



William Wilberforce: A Biography

Stephen Tomkins

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In the 1780s, around 40,000 slaves a year were taken from Africa in British ships, on the notorious "Middle Passage," to the Caribbean. In 1787, under an oak tree in Kent, the British Prime Minister, William Pitt, invited his friend William Wilberforce to introduce a parliamentary bill outlawing the slave trade. Neither of them imagined a twenty-year political campaign that would consume the rest of Wilberforce's life.

Born in Hull, England, to wealthy middle-class parents, Wilberforce entered Parliament and became a political celebrity in his day. After undergoing a profound Christian conversion, he set out on a path of service to humanity. Stephen Tomkins charts Wilberforce's tireless battle to end the slave trade, portraying a man of contradictions and extraordinary determination.

Written in a lively and engaging style, this biography of William Wilberforce transports the reader back to a dramatic age of conflict and upheaval. Published as part of the widespread commemoration of the 200th anniversary of the Anti-Slave Trade Act -- also celebrated by the 2007 release of the widely acclaimed movie *Amazing Grace* -- this biography brings an extensive cast of colorful characters vividly to life.

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