

THE BRITISH WEST INDIAN PHILATELIST

EDITOR E. F. AGUILAR
P.O. BOX 406 - KINGSTON.

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BRITISH WEST INDIAN PHILATELIST

ISSUED QUARTERLY

10/6 YEARLY

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VOL. 6

JUNE, 1955

No. 4



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6

Your footprints could be on
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British Caribbean Philatelic Society – Jamaica Tercentenary Display

THE BRITISH CARIBBEAN PHILATELIC SOCIETY

has much pleasure in presenting a special Tercentenary display of

JAMAICA STAMPS

and its postmarks also dependencies with a special display of Olympic and Athletic stamps at the EXHIBITION GALLERY OF THE INSTITUTE OF JAMAICA to be opened by HIS EXCELLENCY SIR HUGH FOOT K.C.M.G., K.C.V.O., O.B.E. at noon 12:00 o'clock May 9th., 1955 This display will be on show to the public from May 9th., to the 14th.

Tercentenary Central Exhibit – 1955 New Issue

The Tercentenary main Exhibit will be the four prints which the stamps were designed from - The Man-O-War at Port Royal by Joseph B. Kidd being the 2d value.

The 2½d value depicts Old Montego Bay by the same Artist. This stamp will be black and blue. While the 3d value, a View of Old King Street, by Adolph Duperly, in black and claret.

The 6d value illustrates the Abolition of Slavery, in black and Red.

This value was prepared and was about to go on sale in 1919, but due to the unrest, this stamp was withdrawn from the Post Offices and burnt, not before a few copies getting out, one of these, is shown among the Jamaica Exhibit.

The plate that printed these stamps have been sent down specially for this display by the Crown Agents. All these stamps have been printed by Messrs. De la Rue and Co. of London.

The Tercentenary Exhibition **Olympic And Sporting Stamps**

The British Caribbean Philatelic Society, takes great pleasure in presenting a Philatelic display comprised of about 600 pages OLYMPIC AND SPORTING STAMPS. Mr. H. Macdonald, O.B.E. This collection is considered one of the most outstanding in the world, each page being individually mounted and displayed either with a flag of the country or appropriate design. On display are 120 pages of the Olympic and some of the leading sporting events during the last 25 years, held throughout the world. This collection will be of interest to all viewers.

Turks Is – Mrs Pringle

Mrs C. Pringle's collection of Turks Island is well known as she collects Turks, Cayman and Jamaica. This collection features all the settings in the early surcharges. There being an extremely fine copy with the Royal Certificate of the ½d on 1/- SG 11. Another fine item being SG 39 – 2½d on 1/- slate blue with Royal Certificate. Very little will be found missing from this collection, which includes a number of varieties

Jamaica -- E Aguilar

Collection of E. F. Aguilar's which covers 450 pages. A display of the postmarks and Temporary Rubber Date Marks, for Jamaica will be seen. The Temporary Rubber Date Stamps, the first section of these from 1880-1939 comprises one of the most interesting groups to be found, these are all scarce postmarks in finding today. It has been the custom that on the opening of a new Post Office, Temporary Rubber Date Marks were used until the steel die arrived from London. These can be in use for 2-3 years or even longer, while on the other hand, as short as only days. The modern types of these marks will be seen in comparison to the older strikes. Of interest in the modern type is the University College of the West Indies, which had its Post Office for one week. Two registered covers are shown

RAILWAY POSTMARKS. Jamaica was the first Colony to have a Railway, which in those early days 1845, the train ran from Kingston to Angels - 142 miles. A small selection of Railway Postmarks were used between 1900-21 can be seen. There are three distinct types of these postmarks "Jamaica Railway", "Jamaica Gov't Railway", and the latest type "Jamaica Government Railway", which is the scarcest of all types.

