



# The History of Mary Prince: A West Indian Slave (A Slave Narrative)

*Mary Prince, Asa-Asa*

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## The History of Mary Prince

### A West Indian Slave

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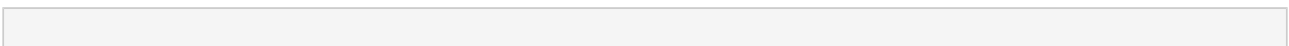
### A SLAVE NARRATIVE

Mary Prince (c. 1788-after 1833) was born in Devonshire Parish, Bermuda, to an enslaved family of African descent. While she was later living in London, her autobiography, *The History of Mary Prince* (1831), was the first account of the life of a black woman to be published in the United Kingdom.

Belonging to the genre of slave narratives, this first-hand description of the brutalities of enslavement, released at a time when slavery was still legal in Bermuda and British Caribbean colonies, had a galvanising effect on the anti-slavery movement. It went through three printings in the first year. Prince had her account transcribed while living and working in England at the home of Thomas Pringle and created the Anti-Slavery Society. She had gone to London with her master and his family in 1828 from Antigua.

I was born at Brackish-Pond, in Bermuda, on a farm belonging to Mr. Charles Myners. My mother was a household slave; and my father, whose name was Prince, was a sawyer belonging to Mr. Trimmingham, a ship-builder at Crow-Lane. When I was an infant, old Mr. Myners died, and there was a division of the slaves and other property among the family. I was bought along with my mother by old Captain Darrel, and given to his grandchild, little Miss Betsey Williams. Captain Williams, Mr. Darrel's son-in-law, was master of a vessel which traded to several places in America and the West Indies, and he was seldom at home long together.

Mrs. Williams was a kind-hearted good woman, and she treated all her slaves well. She had only one daughter, Miss Betsey, for whom I was purchased, and who was about my own age. I was made quite a pet of by Miss Betsey, and loved her very much. She used to lead me about by the hand, and call me her little nigger. This was the happiest period of my life; for I was too young to understand rightly my condition as a slave, and too thoughtless and full of spirits to look forward to the days of toil and sorrow.



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