in 1959 as an annual showcase for Caribbean talent.

These early celebrations were held in halls and were epitomised by the slogan, 'A people's art is the genesis of their freedom'.

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