PAQUEBOTS AND SHIP LETTERS. From time to time one finds very interesting letters being sent by "Paquebot" or "mailed on the High Seas" from the different Colonies. Usually these letters contain invoices which are dispatched on the ship itself. Thus the Postmarking takes

place on board the vessels. A few examples and different types are shown. Interesting variety can be found in the United Fruit Co. Vessels, and The Canadian National Steamship boats

OBLITERATOR NUMBERS. Jamaica Collection of Obliterator numbers are extremely difficult, but one of the most interesting fields today. There are 107 different types, but one can see from the pages shown, many of the more popular numbers. It was the habit of the Post Office, that when a particular obliterator number was damaged this was replaced for the short period by a letter of the alphabet. This is definitely certain for letter "A" which was originally 201 which was for Milk River, this letter is very scarce. The letter "B" was used for "Duncans", originally "A 37", can be found on all the CC's, CA's, and key plate stamps. Up to the present time of writing the letters "C, D, & E" have not been located' on cover, so as to prove their location

SPECIMENS. A small selection of "SPECIMEN" stamps of Jamaica can be seen. These are usually sent out to the Post Master General of each Colony, and on request from any country, the Post Master was in the habit of forwarding these specimens to the country enquiring for same. Many of the very early varieties can be found in Manuscript. All these types whether Manuscript, block type or perforated, are all extremely difficult, and can form a most interesting type of collection.

DIE PROOFS. A few copies of the die proofs, can be seen. The plate is then prepared and made After which this is then printed on the sheet. Die proofs are extremely rare, and are always sought after by collectors.

ESSAYS OR PHOTOGRAPHS. In Modern Pictorials a number of drawings or photographs are usually sent up to the Crown Agents The set of the photographs done by the late Miss Violet Taylor, for the Childs Welfare set is shown. This can be compared against the specimen and the originals of the set.

FIRST FLIGHTS. First flight covers in and out Jamaica since 1930 have comprised of over 80 different flights. Small selection of these covers are on display. Many are difficult in locating. One of the most difficult fields is obtaining a survey cover, where a Company is running a survey flight from a point to another point Two examples of these are shown one by B.W.I.A. to Turks Island, signed by the Captain and Crew, and the other flown by A. E. Airlines from New York to Bahamas; and remailed and restamped in the Bahamas on to Jamaica, again restamped and mailed on to Canal Zone.

The first flights are popular with most collectors particularly in Denmark, America, Australia, and one can look forward to the special covers on the new Vicounts, which will be starting in the very near future between Miami-Jamaica-Trinidad,

RED CROSS LABELS. In 1916 the Jamaica War Stamp League, later renamed the Jamaica Patriotic Stamp League issued a series of Labels to raise money for the British Red Cross Fund, also the creation of the Jamaica Aeroplane Fund, and a fund for the relief of Polish Jews. From this label which was on sale at all Post Offices In Jamaica £20,000 was raised. These were sold at ½d each, and can

be found with many varieties and settings. At this time, there was no air service in Jamaica, nor had the labels, any Postal value. There were three different printings, in sheets of 100 (10 x 10) by Messers. Sennison. These are scarce in finding today. A selection of fifteen sheets can be seen, note the rare copy used in the Cayman Islands, penned by the P.M.

BOOKLETS. A complete issue of Jamaica booklets will be on display. This collection is extremely rare.

Tercentenary Post Office.

For the convenience of viewers and collectors a Post Office will be found in the building, where you can dispatch First Day Covers or envelopes to your friends. So do not hesitate in mailing a letter with a special postmark.

Cayman – E Aguilar

A small display by E. F. Aguilar. The Cayman Islands used Jamaican stamps from 1893 to 1900 when this Colony received its own stamps. Today Cayman Islands are one of the most sought after by collectors.

News Here And There

Jamaica – 1954 Prestwick Crash Covers

Large numbers of Crash Covers salvaged from the Prestwick Christmas Day disaster, arrived in Jamaica around January 20th Many in very bad condition. On each cover (many of the letters being enclosed in an official envelope being badly burnt) a three line cachet reading: SALVAGED MAIL - PRESTWICK - 25/12/54. Purple ink measuring 3 x 1. A second type has also been reported which reads: SALVAGED MAIL - AIRCRAFT CRASH - PRESTWICK - 25/12/54.

Jamaica – Air Letters (Shortage & Rate)

For the past three months the GPO, in Jamaica have not had any air letter available. So as to assist the public they have had printed air letter sheets by Printers Ltd., and the GPO, has stuck an ordinary 6d stamp on each of these sheets. The sheets are a little smaller in size not having gum flaps.

