**The story of the Haynes family of Reading**

In the 1780s, General Robert Haynes, who was born on a sugar plantation in Barbados, wrote a diary in which he described the history of his family, starting with Richard Haynes of Berkshire, near Reading. Robert was proud of his family history and how he could trace it back so far. He saw his family as of *‘high respectability’.*

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| 1500 | Richard Haynes and his wife Thomasine lived in Foxley Grange, near Reading. They had seven children, one daughter and six sons, one of whom worked in the household of Queen Elizabeth I.  |
| 1540s–1635 | Several **generations** of the Haynes family lived in and around Reading and Hackney in London. Records tell us that they were tradesmen, merchants and fishmongers. There is evidence of some members of the family being well educated. By the 1600s, the family was fairly well-off.  |
| 1635 | Richard Haynes sailed on *The Expedition* from London to Barbados. He left England during Oliver Cromwell’s rule because he’d been a supporter of the King during the English Civil War. He became a planter, originally of tobacco and cotton, using **indentured** labour from Britain, but this wasn’t profitable enough so planters on Barbados started using enslaved Africans to grow sugar. |
| 1640s | Two men, Robert and William Haynes, possibly father and son, purchased land in Barbados, which was the start of what became the Newcastle Estate.  |
| 1647 | An **epidemic** hit Barbados and thousands of settlers died; it is probable that some of the family was killed but it is not known for sure. |
| 1674 | Elizabeth Haynes owned the Haynes property. She lived through difficult times in Barbados, where there was a plague of locusts in 1663, the Bridgetown fire and major hurricane in 1667, a **drought** in 1668 and torrential rain in 1669. Elizabeth’s will showed that she left a significant amount of sugar to her family. It is likely that she died in the hurricane that hit Barbados in 1675, destroying most of the island. |
| 1680s–1720s | Generations of the Haynes family in Barbados lived as plantation owners, and over time purchased more land to grow the Newcastle plantation further. Records show that the family’s wealth was growing.  |
| 1739 | Captain Robert Haynes inherited the Newcastle plantation when his father died. From the 1730s, all Barbadian freemen had to join the **militia** (a military force that supports the army) to fight against France in a war. In 1750, Captain Robert Haynes was one of Barbados’s biggest plantation owners. He died at the young age of 33, possibly of **smallpox**. |
| 1746 | Richard Downes Haynes inherited the Newcastle plantation young (his father died when he was six), and he went on to become a **Major General** in the Barbadian militia, and a Representative to the **House of Assembly.** |
| 1780s | A law was proposed to the House of Representatives to make the killing of an enslaved African by their owner count legally as murder, but Major General Haynes strongly opposed this and the law was rejected. It was not until 1805 that the killing of an enslaved African became legally classed as murder.Around this time there was also a devastating hurricane, which did a huge amount of damage to Barbados. The damage done to Haynes property totalled more than £1.3 million in today’s money.  |
| 1793 | Robert Haynes (the diary-writer) inherited his father’s land, the Newcastle plantation. He recorded that there were 111 slaves on the plantation, and that the total value of all slaves, cattle and horses was £18,000 (over £1.3 million in today’s money). Robert Haynes was elected to the House of Representatives in his father’s place. By 1804, he upgraded the plantation house and filled it with silver plates and other valuables. Robert spent much of his life expanding the size of the land he owned and getting richer.  |
| 1806 | Robert Haynes, who fully supported slavery, opposed the slave *trade*, and wrote on 16 September, ‘*I sincerely* ***rejoiced*** *at the abolition of the slave trade… I sincerely wish the trade had been abolished 20 years ago.’* There is evidence that Haynes was opposed to abusing the enslaved, but also that he introduced laws in the House of Assembly to stop free people of African descent buying land or property.  |
| 1808–10 | Robert Haynes left Barbados to move to England, leaving the overseer in charge of the Newcastle plantation. He returned two years later, and purchased Clifton Hall (and plantation) for £35,350 (over £1.5 million in today’s money). He updated the house and plantation and commented that ‘*negroes [were] under good discipline, but happily, and rapidly increasing’.* In his diary, Haynes wrote of his worries about the end of slavery and the impact that it would have on the family’s wealth. |
| 1812 | Robert Haynes bought the Bath Estate for £37,100 (over £1.6 million in today’s money), including its 212 slaves.  |
| 1816 | The Easter Rebellion happened, led by African-born slave Bussa. Robert Haynes was a general in the Barbadian militia when the rebellion broke out. Slaves set fire to the plantations all over the southern half of the island. The slaves **looted** hardware stores and militia stores. Nearly 40 plantations’ cane fields were set on fire and many plantations saw thousands of pounds of damage. Between 500 and 1,000 slaves were killed in the fighting against the militia and 140 slaves were executed afterwards. Haynes received recognition for his importance in putting down the rebellion. |
| 1825 | Robert Haynes was **unanimously** elected Speaker of the House of Assembly in Barbados. In this role, he opposed the banning of flogging female slaves as he said that they were more disobedient than male slaves and he believed that not whipping them would make them worse. |
| 1830 | In 1830, a friend of Robert Haynes and his wife named their first son Robert Haynes after ‘the island’s most **prominent** citizen’. |
| 1833 | Robert Haynes was awarded over £6,044 as compensation for loss of property on abolition of the slave trade. This is the equivalent of £409,880 in today’s money. |
| 1835  | Robert Haynes decided to break his ties with Barbados and went about selling his estates on Barbados. |
| 1835  | Robert Haynes and his family left Barbados for good to move to Reading. |
| By 1851 | Robert Haynes’ wife had died and he remarried a woman called Anna. They moved to Reading and settled at 1 Albion Place, Reading, where they show up on the 1851 **census.** |