Americans in Manchester walking tour

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walking tour

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Manchester's "American Connections"

Andrew Fearnley

There are some thirty settlements in the contemporary United States named Manchester. Almost all took that name in the nineteenth century, when doing so could mark a place with ambition, innovation, prosperity—qualities widely associated at the time with the English city of Manchester. Such opinions reflected the dense economic entanglements between the US and Britain. The US was already the largest consumer of British manufactured goods by 1800, and within half a century, Britain was importing close to one million pounds of American cotton, about 80 percent of its annual requirement, most destined for Manchester. The American Civil War adjusted these patterns, but Manchester maintained its position 'among the cities of the world', at least through the First World War, and could be plausibly mentioned alongside London, New York, Paris, Berlin, Tokyo, and St. Petersburg. Five of Britain's largest manufacturing companies were headquartered there around 1900, and at least eight major US subsidiaries operated out of Trafford Park a decade later. The leading commodities of the global economy flowed through this city. In the nineteenth century, that was cotton; in the twentieth—via the newly-opened Ship Canal, the 'aorta of Lancashire'—it was oil. Such patterns made Manchester the vanguard of industrial capitalism, and they increasingly tethered the city, and the hinterlands of Lancashire, to the US.

But the city of Manchester has been connected to the US in a multitude of ways, other than by the currents of commerce. Scores of prominent or influential Americans visited Manchester and neighbouring Lancashire towns between Benjamin Franklin's visit to Chetham's Library in May 1771 and Bob Dylan's concert at the Free Trade Hall in May 1966, which changed the direction of modern music. At a time when international travel among incumbent and former presidents was rare, Ulysses Grant (1877) and Woodrow Wilson (1918) both visited and spoke in the city, and a third, Abraham Lincoln, in 1863, wrote a letter expressing 'the most reciprocal feelings of friendship' towards the city's working people.

This project, and the accompanying map, designed by local artist Dave Gee, and co-produced by students from the University of Manchester's American Studies programme, spotlights several of the Americans who came, around twenty in total. Most are connected to politics and culture, broadly defined. These were the preeminent connections, as well as the ones most familiar to this author. Grouped in such ways, a crude pattern emerges: political figures, including campaigners and presidents, predominated in the long nineteenth century; cultural figures, including actors, performers, literary writers, and musicians, in the long twentieth. The separation is not entirely satisfactory, for the two groups intermingled, chronologically and categorically.

The troubadours who journeyed to Manchester were led by diverse motives; their stays of variable length; and what they remembered about their visits mixed. But taken together, they help to capture the frequent and consequential linkages that joined this city with the US. Viewed as a collective, it is also clear that the cohort is 'useful with which to think,' encouraging us to: contemplate why so many Americans came to Manchester when they did; how they got there; what they thought could be achieved by addressing new audiences.

This was frequently a group on the move, restless, energetic, but also connected and cosmopolitan in a mobile world. Most were only passing through, stopping off in Manchester on the circuit of their travels. Some stayed longer—the abolitionist Frederick Douglass, on and off, for some months, Henry 'Box' Brown took up residence for several years. As with most peripatetic communities, it was a youthful cohort, with a median age of 39. The youngest who arrived in Manchester was the actor Ira Aldridge (20) in 1827, and Dylan (24) in 1966, while Franklin and W. E. B. Du Bois, a fellow scholar and also an activist, were the most senior, both in their 70s. While the majority are men, almost half were persons of colour, and for many of those, international travel was not incidental to, but constitutive of how they imagined the work of racial justice.

Although many traveled alone, most recognized that their tours were part of a shared cultural fabric of experience and meaning. Some were good friends—including Du Bois and the singer Paul Robeson, who had been close for decades by the time each visited Manchester in the 1940s. Others were siblings: the novelist Harriet Beecher Stowe came to Manchester in 1857, on a private excursion; her brother, the Reverend Henry Ward Beecher, the best-known US preacher of the mid-nineteenth century, followed six years later, and spoke to a crowd of 6,000 for more than two hours at the Free Trade Hall. Many were bound in communities of correspondence or networks of allegiance. When the anti-lynching advocate Ida B. Wells toured Britain in the 1890s, she carried letters of introduction written by Douglass, who had twice visited Manchester, and who testified to the 'good and urgent work' Wells was doing. Douglass's letter to the Reverend Samuel Steinthal, Unitarian minister at Manchester's Cross Street Chapel and an advocate for anti-slavery and women's rights, is, like many of the documents on which this project rests, today preserved at the John Rylands Library on Deansgate. That letter prompts us to recognize that many American visitors knew about those who had preceded them, and how the tidal forces of abolitionism, decolonization, and global civil rights surged over what remained of earlier waves of reform networks and institutions.

This project also brings into view the fact that the main moment of interchange runs almost two centuries, from the 1770s to the mid-1960s. It is of course a period that overlaps with Manchester's own growth and ascendancy as a hub of industrial capitalism, and, probably relatedly, a moment when the city was most densely entangled within larger grids of trade and transportation. As a project that is in part a prosopography, it ponders the shared experience of the cohort we follow, to wonder what it was

Background:
King's Hall advertisement,
May 10, 1949, AG Len Johnson.
Courtesy of the Working Class
Movement Library.
See page 23 also.

like to cross the Atlantic, and the relative possibilities for doing so at given moments. By the time abolitionists were arriving in Britain in the 1840s and '50s, transatlantic crossings took around two weeks, and like with most of the cotton arriving from the US, those passenger ships docked at Liverpool, before the region's 'spider's web of railways,' in impresario William Cody's felicitous phrase, shuttled travellers to Manchester and beyond.

It was from Liverpool that Douglass sailed following his twenty-one months in Great Britain, traveling on Cunard's paddle-steamer *Cambria*, a journey that took 16 days and 6 hours. A few months later, the American journalist and writer Margaret Fuller crossed from Boston on the same ship in 10 days and 16 hours, which, she boasted in her diary, stood as 'the shortest voyage ever made across the Atlantic.' Fuller knew also that Douglass had sailed on the ship, because she relayed how she had met its captain, who she applauded for having the courage to face down those who had tried to prevent Douglass from eating his meals with other passengers.

As steam eclipsed sail in transatlantic crossings in the 1860s and '70s, journey times shortened, and the number of American visitors rose. By the time Wells crossed, in 1893, the journey took just seven days. A half-century later, in the aftermath of the Second World War, all of those featured in this booklet arrived by airplane. Du Bois flew in 1945 from New York—via Newfoundland, and Ireland—to London, before catching the train to Manchester, while Malcolm X crossed the Atlantic in six hours in 1964. Ironically, though, while jet aviation made Britain and Europe far more accessible to international travelers from the mid-'60s on, it also weakened the direct routes that had once bound Manchester to America's east coast. Fewer distinctive American figures came to Manchester after the mid-'60s because while many more now travelled to Britain, most arrived (and often remained) in London. The writer James Baldwin and activist Stokely Carmichael typify the trend. Only those who continued to explore Britain by train—composing songs while 'sitting in a railway station' in Widnes, like the musician Paul Simon did in 1964—or who had a personal connection to the region—such as Beat poet Allen Ginsberg (who performed at Manchester's Library Theatre in 1979), whose musical accompanist was born in Gorton—were much in evidence thereafter.

The counterparts of these figures were the Mancunians and Lancastrians who went in the other direction, as temporary visitors or emigrants to the US. Less is said about such figures in this booklet, but it is worth mentioning here, as illustration, that such would likely include the literary writer Frances Hodgson Burnett, born in Cheetham Hill in 1849, who first settled in Knoxville, Tennessee, in 1865, and published her popular children's stories in American magazines. It would also encompass Mother Ann Lee, born in 1736 and baptised at what is today the Manchester cathedral, who migrated to the US before the country existed, and who was formative in establishing the Shaker faith. Lee is a reminder that others will want to examine the traffic of religious figures

Union and Emancipation Society, Members, 1863. John Rylands Library. Copyright of the University of Manchester. Creative Commons license.