The 6d air letter rate will come into use from May 1st. 1955 to the U.S.A.

England -- 37th Philatelic Congress

The 37th Philatelic Congress will be held this year at Norwich from May 17th-20th.

Jamaica – TRDs at Point Hill & May Pen

Mr. L. A. Courtney reports finding a new T.R.D. for Point Hill in Type 8, this being the only copy known. JAMAICA

JAMAICA T.R.D.'s in use for May Pen, has been seen, which has only been in use for a short while.

B.W.I. – Princess Alice Appeal Slogans

Very nearly all the British, West Indian Islands connected to the University College are now using special slogans on envelopes. Being used locally in Jamaica, the meter mark is an oblong, 50 cm. x 15 cm. reading, "PRINCESS ALICE APPEAL" In Antigua, St. Kitts, British Honduras, and St. Vincent, a rubber stamp around 50 cm. x 24 cm. is being used with the following words, "GIVE TO THE-PRINCESS ALICE-APPEAL" in three lines, the outside frame is in wavy lines.

B.W.I. -- Federation

Federation has now come, and one can look forward within the next two years for big changes taking place, particularly philatelically. Leeward Islands will be off sale within a year. No announcement has yet been made with regards the forthcoming arrangements when Federation starts. This will be issued as soon as possible.

Jamaica – 1955 Booklets

Booklets of the ½d orange and the 1d green came on sale in the first week in February.

Jamaica – Aguilar Collection in London

LONDON Collectors interested in the T.R.D.'s and first flights of Jamaica, will have the opportunity in seeing E. F. Aguilar's collection at the Postal History meeting on June 15th. The collection will comprise of 75 pages of T.R.D.'s and 25 pages of first flights, which is being sent over by air express for the show.

Golden Opportunity Lost (£1 Adhesive & Princess Margaret Visit)

At the end of November last year, the matter of a special stamp for Princess Margaret's visit to Jamaica was taken up with the Government, knowing that at that time stocks of the £ stamp with the Queens head were in Jamaica. At that time nothing was done very much in this matter, due to the forthcoming elections, and once again towards the end of January, the matter was gone into with the Government. Although no official reply had been forwarded it was stated that no special stamp would be done for Princess Margaret, namely for the following reasons:-

1. The face value of the stamp was too high.
2. If this stamp was overprinted at a lower value, there would not be sufficient stocks to take care of the demand, as there was well under 100,000 of these stamps.
3. It was felt that putting out three issues of stamps in one Colony in a year was too much.

Thus Jamaica did not get a special stamp for the visit of H.R.H. Princess Margaret, which incidentally was the only Colony in the B.W.I. Group that has had the honour of having both H.M. the Queen, and Princess Margaret.

In Jamaica, there are two Local Stamp Vendors, who distribute the stamps direct from the Stamp Office, to the business houses and banks.

As the £ Jamaica has been sitting in the vaults for well over two years now, it so happened that early in February, the Royal Bank of Canada placed an order with one of these agents for a sheet of the £. As usual the agent, who is well known around the business houses delivered the stamps to the teller, who was quick to notice that the stamps did not have the head of the King which was usual, BUT featured the head of H.M. the Queen. This teller, as quick as he was to pick up the difference, was not quick enough to realize what he held in his hand.

Not knowing anything about the item, he asked the agent (a Miss Binns) to check up at the Stamp Office, and returned the sheet.

There a Golden Opportunity was lost through the Bank returning these stamps, for had they been used, one is very inclined to think that the PMG would have released them. The main reason for these items not going on sale 22 years ago, has been one of the many Red Tape Rules laid down by the Crown Agents, which states that any stamp put on sale, other than Commemoratives, must remain on sale for at least 6 years.

What a list one could name of Colonial stamps which have had a shorter life than 6 years, and of which Jamaica has lost a very tidy sum of money, as the new Queens will not have the same appeal to the Philatelic public.

