

Black Women and Female Abolitionists in Print

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Article abstract

The WPHP Monthly Mercury is the podcast for the Women's Print History Project, a bibliographical database that seeks to provide a comprehensive account of women's involvement in print in a long Romantic period. The podcast provides us with an opportunity to develop in-depth analyses of our data. In the August 2020 episode, "Black Women and Female Abolitionists in Print," the entire team of the WPHP joins hosts Kandice Sharren and Kate Moffatt to speak to the Black Women's and Abolitionist Print History Spotlight Series published on the WPHP website between June 19 and July 31, 2020. The WPHP team cameos are followed by a discussion between the hosts about the common themes of the spotlights produced. We then analyze some of the common threads across the spotlights, including how the people, firms and titles featured were documented and framed within a predominantly white transatlantic print culture. We conclude by considering some strategies for working within the constraints of the resources that we rely on and adapting our own data model to be more transparent and inclusive. This textual supplement includes a description of the episode, links to all records in the WPHP database referenced in the episode, resources relevant to this topic, our works cited list, and suggestions for further reading.

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Romanticism on the Net

Black Women and Female Abolitionists in Print

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Abstract

The *WPHP Monthly Mercury* is the podcast for the *Women's Print History Project*, a bibliographical database that seeks to provide a comprehensive account of women's involvement in print in a long Romantic period. The podcast provides us with an opportunity to develop in-depth analyses of our data. In the August 2020 episode, "Black Women and Female Abolitionists in Print," the entire team of the *WPHP* joins hosts Kandice Sharren and Kate Moffatt to speak to the Black Women's and Abolitionist Print History Spotlight Series published on the *WPHP* website between June 19 and July 31, 2020. The *WPHP* team cameos are followed by a discussion between the hosts about the common themes of the spotlights produced. We then analyze some of the common threads across the spotlights, including how the people, firms and titles featured were documented and framed within a predominantly white transatlantic print culture. We conclude by considering some strategies for working within the constraints of the resources that we rely on and adapting our own data model to be more transparent and inclusive. This textual supplement includes a description of the episode, links to all records in the *WPHP* database referenced in the episode, resources relevant to this topic, our works cited list, and suggestions for further reading.

Biographical Note

Kandice Sharren completed her PhD in English at Simon Fraser University in 2018. Her research investigates the relationship between the material features of the printed book and narrative experimentation during the Romantic period. She is the Lead Editor for the *Women's Print History Project*.

Kate Moffatt has been the Firm Editor for the *Women's Print History Project* since 2016. She completed her MA at Simon Fraser University in 2019. Her research focuses on women's pedestrianism in the long eighteenth century.

Podcast Episode Description

1. In this double episode of *The WPHP Monthly Mercury*, Episode 3: Black Women and Female Abolitionists in Print (August 2020), hosts Kandice Sharren and Kate Moffatt are joined by the entire team of the *WPHP* to speak to the Black Women's and Abolition Print History Spotlight Series¹ that we published on the *WPHP* site between June 19 and July 31 in response to the Black Lives Matter movement and the protests that erupted across the globe in response to police brutality and the murder of George Floyd on May 25, 2020. Featuring poet Phillis Wheatley,² [bookseller Ann Sancho](#), author [Mary Prince](#), abolitionists [Elizabeth Heyrick](#) and [Lydia Maria Child](#), orator [Maria W. Stewart](#), and [the anonymous novel *The Woman of Colour*](#), these spotlights sought to celebrate and make visible Black women's and radical abolitionist history as it appeared print during the Romantic period. In this episode, we discuss what the common threads and challenges we faced can tell us about Black women's lives and the abolitionist movement in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.
2. For more information, as well as links to the spotlight series, see the blog post on the *WPHP* website: <https://womensprinthistoryproject.com/blog/post/34>.

“Black Women and Female Abolitionists in Print”

3. The *WPHP Monthly Mercury* dives into the details of working on *The Women's Print History Project*, a bibliographical database that traces women's involvement in print between 1700 and 1836. Sharing the stories of prolific and not-so-prolific women authors and the oft-widowed women publishers, printers, and booksellers of the period, as well as the rabbit-hole-filled processes of recovery and the adventures of our research assistants, our project manager, and our project director, *The WPHP Monthly Mercury* centres the discovery of women and their work.

4. In this month's double episode of *The WPHP Monthly Mercury*, "Black Women and Female Abolitionists in Print", the entire team of the *WPHP* joins hosts Kandice Sharren and Kate Moffatt to speak to the [Black Women's and Abolitionist Print History Spotlight Series](#) that we published on the *WPHP* website between June 19 and July 31. You can listen to this episode on [Apple](#), [Spotify](#), [Stitcher](#), [Google Podcasts](#), and other podcast apps, available via [Buzzsprout](#).
5. In response to and in support of the Black Lives Matter movement, this spotlight series is focused on the lives of, and books published by, three Black women authors during our period—Mary Prince, Phillis Wheatley, and Maria W. Stewart—as well as the ways in which white female abolitionists Lydia Maria Child and Elizabeth Heyrick exploited print's powerful potential for eliminating slavery. The series also includes a spotlight on the anonymous 1808 novel, *The Woman of Colour*, and a spotlight on the one Black woman bookseller we have been able to identify thus far during our period—Ann Sancho, of whom we spoke in the July 2020 episode, "Women in the Imprints."
6. In this episode, each member of our team speaks to the spotlight that they authored. You'll hear from one of our *WPHP Monthly Mercury* hosts and Lead Editor, Kandice Sharren, about the role of authorship in her spotlight on the anonymous 1808 novel *The Woman of Colour*, "[The Woman of Colour: Don't Break the \(Attribution\) Chain](#)"; our other podcast host and Lead Editor of Firms, Kate Moffatt, about the question of collecting and presenting racial data provoked by her spotlight on the Black woman bookseller, Ann Sancho, "[A Search for Firm Evidence: Ann Sancho, Bookseller](#)"; Sara Penn, research assistant, about the language of enslavement and the complexity of identifying contributors and determining genre that arose while writing her spotlight, "[The First Slave Narrative by a Woman: The History of Mary Prince, a West Indian Slave](#)"; Amanda