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and institutions that linked Manchester and the US, which this booklet only briefly mentions.

At no point in the period examined here was Manchester uniform in its relations with or reactions towards the US. Differences of outlook run through the cohort we track. The writer Elizabeth Gaskell, for example, shared a commitment towards abolition with the American novelist Harriet Beecher Stowe, who she hosted at Plymouth Grove in 1857, but Gaskell declined to attend the lecture that Black abolitionist Sarah Remond gave at the Athenaeum two years later, explaining that her presence there would 'only end in discomfort' for both women. Such differences were more pronounced across the city at large, and they erupted at key moments, including in the 1860s during the American Civil War, which sent tremors through British politics. The historian Richard Blackett has cogently shown that competing reactions within the 'Cottonopolis' and the satellite towns which depended on trade with the US are not fully explained as the result of class or geography. Manchester served as the headquarters for *both* the Union and Emancipation Society, which advocated for Union victory, and the Southern Independence Association, which pressed Palmerston's government to recognize the Confederacy, and their offices were a third of a mile apart, though their leading members exhibited rather different connections with the city. Manchester was a city that could support Ida B. Wells's campaign against the rise in racial violence, in 1893, but also a place where a few months earlier a new land holding and development company was set up, that made investments in the segregation of American cities, and thus created some of the conditions against which Wells advocated.

While our attention inevitably focuses on the headline figures who travelled to Manchester, we should not lose sight of the scores of lesser-known individuals who connected this Anglo-American world, nor of the material conditions that Manchester offered. Wells was helped by a network of activists and supporters, some of whom formed the Society for the Recognition of the Brotherhood of Man, and in this she was typical. Lancashire's community of American businessmen, the largest group of expats anywhere in Britain between the 1860s and mid-1880s, arranged for Albert Spalding's Chicago baseball players to dine at one of Manchester's

toniest clubs in 1889; the Guyanesian-born businessman T. Ras Makonnen funded and fed scores of delegates at the 1945 Pan-African Congress; while the Muslim students who hosted Malcolm X in December 1964 took him for lunch at the Bombay restaurant, established by Bangladeshi immigrants in the 1940s. While scholars have frequently presented Britain's imperial metropole as singularly capable of attracting diverse groups from across the globe, Manchester's record amply demonstrates that between the 1840s and 1940s it too performed a comparable function.

What those who visited Manchester thought of the city naturally differed, but their perspectives also followed some general patterns. If, as the historian Asa Briggs noted, interest in Manchester among British and European commentators spiked in the early 1840s, this was also true for American observers. And the verdicts they offered were no less pejorative than those advanced by de Tocqueville or Engels. Nathaniel Hawthorne, the American writer, and an ill-appointed US consul to Liverpool, described Manchester as 'abominable,' and, but for its impressive factories, not 'worth visiting.' The journalist Margaret Fuller thought 'the girls from the Mills' had a 'coarse, rude, and reckless air' about them. Mark Twain typified such mid-century disdain: 'I would like to live in Manchester,' he reportedly quipped, because 'the transition between Manchester and death would be unnoticeable.' Twain's judgment, offered from afar, was typical of an age when 'Manchester' was a symbol as much as a site.

Their opinions also changed. Douglass was galvanised by the courage he discerned among Manchester's anti-slavery proponents in the 1840s, but his second trip, in 1859-60, left him despondent, angry at the apathy that softened public sentiment towards American slavery. While for British commentators the key event in shifting perceptions was Queen Victoria's visit in 1851, for Americans that moment was the Civil War. From roughly the 1860s through to the 1920s, American observers enthused about Manchester and its people. A 'most dignified town,' the writer and critic William Dean Howells judged in 1909. Assuredly Manchester was a more comfortable place to visit, with a larger cultural profile in the later Victorian period than it had been decades earlier. While this new-found embrace was one expression of a general outpouring of Anglo-American friendship that flourished in the half century either side of 1900, it is worth underscoring here that such proclamations often emphasized America's fraternal kinship with Manchester and its people. The

Buffalo Bill and Native Americans, Manchester Corporation Tram, c1903. Manchester Libraries, Information and Archives. Courtesy of Manchester Libraries, Information and Archives, Manchester City Council.

'feeling of friendship' that most Americans felt 'towards the people of Manchester,' President Ulysses Grant reaffirmed in 1877, was 'distinct and separate from that which they feel for all the rest of England.' Such views were echoed by the well-travelled impresario William Cody, or Buffalo Bill, and, in December 1918, by President Woodrow Wilson, who told the crowds that greeted his train that he felt 'at home in the city' and that Americans could stand 'shoulder to shoulder together' with such 'great forward-looking' people as Manchester's free-trade liberals.

For a country which has often looked with suspicion at the rest of the world, many of the Americans discussed in these pages believed that their nationalism was enriched, not weakened, by participating in transatlantic exchange. A few even suspected that America itself could be improved by listening more attentively to what Douglass called 'the nations of the Earth'. Most welcomed the freedom that distance brought, to say what could only be thought back home, to experiment with one's art, to enjoy new rewards. Douglass's first visit to Great Britain vaulted him to the forefront of transatlantic abolitionist circles, materially ensuring his freedom, and winning him a place in a culture of opposition. As Douglass knew, his speeches around Britain and Ireland were also 'copiously reported' in US newspapers and anti-slavery journals, which was an opportunity, but also a challenge. The new milieu could sharpen a perspective, embolden a critique, though not too much. 'Words spoken here,' Remond knowingly remarked on the Athenaeum's stage, 'are read there as no words written in America are read.' That a voice might be '*better heard in America* from the platform[s]' of English meetings 'than from any American platform,' was a cultural conceit about British supremacy, but also the result of new mass media communication, which worked to enlarge and multiple an audience.

We should not lose sight of the fact that for many, even those who arrived by chance, or left in haste, these journeys were not only memorable, but meaningful. Several wrote accounts of their travels, or kept scrapbooks devoted to their travels. Wells clipped and saved British press coverage of her trips, ostensibly because she was a journalist, and they might be useful when she sat down to write her journal. But the corrections and annotations she added imply her deeper attachment to this place and its people. Ordinary, often unnamed Americans found their own meanings in these associations. In February 1945, it was reported that several Black soldiers stationed in the North West visited Platt Fields Park to place a wreath at the foot of the statue of the president who fought a war that abolished slavery and brought about freedom.

Even as Manchester's position as a vital transport interchange declined in the mid-twentieth century, its importance as a city of media production rose, briefly extending and even magnifying the city's distinguished record of links to the US. The southern Baptist preacher Billy Graham addressed thousands at Manchester City's Maine Road ground in 1961, but his sermons reached many times more when they

Background:
Malcolm X at the University of Manchester, December 1964, Manchester Libraries, Information and Archives. Courtesy of Manchester Libraries, Information and Archives, Manchester City Council. See page 25 also.

were broadcast on national radio. Granada's staging of the Blues and Gospel train show was similarly attended by some 200 music fans, but the later broadcast of the concert was watched by 12 million and won a key place for the studio in shaping popular British ideas about American popular music. The Mancunians who heckled at the Free Trade Hall in May 1966 were unremarkable in voicing folk purists' opposition to Dylan's more commercial, electronic sound. But *that* concert became internationally renowned of such fans' frustrations, because one acidic heckle was picked up by the venue's multi-directional microphone, recorded by sound engineers from Columbia Records, and filmed by the pioneering US documentary maker D. A. Pennebaker.

