

# George Alexander Gratton



George was born on the Caribbean island of St. Vincent in 1808. His black African parents were slaves on a sugarcane plantation. He had the skin condition piebaldism and his appearance caused such a stir that he was shown in the capital of his native island at the price of a dollar per person. When he was just 15 months old he was transported to Bristol where he was delivered into the care of a travelling showman named John Richardson.

John Richardson had a large travelling theatre which toured England's annual fairs. A number of sources state that Richardson bought George for 1,000 guineas and included him in shows as a 'live curiosity piece' to be displayed in the intervals of plays and other entertainments. Richardson was said to be a kind and affectionate guardian.

George died in 1813, aged four years and nine months. Reports said that he suffered 'a gathering in the jaw', a tumour or infection. His early death could have been caused by his gruelling schedule, as he was exhibited for twelve hours a day. George's body was buried in the churchyard of the All Saints Church in Great Marlow in a brick vault that Richardson paid to be constructed. According to accounts Richardson kept George's body unburied for three months, 'fearful that the body might be stolen'.

When Richardson died aged 70 in November 1836 he was buried with George.



*George shares his grave with John Richardson*