Historical and Archaeological Society The Museum of Antigua and Barbuda

"Knowledge to be of any Value must be Communicated"

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National Parks Authority Unveils Memorial Of Enslaved Africans

Extract from Antigua Newsroom

The Museum in the Nelson's Dockyard is now home to an exhibit that pays homage to the memory of a group of enslaved Africans who were killed in an explosion on March 8, 1744.



The unveiling of the exhibit took place during a ceremony on Sunday 8th March, the anniversary of the tragic event in the Nelson's Dockyard.

Beyond the incident, it tells the story of the significant contribution that hundreds of enslaved Africans made in the construction of the Nelson's Dockyard, which is today a UNESCO World Heritage Site. (Cont. on page 2)

National Parks Authority Unveils Memorial Of Enslaved Africans (Cont. from page 1)

Among those in attendance at the ceremony were Governor General's Deputy Sir Clare Roberts, who unveiled the eight foot memorial inside the Dockyard museum.



Sir Clare Roberts unveiling memorial

In giving remarks, Chairman of the Board of the National Parks Authority Ambassador Arthur Thomas was able to place the activity in perspective.

"Today, here, on the 8th of March, the anniversary of a terrible event, but one which brings us closer to our history, we wish to commemorate the Africans who were brought here and forced to build this place, celebrate their skilled contributions, and restore them and their names to their rightful place in Dockyard's history," Ambassador Thomas stated.

The 8 March project as it is now being called is the centre piece of ongoing research by the Heritage Department of the National Parks Authority and establishes the foundation for a more extensive project.

Heritage Resources Officer in the Heritage Department of the NPA Desley Gardner revealed that hundreds more enslaved Africans are being identified and the 8th March every year will serve to bring attention to their place in history.

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National Parks Authority Unveils Memorial Of Enslaved Africans

(Cont. from page 1)

"The 8 March Project is not just about the past. It is also about the present and the future. Using these names as a start, we are working on a genealogical project, connecting contemporary families with their ancestors and celebrating the traditions, skills, and continuity of our cultural land-scape," Gardner explained.



"We invite any person or organization who wishes to participate in pulling together these resources, family histories, and collective knowledge to get involved and help uncover our African past, and make sure that Dockyard History is African History."





Memorial of 'The Eight' Enslaved African Slaves

A Chronological History of Town Beginnings at Settlement in Antigua

- 1632 Falmouth was the first part of the is land settled by the English.
- 1640 Gov. Warner lived near Falmouth Bay. The English settlers in the vil lage.
- 1668 "Falmouth appears to have had the lead at this time".
- 1668/04 An act proposed a town to be built on St John's Harbour.
- 1670 New town of St J's, rebuilt after Fr. invasion, destroyed by hurricane
- 1671/04 Lt. P. Lee & Sgt-Major, N. Clarke paid 300lbs for fixing Court Ho. at Falmouth
- 1675 67 emigrants from Barbados settled in Antigua. (At Bridgetown?).
- 1675 Vessels not to unload or sell cargo except in the six appointed towns.
- 1675 Bermudian Valley was one of the trading towns appointed this year.
- 1675 Bridgetown one of the six appointed trading towns.
- 1675/09 Places of trade were: Falmouth, St J, Bridgetown, Carlisle Rd, Parham, Bermudian Valley
- 1676 Stapleton reported one church only, at Falmouth, also served as a Court
- 1689 Falmouth same size as St John's town.
- 1701 Parham is our second town of trade.

The Last Major Pandemic in the Caribbean

By Grenada National Trust

Written by Fayola Moore-Edwards

With the threat of Covid-19 breathing down our necks at every turn and life as we knew it uprooted with little warning, it's hard not to feel anxious about the future and our ability to fight this invisible enemy. It all seems so daunting but did you know that Grenada (and the Caribbean) has been in this position once before? A century ago we warded off a major worldwide pandemic, and survived.

The Pandemic of 1918-1919

The Spanish Flu hit our region about 100 years ago. It appeared in 1918 during the final stages of WWI. The whole world was reeling from the grief of a four four-year long war when this virulent killer struck. Virology studies and technology were merely decades old and countries were picking up the pieces in war-torn areas. The world was ill-prepared. Colonialism was in full swing around the world, including on most Caribbean islands.