Dylan's concert at the Free Trade Hall on May 17, 1966, marked the end of an intense two-year period of exchange. During this period Manchester hosted several Americans in rapid succession, and the presence of such American musicians and activists was part of a wider transatlantic youth culture of dissent, which would combust across Europe and the US in 1968. Our project takes Dylan's concert to mark a shift in Manchester's long-standing connections with the US, and, though the point is intended to be more suggestive than definitive, it is not without merit. By the early 1960s, Manchester was firmly among the second rank of international cities, comparable in scale to Barcelona and Milan (or Cleveland), and subsequent years did not improve its fortunes. In 1963, after more than a century, the US closed its Manchester consulate.

Few of the Americans who journeyed to Manchester left a physical imprint on the city's built environment. Only President Lincoln is today celebrated with a public monument. Yet look more carefully, and other expressions of such linkages emerge, inscribed onto buildings, carved into stone, mentioned on plaques and street signs. Walk around the city, as this project hopes you will now do, and it is possible to view familiar sites in fresh ways, to understand the history of Manchester's development, in part, through the lens of these sustained transatlantic entanglements. Ours is a mode of inquiry that requires you to use your historical imagination, to conjure the conditions and contexts in which the figures described in depth below conversed and converged. But it also demands that we become more attentive to the contemporary built environment. In the sixteen portraits that follow, students identify many of the locations, buildings, and sites where particular Americans spoke, sang, and stayed. Our hope is that, with this short guide in hand, and this perspective in mind, you will now embark on your own journey around the city.

Ira Aldridge

Manchester Art Gallery
1827

On the corner of Mosley Street and Princess Street stands the Manchester Art Gallery. Constructed in 1823 in a Greek revival style for a learned society, the Royal Manchester Institute, the building and collections were soon donated to form a public art gallery, to 'provide respite and moral education for the city's working classes through exposure to beauty.'

The first painting acquired by the Gallery was a portrait of the Black American actor Ira Aldridge, painted by James Northcote in the role of Othello. Aldridge, sometimes known as the African Roscious, was likely the first Black performer to play Othello on the English stage. He came to Manchester in February 1827 to play the titular role in Shakespeare's play at Manchester's first Theatre Royal on Fountain Street. Aldridge soon starred in several other plays, including *Oroonoko* and *The Padlock*, both of which involved anti-slavery themes. This was fitting for a city that had played a key role in petitioning for the abolition of the slave trade in the late eighteenth century.

Northcote's portrait was displayed at the first exhibition of the Royal Manchester Institute. It was described as 'admirably painted,' and captured the positive reception that the city extended to Aldridge's performances. Although the title of the painting 'A Moor' does not clearly identify Aldridge, his influence on Manchester society at the time makes it likely that his performances motivated the Institute's purchase of the painting later that same year.

The Gallery has been open and free to the public since 1833, so take this opportunity to go inside and have a look at the portrait yourself.

Sylvie Brown

Frederick Douglass

St. Ann's Square
1846-1847

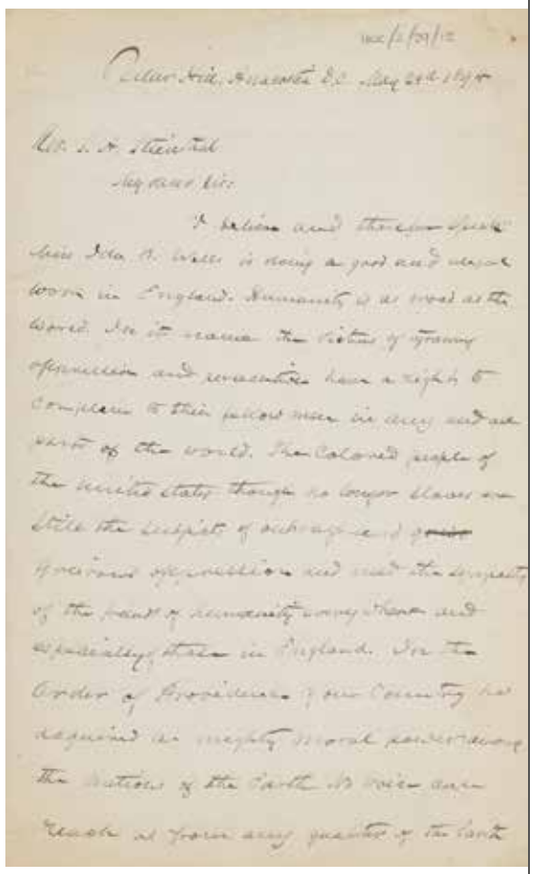
Frederick Douglass, the 'most important African American of the nineteenth century', stayed in Manchester on occasions between July 1846 and January 1847, and spoke at several locations across the city during his twenty-month tour of Great Britain and Ireland. Douglass was born into slavery in 1818 and became one of the leading abolitionists during the nineteenth century. Having escaped in Maryland, he fled to New York, from where he began to lecture and campaign for abolition. Following the publication of his first autobiography, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave* (1845), he toured Britain and Ireland, hoping to build a transatlantic anti-slavery movement.

Douglass visited Manchester during his initial 1845-47 tour, and later in 1859-60, speaking to crowds in several locations. These included the Free Trade Hall, on October 12, 1846, and the recently-opened Corn Exchange, where he spoke on three occasions between early December 1846 and mid-January 1847. He also lectured in surrounding towns, such as Stockport and Oldham, and across the wider region, including in Leeds, Sheffield, and Halifax. These he visited primarily during his later tour, sharing platforms with Sarah Parker Remond.

As a talented orator, Douglass's speeches captivated Manchester audiences, mixing personal anecdotes with observations about the depths of British investment in slavery. The *Manchester Times* reported that the Free Trade Hall had been about 'three-fourths filled' for his speech there in 1846. Even though Victorian Manchester was a 'Cottonopolis,' where links to the international cotton trade ran deep, several elites shared liberal, free trade, and anti-slavery views, and offered public support, and in some cases funds, towards the cause. Such connections led many who had escaped enslavement in the US to travel to Manchester to campaign for abolition, including Henry 'Box' Brown in the 1850s, and William Wells Brown, who spoke at the Town Hall in 1854.

In December 1846 and again in March 1847, Douglass stayed at 22 St Ann's Square, writing letters to the American abolitionist Henry C. Wright, and the British campaigner Elizabeth Pease Nichol. In total Douglass spent twenty months in the UK and on April 10, 1847, he left Manchester for Liverpool, from where he sailed to America as a free man, his reputation among anti-slavery activists ascendant.

Larisa Jones



Frederick Douglass to Revd Samuel Alfred Steinthal, May 23, 1894. John Rylands Library. Copyright of the University of Manchester. Creative Commons license.

Henry 'Box' Brown

1850-1875

Henry 'Box' Brown was an abolitionist and performer, who turned his sensational escape from slavery in the US into an international stage act. Brown was born into slavery in Virginia, but escaped by mailing himself in a crate to Philadelphia in 1849. The mid-nineteenth century saw a huge rise in slave narratives and literature, including writer Harriet Beecher Stowe's best-selling novel, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852), and it is little surprise that Brown's daring escape captured the imagination of the Anglo-American world.

Brown moved to England in November 1850 after passage of the Fugitive Slave Law, which enforced the capture of escaped slaves. He first performed in Manchester in December 1850, followed by shows in Bolton, Liverpool, and Leeds. While in the north of England, he performed his panorama, 'Henry Box Brown's Mirror of Slavery,' as well as shows of magic and mesmerism. It is believed Brown's last public performance took place in Cardiff in 1863.

