



# Ignatius Sancho

Composer of the Week

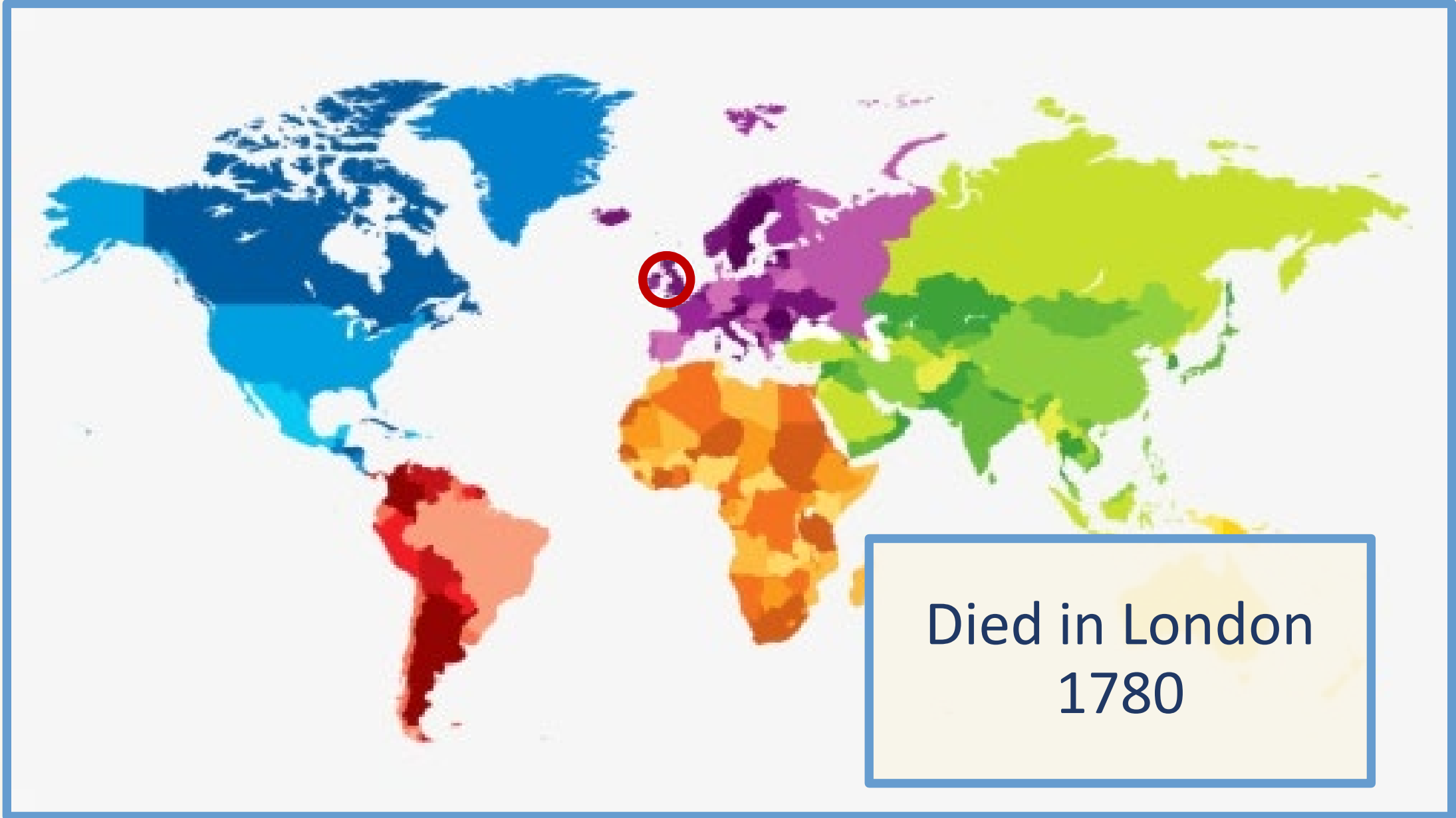


Ignatius Sancho  
(1729-1780)





