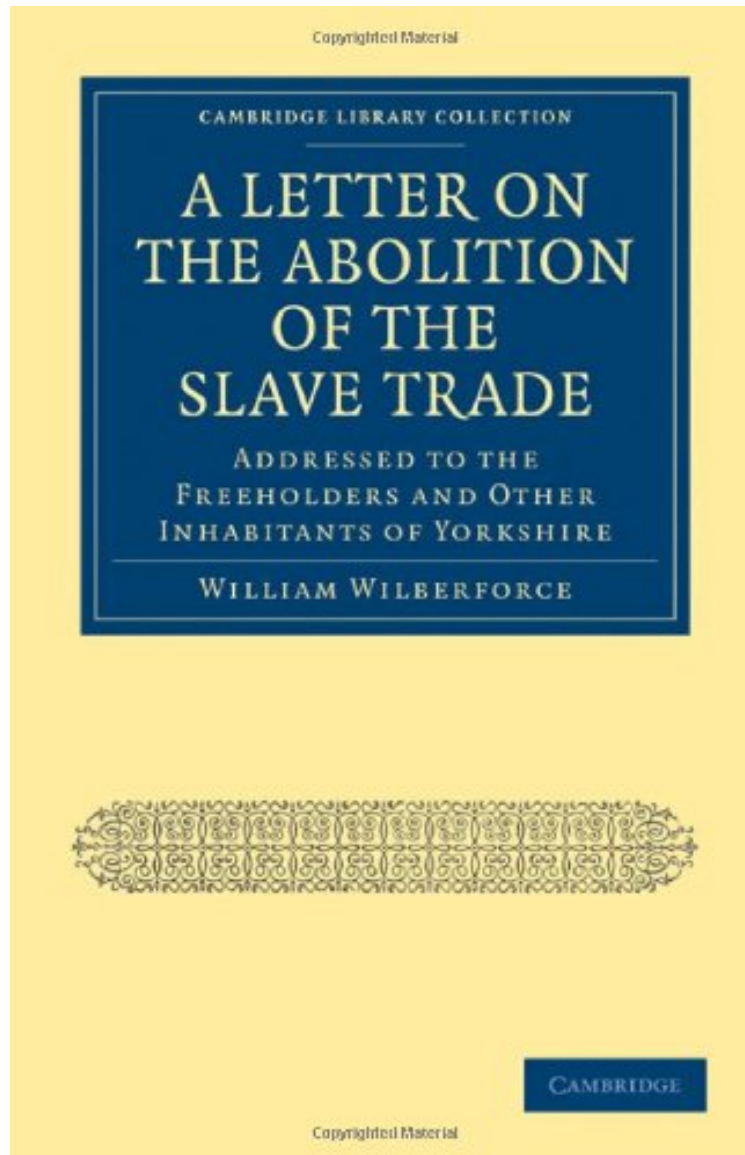


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A Letter on the Abolition of the Slave Trade: Addressed to the Freeholders and Other Inhabitants of Yorkshire (Cambridge Library Collection - Slavery and Abolition)

William Wilberforce

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before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised A Letter on the Abolition of the Slave Trade: Addressed to the Freeholders and Other Inhabitants of Yorkshire (Cambridge Library Collection - Slavery and Abolition):

William Wilberforce (1759-1833) was a politician, philanthropist and evangelical Christian, now best known for his work to end the slave trade. Elected to Parliament in 1780, he campaigned unsuccessfully for penal and electoral reform. In 1787, at the encouragement of William Pitt, he took up the cause of abolition at Westminster, but humanitarian and ethical arguments were slow to overcome the economic interests of those who had made fortunes from the slave trade or the use of slave labour. It was not until 1807 that the Abolition Bill was finally passed: shortly beforehand, Wilberforce had published this Letter to his constituents, justifying his preoccupation with abolition against claims that he was neglecting their local interests at Westminster, and setting out all his arguments against the slave trade. It is followed by his 1814 letter to Talleyrand, calling for a Europe-wide ban of the trade.

About the Author William Wilberforce (1759-1833) was an English politician and a leader of the movement to abolish the slave trade. At the age of 26 he underwent a conversion experience and became an evangelical Christian, which resulted in a lifelong concern for reform. He headed the parliamentary campaign against the British slave trade for many years until the passage of the Slave Trade Act of 1807, which abolished the slave trade in the British Empire but did not abolish slavery itself. In later years, Wilberforce supported the campaign for the complete abolition of slavery. He died shortly after the Slavery Abolition Act of 1833 passed through the House of Commons, freeing all slaves in the British Empire. He was buried in Westminster Abbey.