By 1870, Brown, his wife, and children, settled at 87 Moreton Street in Manchester's Cheetham Hill district, and resided there until July 1875 when they returned to US. Henry 'Box' Brown also wrote *Narrative of the Life of Henry Box Brown* in 1851, which was published by Thomas G. Lee, minister of Salford's New Windsor Chapel. The first line of that work signalled that Brown was far more than a quirky stage performer: 'While America is boasting of her freedom and making the world ring with her professions of equality, she holds millions of her inhabitants in bondage.'

Ed Humphries

Harriet Beecher Stowe

Art Treasures Exhibition, Old Trafford
September 1857

Harriet Beecher Stowe was an American author and abolitionist whose best-selling novel, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852), won huge international success, and changed attitudes towards slavery in both America and Britain. Stowe had corresponded with British novelist Elizabeth Gaskell throughout her European lecture tour, initially meeting Gaskell in London in May 1853 and continuing to maintain a fruitful friendship throughout that decade. Their private letters reveal that Gaskell liked Stowe 'very much indeed,' and this epistolary friendship was of great importance to both women, and the basis of their discussions about the advancement of transatlantic abolition.

Stowe stayed for two days with the Gaskells at their home of 84 Plymouth Grove in September 1857. During that visit, the women attended the Manchester Art Treasures Exhibition at Old Trafford. The Exhibition, which ran from May to October 1857, showcased over 16,000 items of art loaned from private collections all over Great Britain, and included paintings, sculptures, and photographs, as well as illuminated manuscripts, tapestries, and furniture. Visitors were drawn from far and wide, and it stood as a symbol of Manchester's growing ambitions as a cultural hub. Among the other prominent Americans who visited the Exhibition was Stowe's literary counterpart Nathaniel Hawthorne, who despite not much liking Manchester, returned several times to the Exhibition.

Within a few years of Stowe's 1857 stay at Plymouth Grove, her brother Henry Ward Beecher, America's most famous nineteenth-century preacher, made a 'public appearance' in the city, lecturing at the Free Trade Hall on October 9, 1863. His lecture, alongside Stowe's private stay with the Gaskells, captured Manchester's dual ambitions in the mid-nineteenth century: to be a preeminent centre of culture and political debate.

Lucy Blanchard

Sarah Parker Remond

Manchester Athenaeum
September 1859

Born free in 1815 into a household whose ideological core was equality and justice, it is no surprise that Sarah Parker Remond grew up to become a trailblazing Black abolitionist. She used her talents as an orator to tour the US and Europe, relying upon the transatlantic abolitionist network. It was a network that brought her to Manchester in 1859.

Remond travelled to Britain unaccompanied, crossing the Atlantic in two weeks and arriving at the port of Liverpool on January 12, 1859. This marked the start of a highly anticipated British tour that lasted three years, during which she gave more than fifty talks, including in cities such as Warrington, Liverpool, Wakefield, Leeds, and London. Despite the popularity of her lectures, Remond was often refused service in hotels, and had to stay in the homes of supporters.

On September 14, 1859, Remond spoke at the Manchester Athenaeum, which since 2002 has been part of the Manchester Art Gallery. She was invited by Rebecca Whitelegge and Rebecca Moore, two advocates of anti-slavery and women's rights. Remond was introduced by Mayor Ivie Mackie, and, like most American abolitionists, she began by recounting examples of slave conditions. She argued that 'slavery was a poison that had contaminated people of all classes', and she highlighted the cruelties enslaved women faced, proclaiming that 'women are the worst victims of slavery.' From this address, emerged the quotation that has become synonymous with Manchester's history, 'When I walk through the streets of Manchester and meet load after loas of cotton… I remember that not one cent of that money ever reached the hands of the labourer.'

Remond's speech was well received, evidenced by a collection made at the door for the American Anti-Slave Society, and a report published in the *Manchester Weekly Times* the following day. Like other abolitionists who spoke around the city in the 1840s and 1850s, Remond was unafraid to highlight Manchester's investment in slavery. It was the scores of speeches made by abolitionists in the city that created the basis for the later campaign in support of Lincoln. In 1866, Remond moved to Florence, Italy to continue her education, and from where she lived out the rest of her life, dying in Rome in 1894.

Daisy Martin

Ida B. Wells

1893-1894

America's leading anti-lynching activist, Ida B. Wells, visited Manchester in May 1893 and again in April 1894 to compel British audiences to support her campaign against the rise in violence towards African Americans. Her tours drew international attention to the rise in racial violence in the decades following the Civil War, and placed pressure on British audiences to challenge the US around the causes and consequences of lynching. Wells attacked the racist ideology surrounding lynching, exposing the myth of the Black rapist that white mobs used to validate their heinous crimes, and instead argued that such violence was motivated by the desire to oppress African Americans, to 'keep the race terrorised.'

Her first tour in 1893 was covered extensively in *Anti-Caste*, a pamphlet published by the British activist Catherine Impey, copies of which are held at the John Rylands Library. There she detailed her lectures at both Temperance Hall and the Unitarian Church in Moss Side, as well a social outing to Manchester's Vegetarian Restaurant on Fountain Street. Wells returned to Britain the following spring, speaking in other northern cities and towns, including Liverpool, Southport, and Ashton-under-Lyne, before giving twelve speeches over ten days in Manchester.

The *Manchester Press* described Wells as a 'powerful and convincing advocate,' and the commanding nature of her speeches forced audiences to sharpen their criticism of the post-Civil War US. During her time in the city, Wells cultivated a personal friendship with W. E. Axon, an influential figure at the *Guardian*, and he and his wife hosted her in their home and were vocal in their support. Wells' success in garnering sympathy is also illustrated by a letter that the Bishop of Manchester sent to the *Christian Register*, a weekly Unitarian newspaper published in Boston, which condemned America's 'national crime' of lynching. Wells hoped that such denouncements would lead to more effective action in America. She used the earlier abolitionist discourse and networks in Manchester to refocus attention on the latest form of racial violence.

Jenna Barnes

ANTI-CASTE.

Society for S.R.U.B.M.

MISS IDA B. WELLS IN ENGLAND.

LIVERPOOL.

MAY 4th.—Crowded attendance at the Friends' Institute. Intense earnestness and rapt attention were the distinguishing features of those present. Letters of apology were read from Rev. R. A. Armstrong, and Mr. (now Sir) E. R. Russell (Editor of *Liverpool Daily Post*). Mr. W. H. Chapman moved, and Miss E. Robinson seconded, a resolution protesting against Lynching, and suggesting the formation of a Branch of the Society. Result: 40 members joined S.R.U.B.M.

MANCHESTER.

May 5th.—The Vegetarian Restaurant, Fountain Street, was largely attended at the invitation of Mr. and Mrs. E. A. Axon, to hear an address from Miss Wells. Result: Formation of a Branch of S.R.U.B.M., with 146 members.

May 6th.—Large gathering in the Central Hall, Oldham Street.

May 7th.—In the morning, Miss Wells occupied the pulpit of the Unitarian Church, Moss Side; addressed the Bible Christian Schools, Salford, in the afternoon; and lectured in the evening at the Temperance Hall,

ASHTON-UNDER-LYME.

Mr. Dan Marsland presided at the latter gathering, and was supported by Councillor John White, Mr. E. A. Axon, &c. Result: S.R.U.B.M. Branch formed, and 79 members enrolled.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE.