Born in the  
Atlantic Ocean  
1729

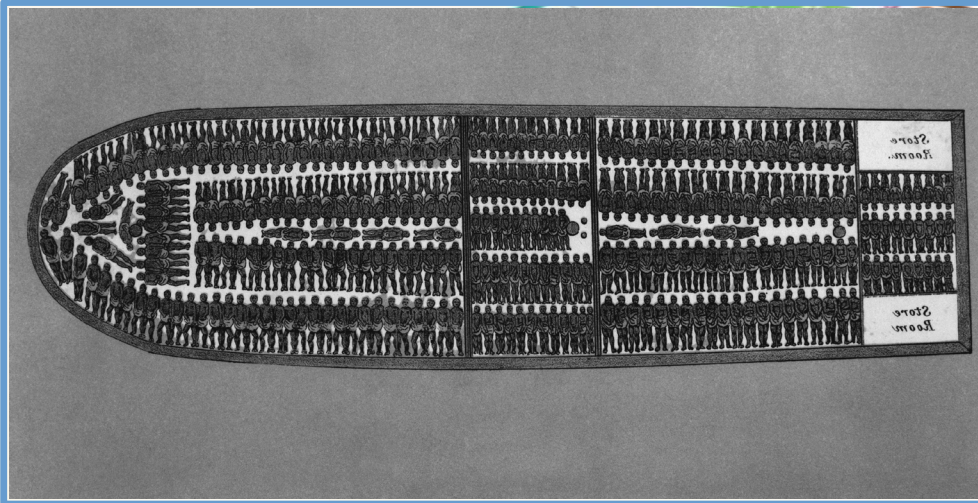


Died in London  
1780





Ignatius Sancho was born on a slave ship in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean on the way to the Spanish Colony of New Grenada.



It is said that his father took his own life rather than become a slave. We can see that conditions inside the ship were dreadful.

Ignatuis' mother died when he was very young and, at the age of two, he was taken to London and given as a gift to three sisters who lived in Greenwich. He remained their slave for 18 years.

Ignatius taught himself to read and write and impressed the Duke of Montagu, who visited the sisters often.





MONTAGUE-HOUSE

*To her Royal Highness the Princess of Wales this plate is by Permission most humbly dedicated by her most obliged Servant  
J. Baker*

Ignatius spent much time at Montagu House in Blackheath, where he was given lessons in Music and Literature.

The background of the slide is a light cream color with a faint, artistic illustration of a tree. The tree's trunk is brown and textured, and its branches are thin and light-colored. Scattered throughout the scene are various musical symbols and instruments in soft colors like blue, green, orange, and purple. These include a bass clef, a trumpet, a saxophone, a guitar, and various musical notes and symbols like a treble clef, a sharp sign, and a double bar line.

In 1749 Sancho ran away to Montagu House and he worked there for two years as the butler to the Duchess of Montagu.

Ignatius wrote a book about the Theory of Music and composed 62 Minuets, Cotillons and Country Dances.