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JAMAICA BOOKLETS

A full set of Jamaica Booklets mounted, and on display
at the Institute of Jamaica — — — £45

Booklets are as follows:

1 booklet 1921-29 1932 1935 Jubilee
6 „ 1938-55 1945 New Constitution

WAR LABELS of 1914/18

A Collection of war labels used during the 1914-18 war,
illustrating aeroplane and Red Cross. All Setting and
variety will be found in this collection, which includes
one used from Cayman Islands mounted on 14 Pages
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Lt. Governor Nugent Letters On The Cayman Islands

Corbet Report

June 3rd, 1802.

I instructed Edward Corbett to proceed to the Cayman Islands, and to give a full report of the Islands population, cultivation, soil, etc.

This report was written by Corbet on the 21st in Jamaica, which was handed to me the same day.

The Grand Cayman is the only one of the three Islands inhabited, which is situated nearly fifty leagues to the westward of Jamaica, steering a course from Negril Bay, West North West. It is from nine to ten leagues in length from East to West, its broadest part is Eastward, about seven miles, its narrowest being two miles. In approaching it from the Westward, the first settlement that is met is called Bodden Town This town or village of which there are about twenty white families, chiefly built up by the family whose name it bears and who I understand to be the oldest and most respectable settlers in the Island. The entrance to it from the sea is opposed by a reef of rocks, which admits only canoes, and it is extremely dangerous for strangers to attempt to pass in boats of any description. Proceeding along the coast to the westward there are settlements of less importance which are named in the list of inhabitants and their residence. At the western extremity is a capacious bay called Sandy Bay, on the south part of which contains a similar number of white families as Bodden Town.

George Town, which was formerly named "Hogstyes" has the only harbour in the Island into which vessels of any burden could enter. It is perfectly secure from every wind, except those from the westward There is a good anchorage for vessels of any burden not approaching nearer the shore than eight fathoms of water. About a quarter of a mile or less upon the north side of the Island is a large sound called the "North Sound". Its entrance is found by two points, ' one called Bakers, the other Rumpoint, a reef of rocks run from each, but in which however, there are channels admitting vessels not drawing more than nine feet of water.

In the course of the war which has just terminated, they have not been annoyed from any quarter, but in the war which proceeded it, the Island was attacked by the Spaniards from Cuba, and were totally defeated. The Island could muster about eighty persons capable of bearing arms. At George Town there is a small fort, not very well constructed which mounted four guns, and four or six, six pounders, by no means well equipped. This place would be most accessible to an enemy, as being the only place where vessels of burden could anchor with security. Upon the road to Bodden Town, which is fifteen miles from Georgetown, there is another fort mounting four guns and intended to oppose the progress of an enemy landing in Sandy Bay and moving Eastward. Except at Sandy Bay and through the Channels of the North Sound, all the coast of the Island is almost inaccessible. The nature of the soil near the shore all round the Island, except at Georgetown is sand, and consequently barren and incapable of production. This is considered to be the case with the interior of the Island, from the eastward to near the centre, which has not been explored appears to be entirely rock, water and underwood.

From Bodden Town to Prospect, about 7 miles to the westward, the soil is good although interspersed with rocks, can produce cotton, and probably coffee, as there is a small quantity in that quarter doing quite well, also yams, plantains, etc., while the cultivation of coconut trees along the coast, can be found in great profusion. Cotton, which the Island estimates to make about thirty tons annually, was usually sent to any of the ports on the North side of Jamaica, chiefly Montego Bay for which they received such supplies as they stand in need of.

Turtles which the Island itself furnishes but a small quantity, and which is mostly caught upon the coast of Cuba, and brought here by small vessels of 20 to 50 tons, in which they have eight or nine employed. The turtles are disposed of chiefly to vessels calling on their way to America or Europe. At Georgetown vessels are supplied with water as well as provisions, which are of good quality and priced about one third less than Jamaica. It was impossible to ascertain with any degree of precision the quantity of land in cultivation, and how much is capable of becoming so. The inhabitants estimate that about one-third of the Island and not more is adequate to that purpose. The nature by which the inhabitants of the Caymans hold their land is possession. An individual cultivates any spot he finds uncultivated before and having used it as long as the soil will properly admit of, deserts it either for a time or altogether, and clears and

cultivates anew, but the land which he may have cleared, although not occupied, is looked upon as his, and it would be considered among themselves as an unfair intrusion to interfere with it. These were the grants. Several of the inhabitants intimated that it would be more gratifying to have their property clearly defined, and hold them by a grant from the Crown.