May 9th.—In the afternoon, large meeting in the Friends' Meeting House, presided over by Mr. T. W. P. Taylder (formerly missionary and lecturer to the coloured folk of Jamaica), and addressed by Miss Wells, and Mr. Celestine Edwards (Editor of *Lux*). At night, David Richardson, Esq., J.P., took the chair in the same place. The crowd was so great that an overflow meeting was held in an adjoining building. The speakers were the same as in the afternoon. At both meetings resolutions were passed condemning the lynching now going on in the United States of America, and suggesting the

Anti-Caste (May & June 1893). John Ryland Library. Copyright of the University of Manchester. Creative Commons license.

Abraham Lincoln

Letter (1863) and Statue (1919)

Abraham Lincoln was a heroic figure among Manchester workers in the 1860s, the embodiment of a successful working man, champion of the campaign for Emancipation. Lincoln's connection to Manchester is first anchored by the city's Free Trade Hall. It was at this location that members of the city's 'working men' assembled on New Year's Eve, December 31, 1862, to express their support 'for the free North', and to lobby Lincoln for 'a complete uprooting of slavery.' Three thousand Mancunians then gathered in the same venue on February 9, 1863, to hear the President's response read aloud. Many who heard his words believed it 'did them the highest honour,' and the sense of affinity it kindled was evident in the weeks following his assassination, in April 1865, when a memorial service was held at the Free Trade Hall, its interior draped in black.

In 1919, Manchester was gifted a statue of the sixteenth president, created by modernist sculptor George Grey Barnard, and recognizing 'Lancashire's friendship to the cause for which Lincoln lived and died.' Originally placed in Platt Fields Park in September 1919, the statue, which some commentators derided as 'thoroughly unworthy' in its likeness, was locally embraced as a celebration of the common man. The *Manchester Guardian* claimed, 'London will have Lincoln the president; Manchester has Lincoln the man.' In subsequent decades, the statue's embodiment of the heroic Lincoln, abolitionist and emancipator, continued to reverberate. In 1986, the statue was moved to its present location, Lincoln Square, mounted on a plinth, and the inscription changed to recognize the 'working *people* of Manchester.' The statue remains a reminder of the deep connections Lincoln, man and symbol, shared with the working people of the city.

Olivia Walker

Background and cover: Statue of President Lincoln, c1943, Platt Fields Park. Manchester Libraries, Information and Archives. Courtesy of Manchester Libraries, Information and Archives, Manchester City Council.

President Ulysses S. Grant

Manchester Town Hall
May 1877

In May 1877, shortly after completing his final term as US President, Ulysses S. Grant, eighteenth President and former Commanding General of Union Army, embarked on a world tour, accompanied by his wife and son. Sailing from Philadelphia, the first country they visited was England. After a brief stay in Liverpool, Grant departed for Manchester on May 30, arriving at the London Road train station at 11am. He was received by Mayor Abel Heywood, who held him in strong personal admiration, and a 'tremendous crowd of citizens.' The warm reception can be attributed in part to Manchester's support for the Union army, fifteen years earlier.

Grant was taken to several points around the city. At the Watts Warehouse, now the Britannia Hotel, on Portland Street, he 'remark[ed] upon the splendour of the warehouse itself.' Grant was next driven to the Royal Exchange, opened a few years earlier, and finally, to the city's Town Hall. Planned for construction during Heywood's first stint as mayor, in 1862-63, and opened officially during his second term, later in September 1877. The building's location had been chosen for its proximity to municipal and banking sectors, and was built in a Gothic revival style. The clock tower was the tallest structure in nineteenth-century Manchester, its largest bell, named 'Great Abel,' in honour of its dynamic mayor.

Upon arriving at the Town Hall, the party was welcomed by the Dean of Manchester, as well as the Mayors of Salford and Wigan. Heywood extended the 'goodwill of the citizens of Manchester…as a representative of the great American people,' and Grant remarked on the 'feeling of friendship towards the people of Manchester' which Americans felt 'distinct and separate from that which they feel for all the rest of England.' After the formalities, Grant and his wife retired to the Major's private apartment, and became the first visitors to stay there overnight. Their brief visit reminds us of the connections the city had with the US during the mid-nineteenth century, links deepened by the US Civil War, and celebrated in the mutual respect between President Grant and Mayor Heywood.

Frank Osborne

Fisk Jubilee Singers

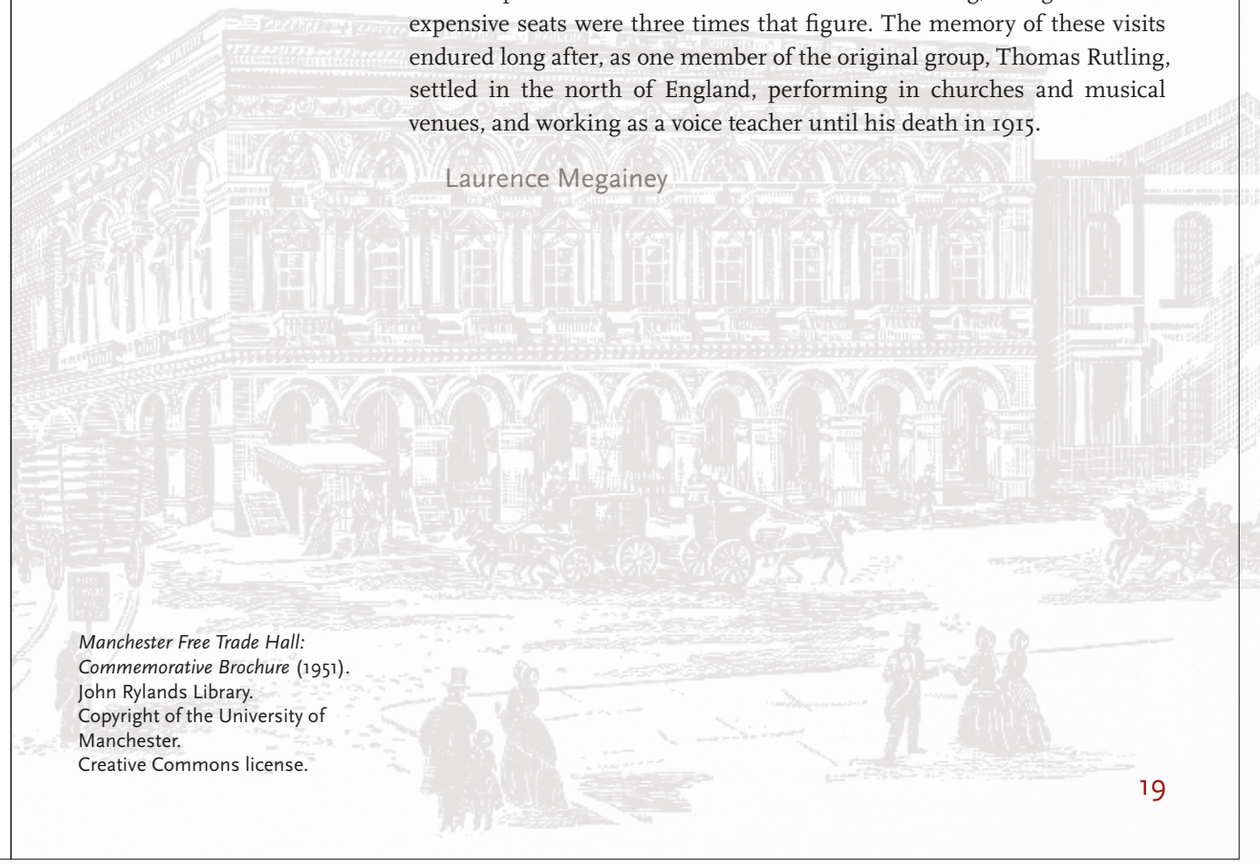
Free Trade Hall
1874, 1877, 1884

In 1873, this bustling industrial city witnessed a remarkable cultural exchange as the Fisk Jubilee Singers, a group of African American students from Fisk University, embarked on their first European tour. The group, formed two years earlier to raise funds for their university, arrived in January 1874 for the first of several visits. Their tour was a triumph against the backdrop of post-Civil War America, a moment of rampant racial violence and a continued struggle for civil rights.

