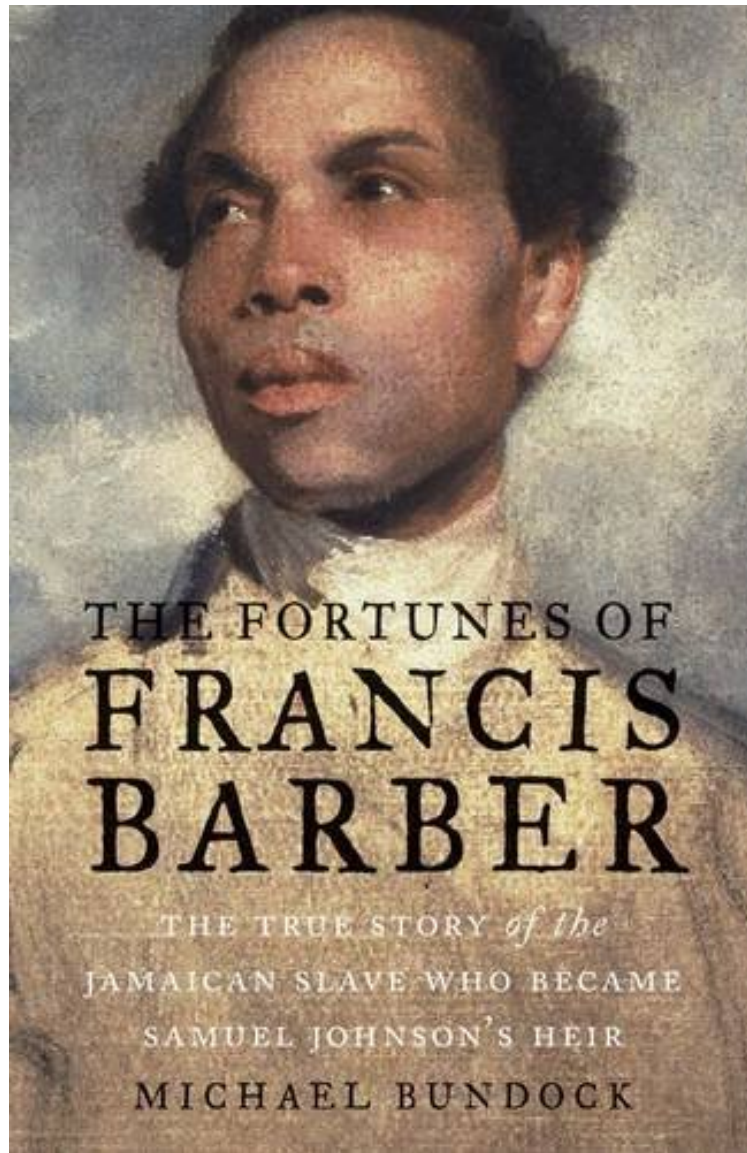


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The Fortunes of Francis Barber: The True Story of the Jamaican Slave Who Became Samuel Johnsons Heir

Michael Bundock

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Michael Bundock : The Fortunes of Francis Barber: The True Story of the Jamaican Slave Who Became Samuel Johnsons Heir before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Fortunes of Francis Barber: The True Story of the Jamaican Slave Who Became Samuel Johnsons Heir:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. A Frank AccountBy Christian SchlectA clear, careful writer explains what there is to be known about Francis Barber. Ordinarily the idea of a serious biography of a servant borders on the absurd. However, two special facts rescue this book: here (1) the servant is a black man, one step away from slavery, and now living in 18th century England and (2) his master is the great Samuel Johnson. Michael Bundock tells an interesting tale of slave societies and the end of slavery in England, of sea-faring, of blacks within British society, of inheritances and wills, and of the ever present one for whom the age was named. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Dr. Johnson's Black Servant, Francis Barber. By Valerie Nordberg As I'm interested in Dr. Samuel Johnson, this story of his servant and friend, Francis Barber, was engaging despite the blank in information on his early years. I felt the author captured well the atmosphere of the time Francis lived in and how awkward it was for a black man to live amongst white Londoners. On the whole I enjoyed the book and feel it will interest many others keen on that period or subject. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars By martinmac Thanks.

The story of the extraordinary relationship between a former slave and Englands most distinguished man of letters This compelling book chronicles a young boys journey from the horrors of Jamaican slavery to the heart of Londons literary world, and reveals the unlikely friendship that changed his life. Francis Barber, born in Jamaica, was brought to London by his owner in 1750 and became a servant in the household of the renowned Dr. Samuel Johnson. Although Barber left London for a time and served in the British navy during the Seven Years War, he later returned to Johnsons employ. A fascinating reversal took place in the relationship between the two men as Johnsons health declined and the older man came to rely more and more upon his now educated and devoted companion. When Johnson died he left the bulk of his estate to Barber, a generous (and at the time scandalous) legacy, and a testament to the depth of their friendship. There were thousands of black Britons in the eighteenth century, but few accounts of their lives exist. In uncovering Francis Barbers story, this book not only provides insights into his life and Samuel Johnsons but also opens a window onto London when slaves had yet to win their freedom.

At last, the biography that Francis Barber deserves. A meticulous yet imaginative book which teases out the full humanity of Dr. Johnsons servant and of the affection and hostility he generated among contemporaries. James Walvin, author of *The Zong: A Massacre, the Law and the End of Slavery*