The term, "Spanish Flu," is a misnomer since it originated in the US in the first quarter of 1918. It was so dubbed because Spain was the only country reporting on its devastation at the time, due to its neutral status during the war.

This (new) influenza virus spread to Europe and then returned to the Americas with renewed vigour. It killed an estimated 50-100 million, which is a figure revised upwards from the first estimates of 24.7-39.3 million.

Not much is widely known about it because it is often overshadowed by WWI, which occupied press headlines and social statistics records throughout the world.

The Flu was said to have come in three waves. The first wave caused only mild symptoms (although highly contagious), the second was most virulent in spread and mortality and the third wave was less severe. The Flu affected the Caribbean between September 1918 and the first 4 months of 1919.

The Pandemic in the Caribbean

The virus entered the Caribbean via ships from the US and was seen in Guadeloupe and Puerto Rico from early September, 1918. Jamaica was one of the worst hit along with Puerto Rico, Belize and Guyana. The true scale of its impact in the Caribbean is unknown because of various factors; including the non-existence or incompleteness of official social statistics records.

The overall death toll recorded in the Caribbean was about 100,000. Some areas were ravaged by the disease whereas others were mildly affected. Disparities in mortality (death toll) and morbidity (infection rate) are attributed to varying factors. Some authorities took early preventative action while others did not. The late arrival to the Windward Islands may have caused them to experience a weakened strain. Some governments made the disease quarantinable but stopped short of making it a notifiable disease and, at that time in the Caribbean, hundreds of deaths in poor and isolated areas went unregistered

The Most Vulnerable

Unsurprisingly, the virus was most severe on the poor, living in small crowded houses or overpopulated areas. The isolated indigenous communities also received a colossal blow. Reports in Guyana indicate that between 60-80% of the indigenous people were affected at one time and entire communities were obliterated. Officials in badly affected areas observed that a lost sense of morale seemed to have an impact on mortality.

The Last Major Pandemic in the Caribbean

(Continued from page 4)

Those who fared well tended to live in less densely populated areas where it was easy to spend time outdoors.

Whereas common influenza epidemics typically affected children and the very old, large numbers of young people in their 20s fell to this influenza.

Common Measures Taken in the Caribbean

The common preventative measures taken by territorial authorities in the Caribbean were not unlike those adopted around the world. There were quarantines on shipping from the USA and other countries, restriction on movements from one parish to the next, isolation of affected individuals, dissemination of information via pamphlets, restriction on gatherings of more than 10 people and suspension of schools and worship gatherings. The pamphlets contained information about the disease and its spread as well as preventative recommendations and suggested remedies. masks, a common measure also employed in the USA, were also recommended. Unfortunately, most of these resources would have been inaccessible to many because of their expense or because of endemic inequities such as those relating to literacy. Communities in territories whose governments took little or no action imposed their own restrictions.



A group of women wearing masks to protect them from the Spanish flu. Photograph from *Guyana Chronicle* courtesy *University of Waterloo*

The Windward Islands and Our

Neighbours

The Windward islands had varying experiences with the virus's impact. St. Lucia saw the Flu's entry in mid-November and it had spread throughout the whole island by the end of the month, with its highest death rate concentrated in the Roseau valley and Cul-de-Sac.

In Dominica, the "Christmas Flu," as it was locally dubbed, was present from late November. They experienced a mild touch at first and its spread was fairly slow but, by the end of December, it had paralyzed the island.

As for St. Vincent, anticipating its imminent arrival, several demands for the government to improve sanitary conditions were made early via the press. The virus exhausted itself within two weeks of its first showing in mid- December, causing only a low death toll. The press of that period highlighted the interruption of trade in imported fish and meat and the urgent need to improve public health as the most important issues in the wake of the pandemic.

Barbados was very mildly touched with a low mortality rate, although many were infected.

Grenada's Pandemic Experience

In Grenada, the Flu appeared in early December and by 12th December, 1918, quarantine measures were in place on trade with Venezuela, Panama, Canada and the United States. It was declared a notifiable disease before the end of the year. Its actual toll is difficult to interpret because of seemingly conflicting reports vs records: Medical officers described it as devastating, yet death records don't reflect any significant increase in that year nor was there a significant number of deaths attributed to the flu. This could be because of poorly regulated death certification at the time. One could make an informed guess that, perhaps, the disease was severe for many but not fatal.