It was observed that the elder Mr. Bodden, who besides being Chief Magistrate, is in other respects considered as the first person, was off the island. The inhabitants preferred delaying any discussion until his return, when they will submit to you. What measures appear to them likely to promote the welfare and prosperity of the settlement.

In close confinement was one who stands charged with having killed another, which event took place now about 10 months. The circumstances of the case as told by the inhabitants were . . . The deceased was married to the sister of the person now confined whom upon some domestic quarrel he heated rather harshly, with her brother in some degree ensured. This gave rise to an altercation between them and a kind of challenge from the deceased to fight him and who it is said struck the first blow, which the other returned and which proved fatal as he died, a few hours after . . .

I mentioned to Mr. Bodden the younger, the gentleman to whom you gave me a letter, being absent for a short time at the Bay of Honduras, that you had it in contemplation to accomplish speedily, by sending a commission for his trial upon the spot. Doubts of his brother or anyone else in the Island possessing sufficient knowledge to carry through a business of that nature, and also of the practicability of finding within the Island a proper and altogether impartial Jury, almost the whole of the settlers being more or less connected by marriage. It was apparent he must be removed to Jamaica. At Bodden Town there is a small place of worship and in which they have divine service. The person who officiated is not an ordained Clergyman, but a respectable inhabitant. When they want to enter into engagement of marriage they leave for some port on the north side of Jamaica, chiefly Montego Bay.

The names of these gentlemen now acting as Magistrates in the Cayman Island are attached. They act under a commission from Lord Balcarres, dated in January 1798.

There were two other gentlemen associated in this commission but who are since dead. Those who continue to act are perfectly respectable but as the residence of all is at Budden Town, it might be a matter of convenience to the inhabitants, that some gentleman residing at George Town should be associated with them. The only laws or regulations in force they consider to be those of Jamaica, as far as they are acquainted with them. They have no particular police. The magistrates are understood to have the same power as those in Jamaica when any new measure is to be adopted, it is generally submitted by them to the consideration of the inhabitants at large. An ill disposed individual may give some trouble, and one of this description was lately shipped off the island to America, by the United Voice, by compulsion of the inhabitants.

The story is told that the original settlers were pirates, but it is considered that the original settler was a person of the name of Bodden, and who was a soldier in the time of Oliver Cromwell. From him it is considered the family of that name now residing in the Island is descended. The greatest part of the inhabitants now upon the Island have been born there. The families of colour of which your Excellency will perceive there, about 20 were represented to me as discreet, orderly and industrious.

Inhabitants

A GENERAL ACCOUNT OF THE NUMBER OF INHABITANTS IN THE ISLAND OF GRAND CAYMAN DISTINGUISHING THEIR COLOUR, PLACE OF RESIDENCE, ETC.

Place of residence	Whites No. of families	Family	Slaves	People of colour No. of families	Family	Slaves
At East End	1	3	-	2	7	1
At Frank Sound	1	5	1	2	7	1
At Bodden Town	24	104	233	8	21	16
At Little Pedro	2	4	9	8	21	16
At Spotts	3	20	36	8	21	16
At Prospect	2	20	73	8	21	16
At South W. Sound	7	29	21	8	21	16
At George Town formerly called Hogstyes	17	90	95	5	7	17-2 free
At West Bay	8	24	25	-	-	-
At Boatswain Bay	8	24	25	3	19	13-4 free
At North Side	1	10	3	2	12	2
Total	66	309	496	22	73	49-6

A list of the inhabitants of the Island of the GRAND CAYMAN distinguishing their place of residence, number in each family and the slaves they possess.

