

200th anniversary of the Demerara Slave rebellion.

On line webinar by the joint History Societies of the United Reformed Church and the Congregational Federation.

Monday 11 September 2023 at 4.00 pm for about 90 minutes.

The topic is the 200th anniversary of the Demerara Slave rebellion, which was all about Congregationalists in Guyana. This was an uprising involving more than 10,000 enslaved people that took place in the colony of Demerara-Essequibo, in Guyana. The rebellion began on 18 August 1823, and lasted for two days. In part the slaves were reacting to poor treatment and a desire for freedom; in addition, there was a widespread, mistaken belief that Parliament had passed a law for emancipation, but it was being withheld by the colonial rulers. Instigated chiefly by Jack Gladstone, a slave at "Success" plantation, the rebellion also involved his father, Quamina, and other prominent members of their Congregational Church. Its English pastor, John Smith, was implicated.

Sadly many people have not even heard of this event, let alone understand its significance, and we would strongly encourage everyone to take this opportunity to learn about this event. We have secured two first rate speakers, the Revd Dr Michael Jagessar, well known to many in the URC, and Professor David Reynolds of Cambridge University, who has been working on the Legacies of Slavery for the URC.

If you would like to know more in advance, this short wikipedia article is very informative:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Demerara_rebellion_of_1823

For those who would like to read books, two are available:

1. **Crowns of Glory, Tears of Blood**, by Emilia Viotti da Costa.

2. **Wallbridge's The Demerara Martyr**: Memoir of the Revd. John Smith published in the 1840's. (This remains a fine bit of historical writing by an LMS missionary who had known Smith, but given that his aim was to demonstrate (which he does very well) that Smith was the victim of a miscarriage of justice, he is inevitably more interested in Smith than in Quamina or the other slaves who died.) This was an uprising involving more than 10,000 enslaved people that took place in the colony of Demerara-Essequibo, in Guyana. The rebellion began on 18 August 1823, and lasted for two days. In part the slaves were reacting to poor treatment and a desire for freedom; in addition, there was a widespread, mistaken belief that Parliament had passed a law for emancipation, but it was being withheld by the colonial rulers. Instigated chiefly by Jack Gladstone, a slave at "Success" plantation, the rebellion also involved his father, Quamina, and other prominent members of their Congregational Church. Its English pastor, John Smith, was implicated.