

Click on a place to find out about the people who lived there.

[More Hitchin](#)

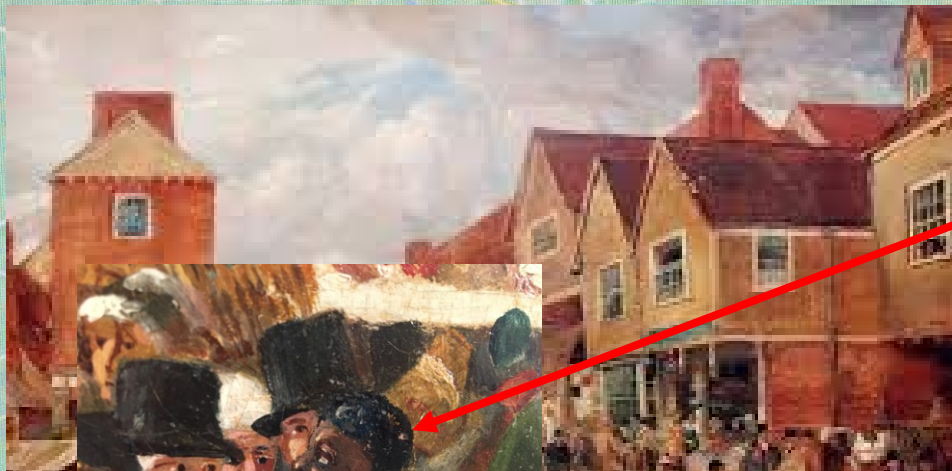
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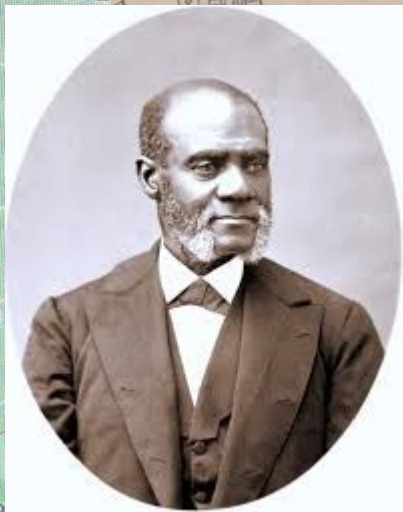
These two pictures show Black people living in Hitchin and attending anti slavery meetings. The Market Place in 1841 by Samuel Lucas shows many people he knew well, including this mystery gentleman delivering a letter. We don't know his name but we do know he was in Hitchin during the campaigns against slavery.



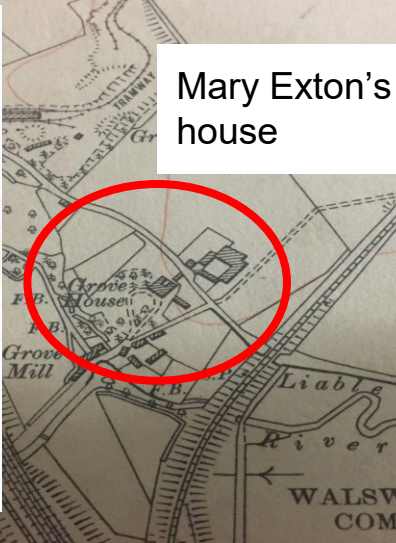
The young man is from 1852 and looks younger than the man in the market. He is listening to a reading of Uncle Tom's Cabin. This book helped turn people against slavery in America. In Hitchin people boycotted sugar and cotton to cut off funds from slave owners.



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Mary Exton's house



Henry Highland Garnett was a very famous ex slave. He came to Hitchin to talk about slavery in America and stayed with Mary Exton at Grove House. His lectures were about not buying the goods produced by slaves, including cotton, sugar and tobacco.

Mr Garnett worked for the anti-slavery movement and helped set up a new country in Africa for freed American slaves. This country, Liberia, has the stripes of the American flag and one star.

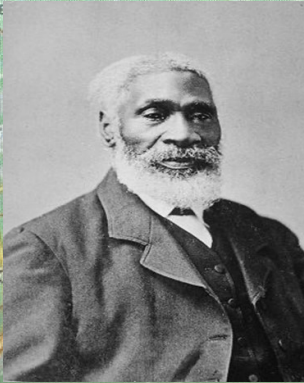
The Real Uncle Tom

25 years after Uncle Tom's Cabin was read to the people of Hitchin, the man whose life story inspired the book came to the town.

Josiah Henson visited Hitchin on a lecture tour of the UK. He was a very old man of 83 then, but he lived until he was 93.

He was a hero to many people in the UK who had read Uncle Tom's Cabin and knew he was the real life Uncle Tom.

Perhaps the children and grandchildren of the men in the Hitchin pictures went to see this famous black gentleman?



