

Great Britain: Slavery Abolished: Voice from Britain to America

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Form: Circular. Pierced at 12 o'clock.

By: J. Davis, Birmingham

Date: 1834

Ref: BHM: 1666; Laidlaw: 0249e;

Variations:	Size	Metal	Mass	Value
	43 mm	White Metal		\$360

Edge: Plain.

Obverse: Rays shining down behind a freed slave dressed in a loin cloth, standing front, arms outstretched holding broken shackles in his feet, more broken shackles and a broken thronged whip. Behind on the right, leafy plant and on the left a thatched hut and four palm trees. Legend: "THIS IS THE LORDS DOING; IT IS MARVELLOUS IN OUR EYES. PSALM 118 v. 23". In the exergue: "JUBILEE AUGT. 1 / 1834".

Reverse: An American slave kneeling, right, arms raised with wrists shackled to ankles. Legend: "AM I NOT A MAN AND A BROTHER". On the exergue line: "DAVIS (left) BIRM (right)". In the exergue: "A VOICE FROM / GREAT BRITAIN / TO AMERICA / 1834".

Notes: Slavery at this time was still practiced in the United States particularly in the southern states. Emancipation came 20 years after the American Civil War.

The terms of Slavery Abolition Act of 1833 became law on 1st August 1834 throughout most of the British Empire. In South Africa this was delayed until 1st December 1834. Under the Act slave ownership was abolished and replaced by a transitional period of paid apprenticeships whereby freed slaves were to continue working for their past masters who were compensated by the Government for the imposed financial losses. A sum of 20,000 pounds sterling was allocated for this purpose.

The social and financial adjustments in a country like South Africa where slavery was commonplace were substantial. This exacerbated the existing resentment against British rule by the people of Dutch descent and was a major factor contributing to the decision by thousands of these people to leave the Cape Colony for the north in an exodus later known as the Great Trek. The 'voortrekkers' settled in territories which became the Boer Republics of the Orange Free State and the Transvaal.