

British Steps Towards Emancipation- Early Protests

The abolition of slavery in England

On **June 22, 1772**, the Chief Justice of England, **Lord Mansfield** ruled that **slavery was declared illegal in England** from that date and forevermore. In addition any slave that was brought to England, after this date, for whatever purpose would be free as soon as they landed in England.



Lord Mansfield

This law was passed because of a series of incidents. The West Indian planters had a habit of traveling to England on for business or pleasure. They tended to take along at least one 'personal' slave with them. This was more to show off on their friends and neighbors than anything else.

In 1765, David Lisle, a Barbadian slave owner took his slave Jonathan Strong to England. We do not know why, but while they were there the master used a pistol to beat Strong in his head. The man was so badly injured that the master was sure that he would not live. He did an abominable thing. He threw him out in the streets to die. The slave managed to come in contact with a doctor Sharpe who helped him to recover. **Granville Sharpe**, the doctor's brother helped Strong to get a job in a chemist shop. One day his old master saw him, claimed him as his property and sold him to a Jamaican planter James Kerr for \$30!



Granville Sharpe

In 1772, a similar case was brought to Granville's attention. This time the slave's name was **James Somerset** and his master was Charles Stewart of Virginia. Granville took the case and represented Somerset in court. He won the case and the declaration was made by the Chief Justice.

Sharpe then turned his attention to ending the trade that allowed men to buy other men: the Atlantic slave trade.