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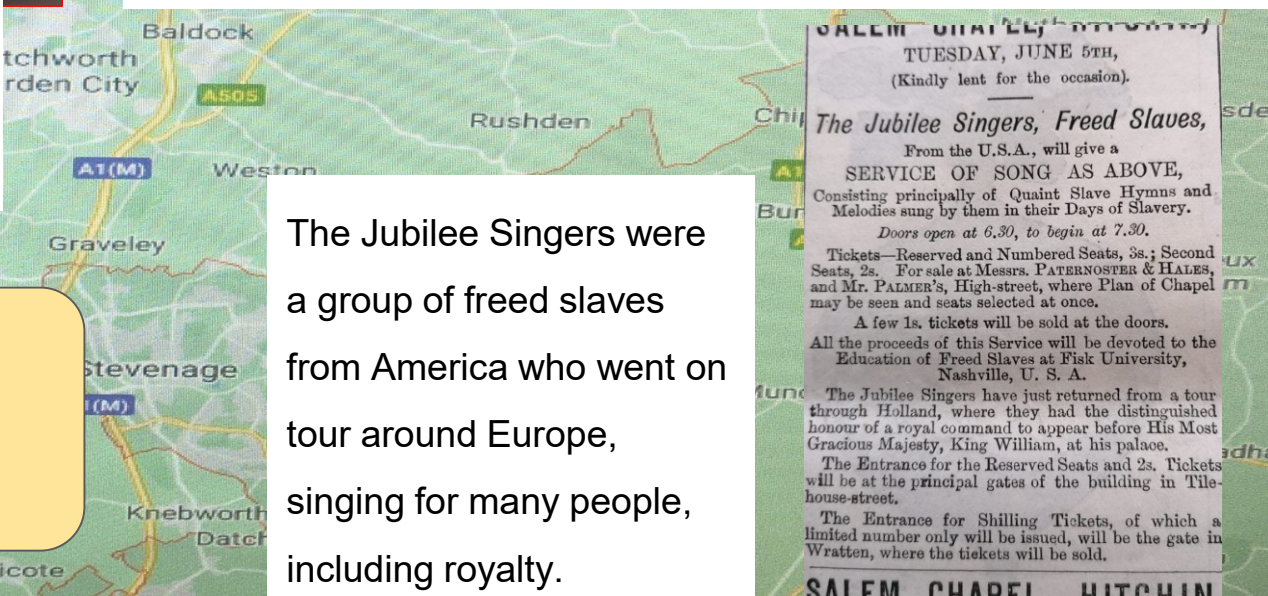
1881 British Census Transcription - Cooperative History Programme

HITCHIN		HITCHIN		HITCHIN		HITCHIN		HITCHIN		HITCHIN	
NAME	RELATION	AGE	SEX	RELIGION	EDUCATION	INDUSTRY	PROFESSION	REMARKS	REMARKS	REMARKS	REMARKS
ROBERT	HEAD	40	M	Angl	Unkn	...	...	...	...	...	...
MARY	WIFE	38	F	Angl	Unkn	...	...	...	...	...	...
FRANK	SON	14	M	Angl	Unkn	...	...	...	...	...	...
GEORGE	SON	12	M	Angl	Unkn	...	...	...	...	...	...
CHARLES	SON	10	M	Angl	Unkn	...	...	...	...	...	...
EMILY	DAUGHTER	8	F	Angl	Unkn	...	...	...	...	...	...
ROSE E	DAUGHTER	18	F	Angl	Unkn	...	...	...	...	...	...
HENRY W	SON	18	M	Angl	Unkn	...	...	...	...	...	...
WILLIAM	HEAD	50	M	Angl	Unkn	...	...	...	...	...	...
MARIA	WIFE	48	F	Angl	Unkn	...	...	...	...	...	...
ALYDORAH	DAUGHTER	17	F	Angl	Unkn	...	...	...	...	...	...
WILLIAM	HEAD	40	M	Angl	Unkn	...	...	...	...	...	...
LOWAN	WIFE	38	F	Angl	Unkn	...	...	...	...	...	...
GEORGE	SON	14	M	Angl	Unkn	...	...	...	...	...	...
WILLIAM	SON	12	M	Angl	Unkn	...	...	...	...	...	...
SARAH	DAUGHTER	10	F	Angl	Unkn	...	...	...	...	...	...
LIZZIE	DAUGHTER	8	F	Angl	Unkn	...	...	...	...	...	...
HENRY	HEAD	30	M	Angl	Unkn	...	...	...	...	...	...
SARAH J	WIFE	28	F	Angl	Unkn	...	...	...	...	...	...
HENRY	SON	1	M	Angl	Unkn	...	...	...	...	...	...
DANIEL	SON	1	M	Angl	Unkn	...	...	...	...	...	...

