

Researching Black British History – a worksheet for schools

In this live event recording of 22 October 2020, four researchers from the University of Manchester share insights into their current research projects on Black British History and various research techniques such as using oral history interviews or newspaper sources.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iEtFAqrwnkA>

We give a brief outline of each segment below. Your students might find it useful to consider the following questions:

While watching:

- What does each researcher say about the techniques/sources they used for their work?
- What do the presenters say about the specific issues they encountered while conducting their research in a British rather than an US American context?

For discussion after watching:

- Are there any approaches you could use for your own work?
- Can you think of a way in which you could have used the Black British experience in a recent assignment, and how this might have changed your argument?

Outline of each film segment

1. Xavier Banson (2:30 onwards) discusses how he used an oral history approach to research his MA thesis and gives practical advice on how to conduct and use interviews in historical research.
2. Zalirah Cooper (14:07 onwards) discusses some of the research findings for her PhD project on *Black Britons in the Industrial North 1960-70*. Being from the US, she also outlines the different approaches needed by researchers to uncover the experiences of black Britons vs their African-American contemporaries. She also explains why she decided to focus her research on working class communities in England's North.
3. Dr Eloise Moss (25:13 onwards) gives an insight into research for her next book project on hotels in Britain, and how she encompasses Black British history in this research. Similar to Zalirah's presentation, she draws a parallel to US history and how a historian of the British experience needs to employ different techniques.
4. Jessica White (39:20 onwards) outlines some of her research findings for her PhD on female identity in post WWII Britain. Using newspapers as sources, she gives a demonstration how historians need to critically assess the material to use it for their research.

Recommended Readings:

Segment 2 - Books

- Brown, Jacqueline Nassy, *Dropping Anchor, Setting Sail: Geographies of Race in Black Liverpool*, (Princeton; Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2005).
- Chambers, Eddie, *Roots & Culture: Cultural Politics in the Making of Black Britain*, (London: I.B. Tauris, 2017).

- Connell, Kieran, *Black Handsworth Race in 1980s Britain*, (Oakland, California: University of California Press, 2019).
- Fryer, Peter., and Gilroy, Paul, *Staying Power: The History of Black People in Britain*, (London: Pluto Press, 2010).
- Goodyer, Ian, *Crisis Music: The Cultural Politics of Rock Against Racism*, (Manchester University Press, 2009).
- Matera, Marc, *Black London: The Imperial Metropolis and Decolonization in the Twentieth Century*, (Oakland, California: University of California Press, 2015).
- Olusoga, David, *Black and British: A Forgotten History*, (London: Macmillan, 2016).
- Perry, Kennetta Hammond, *London Is the Place for Me: Black Britons, Citizenship, and the Politics of Race*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015).
- Ramdin, Ron, *The Making of The Black Working Class in Britain*, (London: Gower Publishing Co., 1987).
- Waters, Rob, *Thinking Black: Britain, 1964-1985*, (Oakland: University of California Press, 2018).

Segment 2 - Articles

- Bland, Lucy, 'Interracial Relationships and the 'Brown Baby Question': Black GIs, White British Women, and Their Mixed-Race Offspring in World War II.', *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, 26 (2017), 424–453.
- Farrar, Max, 'The Politics of Black Youth Workers in Leeds', *Critical Social Policy*, 8 (1988), 94–117.
- Fraser, Penny, 'Social and Spatial Relationships and the 'Problem' Inner City: Moss-Side in Manchester', *Critical Social Policy*, 16 (1996), 43–65.

Segment 3 – Books

- Kennetta Hammond Perry, *London is the Place for Me: Black Britons, Citizenship and the Politics of Race* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).
- Hakim Adi, *West Africans in Britain, 1900-1960: Nationalism, Pan-Africanism and Communism* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1998).

Segment 3 – Archives

- The National Archives (Kew, London): <https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/> (search box in top right-hand corner, use drop-down menu to 'search resources')
- Ahmed Iqbal Ullah Race Relations Resource Centre (Manchester Central Library): www.racearchive.org.uk (click on 'collections' tab)
- Black Cultural Archives (Brixton, London): <https://blackculturalarchives.org/> (click on 'collections' tab, then 'search the collections')

Segment 4 – Archives

The University of Manchester Library offers reference access to printed books and journals and some electronic resources via in-library dedicated PCs for Sixth Form students from NW colleges & schools – see details [here](#). In addition to the archives listed for segment 3, ProQuest has a free online archive for the [Black Freedom Struggle in the US](#), Manchester Libraries has an [online archive](#) freely accessible for library card holders.