AT EAST END

White Families	The People Of Colour-	Number In Each. Family	-No. Of Slaves
John Thomas		3	
	Charles McLean	3	
	Charles Poucheau	4	1

AT NORTH SIDE

Stephen Bodden		10	3
	M. Fature, Snr.	4	1
	M. Fature, Jr.	8	1

AT BODDEN TOWN

Samuel Morton		6	9
White Families	The People Of Colour-	Number In Each. Family	-No. Of Slaves
James Bodden Esq.		12	51
Joseph & Wm. Conoir		2	-
Benj. McCoy Jnr.		3	6
Eenj. McCoy Snr.		6	-
Charles Semon		4	1
James Conoir		3	1
Wm. McCoy		6	3
Wm. Bodden Esq.		4	51
Joseph Bodden Esq.		7	37
James Fature		4	-
Mary Leach		8	3
James Wood		3	6
Susanne Fature		5	2
Wm. Bodden		5	1
James Silver		1	4
John Walter		4	1

AT WEST BAY

White Families	The People Of Colour-	Number In Each. Family	-No. Of Slaves
John Bodden		6	2
Thos. Hide		8	6
Jame Walker		1	
Wm. Rivers		5	2
Isabella Hoye		1	2
Edw. Hall		1	1
Mary Jennett		2	3

AT BOATSWAIN BAY

	Henry Ebanks	6	8
	Augustus Ebanks	7	5
	Barnet Ebanks	6	
Free Negroes	Mary Mitchell		2
"	Thomas Bishop		1
"	Amazon		1

AT S. W. SOUND

Wm. Collins		9	7
Margaret Bush		4	5
James Bush		2	-
Wm. Higgins		5	-
Christopher Bush	Chas. Bush	4	8
Wm. Toulinery		3	1
Wm. & Jn. Hind		2	-
John Bodden		3	2
Waide Wattler, Snr.		1	31
James Watler		5	8
Susanna Watler		4	7
John Counoir		6	5
Mary Ann Faturen		2	1
James Conoir		1	2
	Anna Conoir	7	
	John Bodden	2	
	Dorothy Spleen	2	
	George Bodden	6	1
	Sarah Rosamond &		
	Agnes Bodden	3	
	James Fature Snr.	2	5
	John Fature	4	10
	Wm. Fature	1	

AT FRANKS SOUND

White Families	The People Of Colour-	Number In Each. Family	-No. Of Slaves
Thomas Sutherland		5	1
	Diana McLean	5	
	Absolem Bodden	2	

AT PROSPECT

Waide Walter Jr.		7	17
Thomas Thomson		13	56

AT SPOTTS

Wm. Eden		4	9
James Coe		6	6
Wm. Bodden		10	21

AT LITTLE PEDRO

Wm. Walter		3	6
Thos. Knowles Eden		1	3

AT GEORGE TOWN

White Families	The People Of Colour-	Number In Each. Family	-No. Of Slaves
John Drayton		6	23
Abraham Bodden		6	5
Sterling Rivers		5	5
Sarah Nixon		3	4
Wm. Jennett		3	-
George Bodden		7	4
W. S. Prescott		5	2
Benj. Bodden		6	-
Eliza Conoir		1	5
Mary Savery		6	5
John Bodden		8	8
John Ed. Rivers		4	3
James Thomson		7	5
Cornelia Scott		5	1
Mary Wilson		4	-
John S. Jackson		6	-
	C. Parsons	1	2
	James Parsons	1	5
	Wm. Parsons	3	6
	Lind Rivers	1	
	George Barrow	1	3
FREE NEGROES	Wm. Trusty		1
	Catherine Mitchell	1	-

Officers of the Militia

A List Of Persons Acting In The Island Of The Grand Cayman As Officers Of Militia Having Been Chosen By The Inhabitants Of The Respective Quarters.

AT BODDEN TOWN

James Bodden Esq.	Captain
Joseph Bodden Esq.	Lieutenant
Wm. Bodden Sr. Esq.	Ensign

AT GEORGE TOWN

John Edwards Rivers	Captain
John S. Jackson	Lieutenant

Jamaica – The Settlers From Nevis

By S. A. G. Taylor

The scene as you approach the harbour of Port Morant, whether by land or by sea, is as beautiful as any in the island of Jamaica, and it is hard to realize that at this place three hundred years ago was enacted a grim tragedy, the tragedy of the settlers from Nevis. Little prominence has ever been given to the story of these people, who all said and done, were the first English settlers to come to this Island, as distinct from the soldiers in Venables' Army. In New England the landing of the Pilgrim Fathers is commemorated and in Australia the coming of the First Fleet to Botany Bay has not been forgotten, but here, no one has been at pains to keep alive their memory. Their graves are unmarked and their saga is unsung. A few place names and four crumbling stone towers are all that remain to remind us of them and of times that have long since passed.