In Highbury Hill, we have a lady born in the East Indies (possibly Sri Lanka or Myanmar). Ordinary people living in Hitchin came from many places.

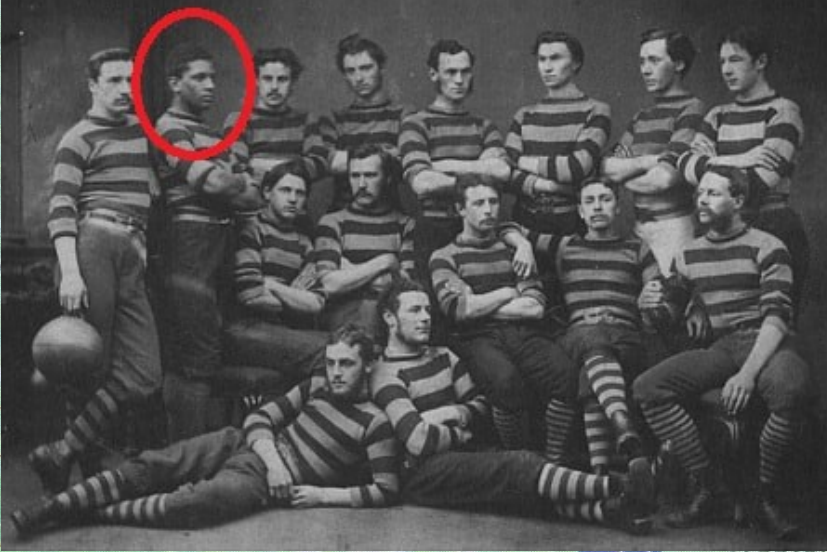
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We don't know the names of the first Black people who lived in this area. In fact scientists now believe that the first people to live in Britain and Europe were dark skinned. After these people, many others crossed into Britain. In Roman times, this included two people born in Africa. We know that they were wealthy enough to be buried in Baldock after long lives. They were possibly merchants. These two African people are the first Black residents of North Herts we have evidence for.



The Jubilee Singers were a group of freed slaves from America who went on tour around Europe, singing for many people, including royalty.

SALEM CHAPEL, HITCHIN.
 TUESDAY, JUNE 5TH,
 (Kindly lent for the occasion).
The Jubilee Singers, Freed Slaves,
 From the U.S.A., will give a
SERVICE OF SONG AS ABOVE,
 Consisting principally of Quaint Slave Hymns and Melodies sung by them in their Days of Slavery.
 Doors open at 6.30, to begin at 7.30.
 Tickets—Reserved and Numbered Seats, 3s.; Second Seats, 2s. For sale at Messrs. PATERNOSTER & HALES, and Mr. PALMER'S, High-street, where Plan of Chapel may be seen and seats selected at once.
 A few 1s. tickets will be sold at the doors.
 All the proceeds of this Service will be devoted to the Education of Freed Slaves at Fisk University, Nashville, U. S. A.
 The Jubilee Singers have just returned from a tour through Holland, where they had the distinguished honour of a royal command to appear before His Most Gracious Majesty, King William, at his palace.
 The Entrance for the Reserved Seats and 2s. Tickets will be at the principal gates of the building in Tile-house-street.
 The Entrance for Shilling Tickets, of which a limited number only will be issued, will be the gate in Wratten, where the tickets will be sold.
SALEM CHAPEL, HITCHIN.



James George Robertson (about 1854 – 1900) was a Scottish rugby union player. **He was the first Black rugby union player in the world.**

In 1880, he married Emily Maud. Robertson purchased a medical practice in Ashwell, Hertfordshire in 1894. He became President of Ashwell Tennis Club and a member of the committee of the local cricket club.

He died suddenly at home in February 1900, aged 46, and is buried in the local churchyard.

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Roger Britten was a printer. He was born in Guyana in 1840 and came to England as a young child with his adopted family. **He became the first named Black resident of Royston and was printer of the Royston Crow.** He demonstrated printing at the Royston Exhibition in 1856.

Roger fell in love and married Fanny Clarke, who was white and a 24 year old dressmaker. He had met her in Royston. Her father was the coachman to the Phillips family who owned the town's brewery. Roger and Fanny were married at St Saviour's Church in Pimlico (London) in October 1865.

They had three children, and he died from pneumonia aged 43. We have not been able to find a photograph of Roger.

We think that this lady may be Sarah Goodchild, who was landlady of the Saracen's Head in Baldock. She lived there with her husband. This Black lady is standing outside the pub (you can see part of the sign).

Sarah was born in Baldock. Without this photograph, you would not suspect that this respected member of the local community may have been Black.

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