



**Bronze Plaque
Main Entrance**

This plaque celebrates William and Constance Burrell. Their shipping company Burrell & Son was set up after the abolition of slavery in the British Empire in 1834, but they still profited from the legacy of slavery. During the transatlantic slave trade, 12 million Africans were taken from their homes and forced to work on plantations to produce goods like sugar and cotton.

Enslaved people were considered property, but they fought to keep their families and cultures alive. They resisted by breaking tools, refusing to work, and running away. When slavery was abolished, slave-owners were paid money by the British Government for the loss of their 'property', but formerly enslaved people were never paid. Most of Burrell & Son's business partners made their money from slavery and Burrell continued to carry goods produced on Caribbean plantations.

As well as merchants, who else do you think could have profited from the goods grown on plantations?

Burrell's Hidden History **DECOLONIAL FAMILY TRAIL**

The Burrell family are celebrated in our museum, but we only tell part of their story. By exploring this trail, we'll learn how the Burrell Collection is linked to Glasgow's colonial history and think about why this history is often ignored.

You will find all of the trail stops on the ground floor of the museum. You can find a map at reception or ask one of our Gallery Assistants to help you find your way.

Please Note:
This trail discusses sensitive topics like slavery and colonialism. We hope that by talking about our complex past, we can learn from history and build a better future for everybody. We have included a glossary of terms to help you throughout the trail.

Glossary:

Abolition: The act of officially ending a system or practice.

Colonialism: The practice of one country extending its control over another, often for economic exploitation or political dominance.

Colony: An area under the political control of another country or state, often occupied by settlers from that country.

Decolonial: Thinking about history in a way that questions how colonisation affected people.

Merchant: Someone who buys or sells goods for profit.

Race Riot: A public outbreak of violence due to racial antagonism.

Slave Labour: Forcing people to work without pay, often under harsh conditions and without freedom.

Strike: A refusal to work by employees as a form of protest.

Union: An organised group of workers, formed to protect their rights as employees.



Rouleau and Baluster-Shaped Vases

Burrell in Glasgow

These vases were bought by Leonard Gow. Burrell and Gow both owned shipping companies that employed Chinese sailors. Because foreign sailors were hired under different laws to white sailors, they could be paid less money.

This was one factor that led to the Seamen's Union being against the use of foreign labour, and union meetings featuring racist speeches against

foreign sailors contributed to race riots in Glasgow's docks in 1919.

Meanwhile, Burrell & Son employed 10% of all Chinese sailors working on British ships. These sailors were given less food and pay than British workers. Poor living conditions led to protests – onboard Burrell's ship 'the Strathyre' 10 of the crew jumped overboard to escape. On many occasions the Chinese workers would rather risk their lives than continue working on William Burrell's ships. People are still sometimes treated differently because of the colour of the skin, or their cultural heritage.

What do you do when you notice this happening?



Embroidered Panel Portrait Gallery

This embroidery shows a young African boy, referred to as a 'page' or enslaved domestic servant. Although most enslaved Africans ended up working on plantations in America and the Caribbean many young boys and girls were taken away from their families and brought to Britain to work in merchant's homes.

These children were not hidden away, but often displayed as a status symbol by the merchants. By the late 1700s there are records of around 80-90 enslaved people living here in Scotland. One example includes a 14-year-old enslaved boy called Frederick.

Frederick was trafficked into Scotland in the 1760s to be supervised by the famous engineer, James Watt, the inventor of the steam engine – whose statue stands in George Square. Burrell had this embroidery hung in the Tower Sitting Room of his home, Hutton Castle.

Why do you think William Burrell would hang this embroidery in his private rooms?



Sugar Bowl Central Galleries

This bowl would have contained sugar produced by enslaved people in Caribbean islands, like Jamaica. After abolition, Jamaica became a Crown Colony. This meant that Britain had complete control over the country, which benefitted British business.

The Burrell family established the Clyde Line, which shipped sugar directly to Glasgow. William and Constance Burrell later used their wealth to holiday in Jamaica. The gap between rich British merchants and Black

Jamaicans added to local frustrations as the cost of living for Jamaicans began to rise.

In 1938, 3000 workers went on strike at the Tate and Lyle sugar plantations. This protest prevented William and Constance from returning to Jamaica and led to the first modern trade unions in Jamaica being set up.

The British Empire had 120 colonies. Do you know of any others?

Pollok Park outside the Burrell Grounds

The last stop in our trail is Pollok Park, originally home to the Stirling-Maxwell family. The Stirling-Maxwell families owned sugar plantations in Jamaica, St Kitts, and St Croix.

After the abolition of slavery, the Stirling's were awarded £12,517 for their lost 'property' – 690 enslaved people. Today this would be around £1.3 million.



Glasgow grew rapidly because of money earned from the use of enslaved labour and there are reminders of this history hidden all around the city. In parks, street names and museums, we all have a part of this story to tell.

What reminders of this history can you spot in your city?