The harmonious voices of the singers and the group's repertoire of spirituals captivated audiences across Europe. At their first concert at the Free Trade Hall commentators described them as 'exquisitely trained,' and their performances raised £1,200, a substantial sum. The *Manchester Guardian* said their performances were 'a triumph of culture over colour,' and further-a-field their majestic voices wowed British audiences. Their popularity was undeniable, and the group sold out concerts from Manchester to London, Paris to Berlin.

In early 1877, the singers returned to Manchester, and their new material was judged to be 'equal in beauty to any of the old favourites.' The cheapest tickets for the latter shows cost a shilling, though the most expensive seats were three times that figure. The memory of these visits endured long after, as one member of the original group, Thomas Rutling, settled in the north of England, performing in churches and musical venues, and working as a voice teacher until his death in 1915.

Laurence Megainey



Manchester Free Trade Hall: Commemorative Brochure (1951). John Rylands Library. Copyright of the University of Manchester. Creative Commons license.

Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show

Manchester Racecourse (1887-1888) and Brooks Bar Whalley Range (1891 and 1903)

Buffalo Bill's Wild West show, a travelling exhibition curated by the Iowan frontiersman William F. Cody, first thrilled audiences in Nebraska in 1883. Its dramatic re-enactment of the violent dispossession of the American Frontier underpinned its celebration in the US. Three tours to England ensued: in 1887-8, 1891-2, and 1902-4. The show stayed at the Manchester Racecourse in Salford for the 'Golden Jubilee' season, from December 1887 to April 1888. It returned for three weeks in July 1891 at Brooks Bar, Whalley Range. Twelve years later the 'Final Farewell Tour of England and Wales by Buffalo Bill's Wild West and Congress of Rough Riders of the World' returned to Whalley Range between April 13 and May 2, 1903. Manchester has a unique claim to, and place within, the global history of this show.

Mancunians regarded the show's performers, Cody later wrote in his memoir, 'more and more as their neighbours and the Wild West as an established institution among them.' Despite the period's racism about the 'vanishing Indian', Mancunians absorbed the Indigenous performers, many of whom were members of the Sioux nation, into their society. In fact, the term 'Salford Sioux' continues to linger in the city's consciousness. The first Native American baby born in the British Isles, Frances Victoria Alexandra, was baptised at St. Clements Church in February 1888, and Mancunians embraced the baby as a 'Lancashire Lass.' In August 1891, two members of the Sioux, Black Heart and Calls the Name, were married at St. Brides Church, Old Trafford, in a ceremony that 'created a great deal of interest.'

BLACK AND WHITE.

THE HOLIDAY SEASON'S GEM.

LONDON, NEW YORK, PARIS, THE WORLD, NEVER SAW SUCH A GRAND PRODUCTION. ART AND NATURE COMBINED. REALISM REACHED AT LAST in the MAGNIFICENT AND UNEQUALLED SCENIC EFFECTS surrounding the animated pictures of WESTERN PIONEER LIFE, presented by

BUFFALO BILL'S
(COLONEL WM. F. CODY) WILD WEST!

A THREE YEARS' TOUR IN AMERICA WITHOUT LEAVING HOME. EDUCATION, INSTRUCTION, ENTERTAINMENT. EVERY MAN, WOMAN, and CHILD SHOULD SEE THAT WHICH CAN NEVER BE SEEN AGAIN IN A LIFETIME. Now being successfully produced in the NEW COLOSSAL BUILDING (Heated by Steam and Lighted by Electricity) Back of Grand Stand

ON MANCHESTER RACECOURSE.

The Preparations of Months Completed. Seating Capacity, 8,000 People. Every Seat a Perfect View. Scenic Revelations in Gigantic Grandeur of Effects.

GENERAL ADMISSION, ONE SHILLING ONLY.
Reserved Seats, 2s.; Stalls, 3s.; Boxes (four), 20s.

TWO PERFORMANCES DAILY. Doors Open 2 p.m. and 7 p.m. Early Doors 1 p.m. and 6 p.m., prices 1s. 6d. Reserves to Extra. Camp Open only from 1 p.m. to 2.15 p.m., and from 6 p.m. to 7.15 p.m. only. 4,000 Shilling Seats. Nothing Extra to Pay after Passing the Door. Exhibitions Commence Sharp at 2.30 p.m. and 7.30 p.m. Carriages can be ordered 4.45 and 9.45. City Booking Office for Reserved Seats, Messrs. Forsyth Bros., Deansgate. Telephone No. 4,011 B.

CALDER & MANSELL, Managers. NATE SALSBURY, Director / JOHN M. BURKE, Gen. Manager | Buffalo Bill's Wild West Co.

Black and White advertisement, Jan. 6, 1888. John Rylands Library. Copyright of the University of Manchester. Creative Commons license.

Street signs erected along a main road in Salford, following the conclusion of the 1887-88 season, remain today. While it is difficult to unearth the stories of Indigenous performers, memories of the encampment that the Oglala Sioux built on the banks of the River Irwell are indicative of the entanglements between British and Indigenous histories in these years.

Georgina Mullins

Chicago White Sox's World Tour

Old Trafford Cricket Ground March 1889

Upon arriving in Manchester from Glasgow on a March morning in 1889, the baseball players of the Chicago White Sox and All-American teams were greeted by a 'curious crowd' of onlookers, proudly welcoming the arrival of the American game as they had done fifteen years earlier, in 1874. Manchester's contemporary reputation as a city enthusiastic about sport was just as true in 1889.

The Spalding World Tour, which had left San Francisco the previous November, had already taken the twenty-two ballplayers to many iconic sites—including the Melbourne Oval, Rome's Villa Borghese, and Lord's Cricket ground. Yet it was the Old Trafford Cricket Ground, opened in 1857, which impressed the team the most. Not only the iconic ground made Manchester stand out, but also the enthusiasm of the 3,500 spectators who attended the exhibition match despite the chilly weather. Starting at 3pm, the spectators repeatedly broke into rapturous applause, many cheering on the White Sox.

ANGLO-FRENCH CLUB
Manchester.

DINNER
to the
CHICAGO & ALL AMERICA
BASE BALL TEAMS.
Friday Mar 22nd 1889.

Anglo-French Club menu, March 22, 1889, Spalding scrapbook collection, New York Public Library.

After the game, the entourage were hosted at the Anglo-French club on St. Peter's Square. The banquet was organized by an American businessman, part of the large community of US residents who resided in Lancashire in these decades, and the dinner was attended by Manchester's US consul, Major Hale. The tour and ensuing celebrations demonstrated Manchester's place in the world, and its enlarged profile as a sporting venue. The tour was an example of successful US cultural diplomacy and cemented an Anglo-American interest in shared athletic endeavours. While the banquet promoted connections between the elite of Manchester society and the US, the baseball game also reached ordinary Mancunians.