The Spaniards had done little to colonise the Hato or Morante as they called the strip of land lying between the sea and the towering peaks of the Sierra de Bastidas and the few who lived there appear to have fled to the north coast or to have surrendered after the coming of the English.

When Cromwell heard of the capture of Jamaica he endeavoured to attract settlers to his newly won domain. He advised the people of New England, whom he declared had been driven from the land of their birth to a desert and barren wilderness, to remove themselves to a land of plenty!

He wrote to the Governors of the various West Indian Colonies and advocated a similar policy, but as these Islands had been brought to the brink of ruin by the loss of four thousand able-bodied men who had enlisted in Venables' Army, they did not look on this suggestion with much enthusiasm and did little to further it, all save the Governor of Nevis, Luke Stokes.

Luke Stokes was an elderly man, probably of humble origin. Writing to Sedgwick he said, "His highness underserved and unexpected favours he hath bin pleased to throw some of them up on myself wherein hee hath in some particulars declared his highness designe concerning Jamaica and made mee an instrument to declaree it to the people of this colloni; so likewise I have declaired it to my adjacent neighbours, and caused his proclamations to bee published; and I find in this island the greater part of the Inhabitants, with their wives, children and servants, are willing and ready to accept his highness termes, laid down in his highness proclamation." He did more than this, he announced his intention of accompanying the colonists if ships were sent from Jamaica to carry them to their new home.

The reasons why the Port of Morant was selected by the Commissioner in Jamaica as the site of the new settlement are easy to guess. Vice Admiral Goodson declared that this part of the island was "healthful", possibly because no one lived there, and, as a result, there had been no deaths from sickness.

Unlike the arid plains around St. Jago de la Vega the rainfall is adequate and the soils are among the most fertile in Jamaica. Here too the settlers would not be troubled by the Spanish guerillas whose raids had proved so costly to the Army west of the old Capital.

Lastly, it was unsafe to allow the fine harbour of Morant to remain undefended, for if it was reoccupied by the Spaniards it might prove a serious threat to the new naval base at Cagway, as Port Royal was then called, for it lay to windward of it. Indeed, this course was later recommended by the Governor of Cuba. Towards the latter part of the year 1656 the fleet despatched by Goodson arrived at Nevis, that tiny island on the outer rim of the Caribbean, where the trade-wind forever blows, and clouds as white as snow shroud the crest of its lofty mountain. In all, sixteen hundred men, women and children embarked with Luke Stokes, who was accompanied by his wife and three sons, the eldest of whom was only fifteen. This was no exodus of wealthy planters or of adventurers in search of loot. Most of those that bade farewell, forever, to their island home and sailed into the sunset towards the promised land were humble folk who wrested their living from the soil.

Let us picture the scene that greeted the settlers as their ships dropped anchor in the calm waters of the Port of Morant towards the end of December. Rising from the sea at the head of the cove was a low hill with red cliffs. On either side of it were mangrove swamps, a tangled

mass of roots sprouting from the slime. Here and there, these were pierced by sluggish creeks shaded by trees whose branches met above them in a leafy arch. Behind were low, densely wooded hills, and in the background, swathed with dark forests which hid their secrets, the Sierras de Bastidas brooded ominously over the scene. This wilderness was the promised land to which they had come, a wilderness which could only be tamed by strong arms and stout hearts.

They landed their stores on the beach by the low hill. They pitched their tents and built rude huts as shelters till their first tasks had been completed. The landing place had to be improved and a storehouse built; the woods about the camp had to be cleared and the country around explored; lastly, each family would be eager to select the land that was to be theirs.

Hardly had they begun these tasks when it began to rain and it continued to do so for the next two weeks. Only those who had experienced them can appreciate the rigours of the rainy seasons in the Tropics. Rains that descend day and night in an unending, stupefying roar, beating down the branches of the trees and blotting out the scene with a wall of tumbling water. When they stop, the air is hot and steamy and is filled with the stench of rotting vegetables. These were the conditions that the settlers from Nevis experienced as they waited in their rude shelters for the weather to abate. Wet, cold and tormented by myriads of mosquitoes, to them it must have seemed that there was death in the dank miasmatic air that they breathed.