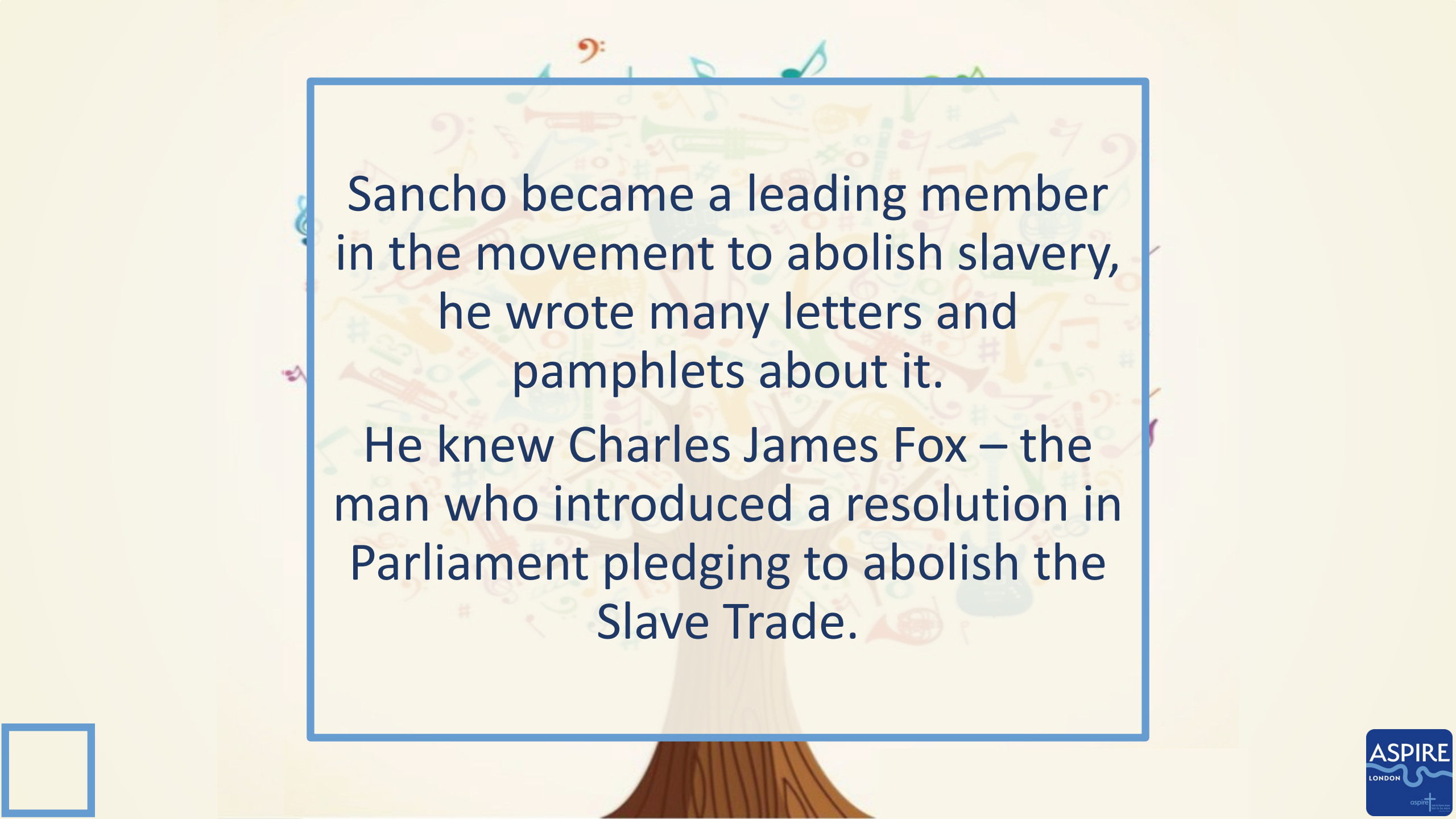
These were all fashionable dances at the time and Sancho's compositions became very popular with the aristocracy.





He often named the dances after the famous people he knew. This is the Duchess of Devonshire Reel.




The background features a stylized tree with a brown trunk and a canopy of colorful musical notes and instruments. The notes are in various colors like blue, green, yellow, and red. Instruments like trumpets and saxophones are also visible. The entire scene is set against a light beige background.

Sancho became a leading member in the movement to abolish slavery, he wrote many letters and pamphlets about it.


He knew Charles James Fox – the man who introduced a resolution in Parliament pledging to abolish the Slave Trade.



The background of the slide is a light beige color with a faint illustration of a tree trunk at the bottom. Scattered across the background are various colorful musical notes, clefs, and instruments like a trumpet, saxophone, and guitar.