Alexander Martin

W. E. B. Du Bois

Chorlton-on-Medlock Town Hall
October 1945

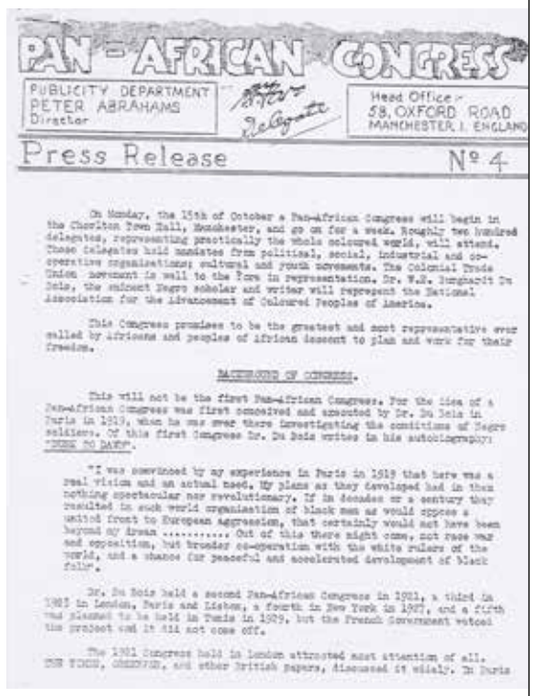
The Fifth Pan-African Congress, which took place at Chorlton-on-Medlock Town Hall in October 1945, provided an outlet for determined Black voices from around the world. It gave shape to African nationalism and changed the course of global civil rights. The six-day meeting demanded 'autonomy and independence' for Africa, inspired African workers to campaign for economic democracy, and opened up discussions around the problems faced by Black women. Two months after the surrender of imperial Japan, this former town hall, decorated with the flags of Ethiopia, Haiti and Liberia, welcomed three future African presidents, including Jomo Kenyatta, Hastings Banda, and Kwame Nkrumah, and more than 200 delegates.

Among those delegates was W. E. B. Du Bois, one of the most prominent civil rights figures of the twentieth century, who, from his base in the US, devoted his career to exploring the problems of race and fighting imperialism. Known as the 'father of Pan-Africanism', Du Bois had been present at the first Pan-African meeting in London in 1900, and a later one in 1911. He was crucial in reviving such gatherings after the First World War, holdings meetings in Paris, Lisbon, and New York. After retiring from his position at Atlanta University in 1944, Du Bois once more reinvigorated such meetings, leading an anti-colonial workshop in Harlem, New York, which drew scholars from across the US, and paved the way for the Manchester Congress.

While Du Bois inspired the Manchester Congress, local preparations for the event were carried out by Manchester-based activists, including businessman T. Ras Makonnen. Makonnen helped to fund the Congress with proceeds from his bookstore, at 58 Oxford Road, and he hosted delegates at his Seven Stars restaurant, both typical of the small businesses that lined this area.

Manchester's Pan-African Congress had a lasting impression on those who attended. It propelled the international struggle against imperialism and brought into existence smaller civil rights groups, such as the West African National Secretariat. At its conclusion Du Bois was unanimously elected international president of the Congress and had an influence on other activists who visited Manchester in subsequent years. As Du Bois later remarked, 'The Congress carried messages which must not die.'

Lucy Hook


PAN-AFRICAN CONGRESS

PUBLICITY DEPARTMENT
PETER ABRAHAMS
Director

Head Office:
58, OXFORD ROAD
MANCHESTER 1, ENGLAND

Press Release Nº 4

On Monday, the 15th of October a Pan-African Congress will begin in the Chorlton Town Hall, Manchester, and go on for a week. Roughly two hundred delegates, representing practically the whole coloured world, will attend. Those delegates hold mandates from political, social, industrial and co-operative organisations; cultural and youth movements. The Colonial Trade Union movement is well to the fore in representation. Dr. W.E. Burghardt Du Bois, the eminent Negro scholar and writer will represent the National Association for the Advancement of Coloured Peoples of America.

This Congress promises to be the greatest and most representative ever called by Africans and peoples of African descent to plan and work for their freedom.

BACKGROUND OF CONGRESS.

This will not be the first Pan-African Congress. For the idea of a Pan-African Congress was first conceived and executed by Dr. Du Bois in Paris in 1919, when he was over there investigating the conditions of Negro soldiers. Of this first Congress Dr. Du Bois writes in his autobiography: "DUSK OF DAWN".

"I was convinced by my experience in Paris in 1919 that here was a real vision and an actual need. My plans as they developed had in them nothing spectacular nor revolutionary. If in decades or a century they resulted in such world organization of black men as would oppose a united front to European aggression, that certainly would not have been beyond my dream ..... Out of this there might come, not race war and opposition, but broader co-operation with the white rulers of the world, and a chance for peaceful and accelerated development of black folk".

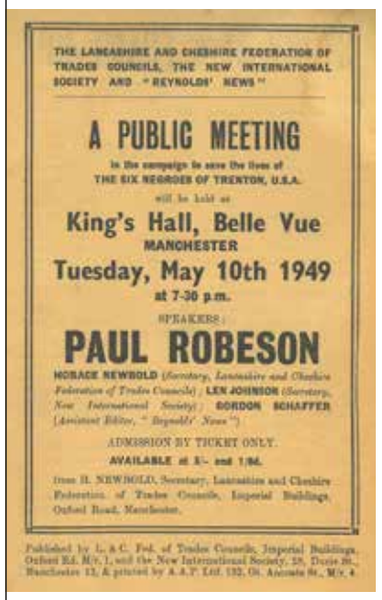
Dr. Du Bois held a second Pan-African Congress in 1921, a third in 1923 in London, Paris and Lisbon, a fourth in New York in 1927, and a fifth was planned to be held in Tunis in 1929, but the French Government vetoed the project and it did not come off.

The 1921 Congress held in London attracted most attention of all. THE TIMES, GUARDIAN, and other British papers, discussed it widely. Dr Du Bois

Pan African Congress, Press Release #4, October 1945. Image courtesy of the Ahmed Iqbal Ullah RACE Centre, Manchester.

Paul Robeson

King's Hall, Belle Vue
May 1949


THE LANCASHIRE AND CHESHIRE FEDERATION OF TRADES COUNCILS, THE NEW INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY AND "REYNOLDS' NEWS"

A PUBLIC MEETING

in the campaign to save the lives of THE SIX NEGROES OF TRENTON, U.S.A.

will be held at

King's Hall, Belle Vue
MANCHESTER
Tuesday, May 10th 1949
at 7-30 p.m.

SPEAKERS:

PAUL ROBESON

HORACE NEWBOLD (Secretary, Lancashire and Cheshire Federation of Trades Councils); LEN JOHNSON (Secretary, New International Society); GORDON SCHAFFER (Assistant Editor, "Reynolds' News").

ADMISSION BY TICKET ONLY.

AVAILABLE at 5/- and 1/6d.

from H. NEWBOLD, Secretary, Lancashire and Cheshire Federation of Trades Councils, Imperial Buildings, Oxford Road, Manchester.

Published by L. & C. Fed. of Trades Councils, Imperial Buildings, Oxford Rd., M/r. 1, and the New International Society, 28, Dale St., Manchester 12, & printed by A. & P. Ltd. 132, Gt. Ancoats St., M/r. 4

King's Hall advertisement, May 10, 1949, AG Len Johnson. Courtesy of the Working Class Movement Library.

Paul Robeson was an African American artist and activist whose voice extended beyond the borders of United States, captivating audiences across the globe. In May 1949, Robeson visited Manchester at the invitation of the city's largely white, Communist-leaning New International Society in Moss Side. His visit took place shortly after his speech at the Paris Peace Congress, where he implied that African Americans would refuse to support America in a war against the Soviet Union. While Robeson's friend and fellow Congress speaker W. E. B. Du Bois reacted to his speech with enthusiasm, for other commentators, Robeson's words were unwelcome. This was a moment when, amid rampant anti-Communist persecution, mainstream media and even the Black press turned on him, labelling Robeson 'a traitor to his country.'