The blow was not long delayed. By January many were sick. In February Luke Stokes and his wife were stricken and by the beginning of March twelve hundred of the colonists had followed him once more, this time to the grave.

Although weak and wracked with fevers the survivors continued their hard task. They cleared the woods, they planted their crops, and the fittest of them hunted wild hogs in the mountains.

Their efforts were rewarded when later in the year they reaped a harvest, so bountiful that it was almost beyond their strength to gather it. The threat of another famine was thus averted and it was in large measure due to them that England was able to maintain her hold on Jamaica.

As their numbers were now too few to ensure the defence of this side of the island, part of the Regiment that had come out with Brayne was sent to Morant where they built two forts at the entrance to the Harbour, later known as Fort Lynch and Fort William. These soldiers had been recruited partly from the veteran Regiments under Monck in Scotland, and partly from the garrison in Ireland, and it was said later that they were "the best men that had ever come to Jamaica".

There is little more to tell. In 1658 Doyley on his way to attack the Spaniards at Rio Nuevo put in to the Port and was hospitably entertained by the settlers for a week. Long mentions that by 1671 they were prosperous and had developed upwards of sixty settlements, but in 1694 a disaster occurred, which must have hastened the disappearance of the Yeoman Farmers as a class.

In May of that year a warning was received that the French in Haiti under Du Casse were planning an attack on Jamaica. The Governor, Sir William Beeston, realized that it would be impossible to successfully defend the east end of the island so he ordered the Militia Regiment and all the settlers, with such goods as they could carry away with them, to withdraw to the newly founded town of Kingston.

At that time there was only one road to the Precincts of St. David and St. Thomas and this ran along the sea shore at the foot of the cliffs near Cow Bay. He knew that if the French seized this defile-as is in fact, they later did-it would be impossible to reinforce the troops in the East End or to withdraw them, Furthermore, although the forts at the entrance to Port Morant might prevent ships entering the harbour it would be easy for the enemy to attack them from the rear. Therefore, in accordance with the Governor's orders, the guns at the forts were spiked, the shot buried, and the powder brought away.

On the 17th of June Du Casse landed, and during the next month he laid waste the countryside. He fired the cane fields, he burnt the sugar works, and dwellings, he slaughtered the cattle, he ill-treated those whom he captured and he carried off everything of value and all the slaves on whom he could lay his hands. It was many years before the district recovered its former prosperity.

Little is known of the descendants of Luke Stokes. A heavy burden must have fallen on his eldest son who was only fifteen but then responsibilities had to be shouldered at an early age in those far off times. Goodson appealed to Cromwell on their behalf and mentioned that the old Governor's fortune had been greatly reduced by his removal to Jamaica, and it is said that the Protector granted one of them a Commission in a Regiment in one of the American colonies.

In Modyford's survey of the island in 1670, it is recorded that John Stokes owned 25 acres of land in St. Thomas and Jacob Stokes 640 in St. David, for which parish the latter was returned as a member of the Assembly in 1672. In the eighteenth century another Colonel Jacob Stokes, had a son whom he also named Jacob, and when the latter died, the male line became extinct.

Stokes Hall, the family seat, was probably built towards the end of the seventeenth century or early in the eighteenth. It was strongly fortified and was undoubtedly intended as a rallying place for the Militia in troublous times. When it was destroyed by fire in 1933 it was the oldest dwelling in the island, which, had been lived in continuously from the time it was built. The Great-House at Stokesfield belongs to a later period.

The names of some of the estates in the district such as Bowden, Wards River, Stanton, Stokes Hall, Stokesfield, Phillipsfield, Wheelersfield and Rolandsfield are probably those of the first owners and there is another name here about which it is interesting to speculate. Near Stokesfield there is a little stream known as the River Styx. Perhaps it is connected in some way with the burial place of the first settlers, if so, let us hope that the shades of the men and women from Nevis rest in peace in the world beyond its banks.



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