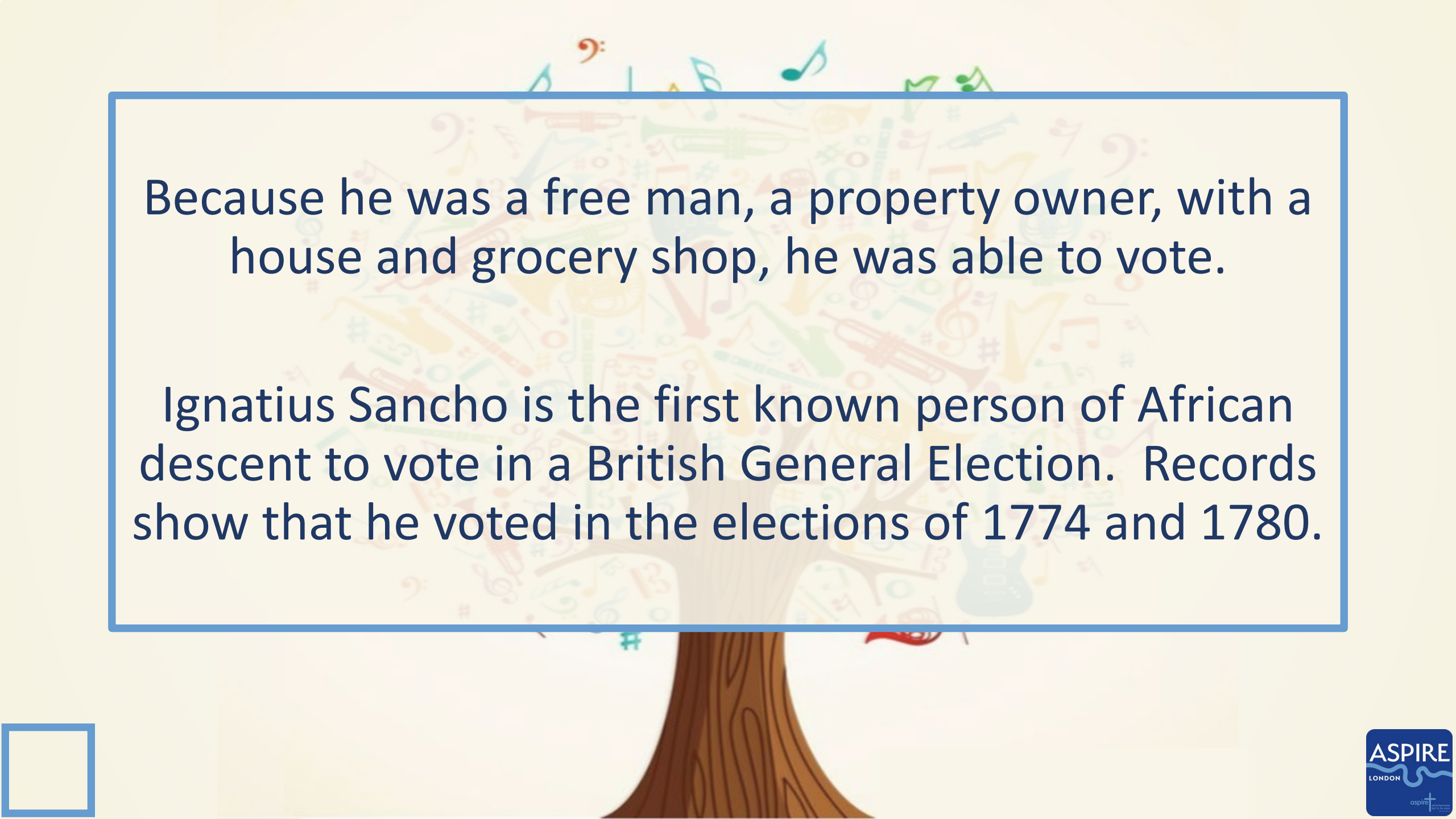
In 1774, with help from Lord Montagu, Sancho opened a shop in Charles Street, Mayfair, selling, tobacco, sugar and tea.

It is ironic that at that time these goods were mostly produced by slaves in the West Indies.

A rectangular white plaque is mounted on a grey stone wall. The text on the plaque is in black, serif capital letters. It commemorates Ignatius Sancho, a writer and symbol of the humanity of Africans, who lived and had a grocery shop near the site. The plaque is set against a background of a stone wall with horizontal courses.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE  
**IGNATIUS SANCHO**  
1729 ~ 1780  
WRITER,  
SYMBOL OF THE HUMANITY  
OF AFRICANS  
LIVED AND  
HAD A GROCERY SHOP  
NEAR THIS SITE  
NUBIAN JAK COMMUNITY TRUST  
CITY OF WESTMINSTER





Because he was a free man, a property owner, with a house and grocery shop, he was able to vote.

Ignatius Sancho is the first known person of African descent to vote in a British General Election. Records show that he voted in the elections of 1774 and 1780.



When he died, he was buried at St Margaret's Church, Westminster, right next to the Houses of Parliament.

He was the first person of African descent to have an obituary in the British press.

If you go to Greenwich Park you can see a plaque commemorating him there.



IGNATIUS SANCHO  
c 1729 - 1780

African man of letters,  
composer and  
opponent of slavery.  
Born on a slave ship, he was  
encouraged to educate himself  
by John 2<sup>nd</sup> Duke of Montagu  
and served as butler  
to the Duchess  
here in Montague House.