Three weeks after the Paris speech, on May 10, 1949, Robeson stepped onto the platform at King's Hall, Belle Vue, to sing and speak out about the case of the 'Trenton Six,' a group of African American men convicted on insubstantial evidence for the murder of a white shopkeeper. This was neither Robeson's first nor last visit to Manchester. The star had performed in the city in the 1930s, and he would return in 1958 to sing at the Free Trade Hall. Yet Robeson's 1949 visit marked a critical moment in Manchester's history, partly due to the controversy it sparked in local communities. The New International Society claimed his appearance as one of the most important in their history. By contrast, Peter Milliard, president of Manchester's Pan African Federation, which was crucial to the organization of the 1945 conference, called it a failure for 'our Trenton lads.'

Why such contradictory responses? Robeson's visit brought the New International Society prestige, but it also caused criticism from members of the city's Black and minority communities. The Pan-African Federation, formed in 1944, had hoped to 'give an African welcome to Mr Robeson'; this 'voice of Black Manchester', to which Robeson's close associate Du Bois was the accredited representative, was offended that a largely non-Black organisation had usurped their position. Placing this globally significant figure in the context of Manchester's local and social history highlights the tensions between a class-based Communist internationalism and the powerful movements towards Black solidarity that existed across the city. Robeson's 1949 visit offers insight into Manchester's political and cultural groups: how they saw themselves, and each other, in relation to wider freedom movements that were sweeping across a rapidly decolonising world.

Anya Carr

Blues and Gospel Train

Wilbraham Road Station
May 1964

South of the city centre lies Wilbraham Road Station, built in 1892 and once part of the busy Fallowfield Loop Line, and now a shared-use path for runners and cyclists. But in May 1964, this location was chosen for one of the most iconic concerts of the British Blues Revival. The concert in question was the Blues and Gospel Train Performance, a musical television special directed by Granada producer Johnny Hamp. It featured leading American musicians, such as Sister Rosetta Tharpe, Cousin Joe, Sonny Terry & Brownie McGhee, and Muddy Waters, who were touring Britain and Europe at the time. It is no surprise Manchester was chosen for the venue of the concert, as the city had hosted the American Folk Blues and Gospel Tour of Europe the previous year. As one newspaper noted, these musicians were 'welcomed like old friends.'

Hamp staged the concert on the station platform, positioning the musicians on one side, and the audience of 200 fans, most of whom had journeyed from Central Station, what is now the Convention Complex, opposite. The stage was designed to fit with British ideas of a southern US railway station a century earlier, being renamed 'Chorltonville,' and with bales of cotton, crates, and wanted posters featured prominently. Muddy Waters opened the concert, but the interruption of heavy rainfall created one of the show's highlights, with Sister Rosetta Tharpe changing her first number to 'Didn't it Rain.' The concert made clear how many young people were listening to American music, which in turn created a consciousness among young people about the struggles of African Americans. For many among this audience, consuming American blues music was also an expression of support for civil rights. The Blues and Gospel Train performance was televised, and a 40-minute special was broadcast some months later in August, reaching more than 12 million viewers, and influencing musicians such as Keith Richards and Eric Clapton. The concert foregrounded the popularity of the blues among young people around Manchester, and beyond, and renewed connections between the US and Manchester.

Alice Spencer

Sister Rosetta Tharpe, May 1964, Wilbraham Road Station. Copyright of Bridgeman Images. See back cover also.

Malcolm X

University of Manchester
December 1964

Malcolm X at the University of Manchester, December 1964, Manchester Libraries, Information and Archives. Courtesy of Manchester Libraries, Information and Archives, Manchester City Council.

When Malcolm X spoke at the University of Manchester's Main Debating Hall on December 4, 1964, he offered a message of Black Power. This was Malcolm's third visit to England—his first since the US Civil Rights Act was passed in July 1964—and it helped to cement his place within a global civil rights struggle.

The speech was one of several he gave at British Universities, commencing with his visit to the Oxford Union, and followed by one at the University of Sheffield. It came about because student Ebrahimsa Mohammed had contacted the Federation of Islamic Student Societies (FOSIS) and invited him speak. Malcolm's removal from the Nation of Islam in March 1964, ironically deepened his engagement with Islam, and this was demonstrated during his brief visit to Manchester. He stayed at FOSIS Treasurer Rajah Hoosain's house in Withington, and attended Friday Prayer at the Victoria Park Mosque. His speech was also preceded by lunch at the Bombay Restaurant, 80 Upper Brook Street, which was run by Nazir Uddin, a member of the city's Islamic Cultural Centre. The lunch group was joined by other FOSIS members, as well as the University's newly-appointed professor of sociology, Peter Worsley, whose book, *The Third World* (1964), had just been published.

Uncertainty about Malcolm's visit remained until two days before it happened, and posters advertising the event stated only 'Malcom X Speaks.' They were nevertheless effective as the Hall was overflowing before his arrival. Malcolm's speech in Manchester focused mainly on his political aspirations, including taking his Organization of Afro-American Unity (OAAU), established following his departure from the Nation of Islam, to the UN, an ambition halted by his assassination in February 1965.

Malcolm's visit was not covered by the University's student newspaper, but there were interviews done before and after the event by local print media, which echoed British television's claims about the extremism of such figures. Malcolm's visit to Manchester was brief, and afterwards he was rushed to the University of Sheffield before heading by train to London, where on December 6, 1964, he briefly crossed paths with Martin Luther King, Jr., on his way to collect a Nobel Peace Prize.

Rebekah Stockman

Background:
Bombay Restaurant, c1959, Manchester Libraries, Information and Archives. Courtesy of Manchester Libraries, Information and Archives, Manchester City Council.

Bob Dylan

Free Trade Hall
May 1966

Bob Dylan, the American folk and rock musician, changed the direction of modern music when he played electric at the Manchester Free Trade Hall. The event is important in capturing the wide appeal that American music had among young British people in the mid-1960s, and for the divergent reactions it elicited among traditionalist and modernist fans.

Dylan first toured the UK in 1962, though he was much better known when he returned two years later. His rising fame was based on the growing popularity of folk music among young people, and also Dylan's association with the '63 March on Washington, where he had played alongside Joan Baez. For British fans, Dylan's music was closely tied to contemporary US politics. His song 'Blowin' in the Wind' was widely regarded as an anthem of civil rights, and his track 'Only a Pawn in Their Game', taken from his album, *The Times They Are A-Changin'* (1964), dealt with the assassination of activist Medgar Evers.

Around 1965, Dylan began to experiment with his sound, and increasingly added drums and backing guitars to tracks. Fans who preferred Dylan's traditional folk sound were quick to voice their opposition. At the Newport festival in July 1965, he was heckled for shifting from acoustic to electric. By the time he came to Britain in 1966, tensions were high. In Edinburgh members of the young Communist League insisted that if he continue to play electric, they would boycott the event, and the University of Manchester's folk music society made similar claims.

For much of the first half of his much-anticipated concert at the Free Trade Hall on May 17, 1966, Dylan played solo. The familiar opening acoustic track, 'She Belongs to Me', settled the crowd, while staples such as 'It's All Over Now, Baby Blue' offered further reassurance. Journalist C. P. Lee tells us that an air of satisfaction hung over the crowd by the intermission. But in the concert's second half, Dylan opted for an electric rendition of "I Don't Believe You,' prompting slow clapping and some swearing from the audience. A few more songs of uneasy reaction came before a cry of "Judas!" pierced the evening's air. Manchester's folk traditionalists thought Dylan had sold out, and their verdict was captured by the Columbia Record sound engineers.

The moment marks an emphatic point in a century of American live music across Manchester, and particularly at the Free Trade Hall. It is a history that runs from the Fisk Jubilee Singers through Paul Robeson and on to Dylan, and which crosses popular music with civil rights activism and shifting attitudes towards form.

Harry Varley

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