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Law, research assistant, about the systemic racism that shaped the publication process for Phillis Wheatley, which Amanda discusses in detail in her spotlight “[The Transatlantic Publication of Phillis Wheatley’s *Poems on Various Subjects, Religious and Moral*](#)”; Victoria DeHart, research assistant, about women’s involvement in the radical branch of the abolition movement known as “immediatism,” explained more fully in her spotlight “[Elizabeth Heyrick, Mother of Immediatism](#)”; our Project Director, Michelle Levy, about the impact of uneven digitization and the intermixture of oral and print culture in the publications of Black author Maria W. Stewart in her spotlight, “[Maria W. Stewart, Activist for ‘African rights and liberty’](#)”; and from Hanieh Ghaderi, research assistant, on her spotlight, co-written with Kandice Sharren, “[Lydia Maria Child’s *Radical Appeal*](#),” about the experience of working on a feminist title from the 1830s as a current Gender Studies student.

7. The episode examines the challenges faced and connections made in the writing of these spotlights, as well as the many learnings that both the spotlights and the creation of this episode prompted. From the frustrations with the gaps in records about Black women, to the transatlanticism of abolition, to the question of how to responsibly and ethically account for racial data in the *WPHP*, “Black Women and Female Abolitionists in Print” responds to the ethos of the current moment, centring the voices of Black people and the need for immediate and radical change while acknowledging how bibliography can guide us to a clearer understanding of the interactions between gender, race, abolition, and print.

Acknowledgements

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Black Women's and Abolitionist Print History Spotlight Series

[Black Women's and Abolitionist Print History Spotlight Series](#) [Series Introduction]

["The Woman of Colour: Don't Break the \(Attribution\) Chain"](#) by Kandice Sharren

["A Search for Firm Evidence: Ann Sancho, Bookseller"](#) by Kate Moffatt

["The First Slave Narrative by a Woman: *The History of Mary Prince, a West Indian Slave*"](#) by Sara Penn

["The Transatlantic Publication of Phillis Wheatley's *Poems on Various Subjects, Religious and Moral*"](#)
by Amanda Law

["Elizabeth Heyrick, Mother of Immediatism"](#) by Victoria DeHart

["Maria W. Stewart, Activist for 'African rights and liberty'"](#) by Michelle Levy

["Lydia Maria Child's Radical *Appeal*"](#) by Hanieh Ghaderi and Kandice Sharren

WPHP entries mentioned in this episode, in the order they are referenced

[Ann Sancho](#) (firm, bookseller)

[Ann Sancho](#) (person, bookseller)

[Mary Prince](#) (person, author)

[Phillis Wheatley](#) (person, author)

[The Woman of Colour](#) (title)

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[Elizabeth Heyrick](#) (person, author)

[Lydia Maria Child](#) (person, author)

[Hobomok](#) (title)

[Appeal in Favor of That Class of Americans Called Africans](#) (title)

[Maria W. Stewart](#) (person, author)

[Productions of Mrs. Maria W. Stewart](#) (title)

[Light and Shade](#) (title)

[The Aunt and the Niece](#) (title)

[Eversfield Abbey](#) (title)

[Ann and William Sancho](#) (firm, booksellers)

[Ignatius Sancho](#) (person, author)

[The History of Mary Prince, West Indian Slave](#) (title, first edition)

[The History of Mary Prince, West Indian Slave](#) (title, second edition)

[The History of Mary Prince, West Indian Slave](#) (title, third edition)

[Thomas Pringle](#) (person, editor)

[Susannah Moodie](#) (person, editor)

[Poems on Various Subjects, Religious and Moral](#) (title)

[Ezekiel Russell](#) (firm, publisher)

[Selina Hastings, Countess of Huntingdon](#) (person)

[Hannah More](#) (person, author)

[Immediate, not Gradual, Abolition](#) (title)

[Eliza Coltman](#) (person, author)

[Amelia Opie](#) (person, author)

[Meditations From The Pen Of Mrs. Maria W. Stewart](#) (title)

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[Garrison and Knapp](#) (firm, publisher)

[Friends of Freedom and Virtue](#) (firm, publisher)

[The Oasis](#) (title)

[The Mother's Book](#) (title)

[The Frugal Housewife](#) (title)

[Priscilla, Sarah, and Frances Stockdale](#) (firm, publishers)

[Letters of the Late Ignatius Sancho, an African](#) (title)

[Frances Anne Crewe](#) (person, editor)

[David Garrick](#) (person, author)

[Laurence Sterne](#) (person, author)

[Samuel Johnson](#) (person, author)

[Joseph Jekyll](#) (person, author)

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¹ <https://womensprinthistoryproject.com/blog/post/18>

² <https://womensprinthistoryproject.com/blog/post/25>