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65 years ago, a ship called the Empire Windrush arrived at Tilbury carrying nearly 500 hundred people from Jamaica to start a whole new life.

It was the first large group of West Indian immigrants to arrive after the second World War.

Ruth Hanks has the details:

It was the first wave of mass migration from the Caribbean to the UK: a boat full of workers called in from the colonies to plug Britain's post-war labour shortage.

Among them, Sam King whose father had sold 3 cows to pay the 28 pounds and 10 shillings for his passage in hope for a better life.

“My children will have a better quality of education here **than** in the West Indies.

In the West Indies, **even if** you were bright, **unless** your parents have money, you would not have much education.”

Some had served in the RAF during the war and hoped to rejoin the forces.

Most of the others came in response to job adverts in Jamaican newspapers ; **but despite** that clear invitation, the reception was hardly warm.

The authorities panicked and refused to let them off the ship for 24 hours.

Peter Dillon was a member of the crew on board:

“There were still arguments going on in Parliament **whether or not** they were gonna let them come off the ship.

**So although** we docked on the 21st, they didn't disembark until the 22nd and of course, by that time, there were lots of news people who came around and criticized what's on the dock side, because of all the controversy that was going on”.

By then, the arrival of 500 black immigrants was news

"**But** there were no black people about and I have been to some towns in the Midlands and some children in the forces want to tear my...just to speak to me never had seen a black person"

“Did you experience a lot of racism when you first arrived?”

“I took a man to stockwell **because** he was looking for a room to rent and when we got there it says 'no irish, no blacks no dogs". Very hurtful **but** it was a blessing "we had to buy property. **If** you had bought about 2500, it's worth half a million now today”

**As** they arrived here in Tilbury, most of the passengers thought they wouldn't be staying in Britain for all that long. **But** now, 65 years later we know that the windrush generation and their descendants would become an integral part of British life.

Ruth Haks, ITV news Tilbury

And **if** you want to find out more about the Windrush and her historic passengers, there are more images and videos of the people involved on our website [itvnews.com](http://www.itvnews.com)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-BYSdVERQDk>