

Foreign Office covers up important slave trade documents

Historic papers about the slave trade have been held in secret archive.

Significant Slave trade documents are among the Foreign Office's secret hoard, it has been revealed. The Guardian reported that historic papers about the slave trade are among the enormous collection of public documents that the Foreign Office has unlawfully hoarded in a secret archive. These papers might provide information for people seeking compensation for their ancestors' suffering. Some of the papers appear to date back to 1662 and are thought to contain information about England's involvement in slavery, while others were created in the 19th century and detail British attempts to suppress the trade. They are contained in a vast archive of 1.2 million files that the Foreign Office has kept at Hanslope Park, a high-security compound that it shares with MI5 and MI6 in the Buckinghamshire countryside north of London. Under the Public Records Acts, the slavery papers should have been handed over to the National Archives in Kew, southwest London. The Foreign Office has not answered questions about the papers, and historians say it is difficult to be sure of their significance without having an opportunity to examine them.