(Continued on page 6)

The Last Major Pandemic in the Caribbean

(Continued from page 5)

Trinidad and Tobago

Our southern neighbours, Trinidad and Tobago were touched fairly lightly by the disease despite its impact in Venezuela. The press was vocal, both in its reporting and in demanding action from the government. Trinidad recorded more than 350 deaths from the Flu and pneumonia in that period. Tobago had no deaths recorded from it whatsoever, although the disease was prevalent in some areas. One health official stated that the disease was mild and hoped it was a secondary wave of Influenza which "would confer on the inhabitants of Tobago a partial immunity."

The Takeaway

Our small island and region has done this before. We confronted a severe pandemic in times when health systems, communication and resources were a lot more limited than they are today. We sustained injuries but survived with the employment of preventative measures and the leadership of authorities that were quick to action. In fact, reading about some of these measures was like reading about our situation in Grenada today. Oh, how history can repeat itself!

But aren't we in a better situation today? We have more access to healthcare, a better understanding of how viruses work, more access to preventative resources, the ability to transition to online work, learning and worship, quick thinking and responsive authorities, amazing medical professionals and access to ongoing discoveries on COVID-19. Can we overcome this? Yes, we can and we will. Let's keep calm and follow official guidelines. Stay Safe, Grenada.



A temporary hospital in Camp Funston Kansas during 1919-19 influenza pandemic.

Photo from Encyclopedia Britannica

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Explosion of a Meteor Near Antigua, West Indies, 1840

From: The American Journal of Science and Arts

4. Explosion of a Meteor near Antigua, West Indies.—The following account is taken from the Dansk Westindisk Regierings Avis, of Jan. 2, 1840.

"On Saturday morning, November 9, 1839, a little after daybreak, a concussion was felt in this town, preceded by a sound like the discharge of a heavy piece of ordnance, not far off, with blank cartridge, with reverberations; we thought it might be an earthquake. The impression was various in the town, it being an hour at which so few persons are awake: some thought it thunder; others, guns; and others, again, the explosion of one of the magazines at the forts at the mouth of the harbor. On inquiry in the course of the day, we heard that it was said by some servants and laborers, who were out soon, that it was a star with a train of fire, which came from the eastward, passed over the town toward the sea, and burst in a blaze. Anxious for all the information we could procure, we sent down to the fort, about three miles below the town, and at the south entrance to the harbor, to desire the chief signal man to report any observations he may have made on that morning. The following reply, coming from a person of great steadiness of character and intelligence, may be relied upon. It has been since fully corroborated by others, and especially fishermen, who were at sea at a very early hour that morning."

On a Country Road in Antigua

Burros provide the chief means of locomotion for the natives of Antigua

The Mentor (1920-1924 (circa))

Many pre-1970s narratives of the Caribbean often refer to non-whites residents as "natives" and not necessarily in a neutral or positive way.

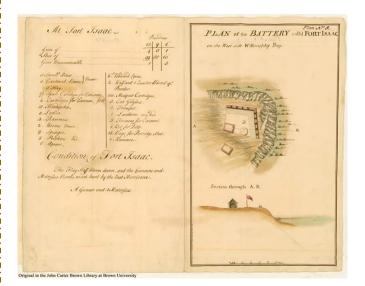


Fort Isaac

By Antigua Naval dockyard and related archaeological sites, UNESCO World Heritage.

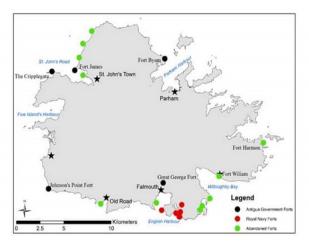
Fort Isaac protected the southern entrance to Willoughby Bay during the War of Austrian Succession (1740-1748). After more than two decades of peace in the Caribbean, a sudden threat from Spanish and then French forces caused the Antiguan legislature to rapidly expand the fortification system, including Fort Isaac.

Willoughby Bay was seen as particularly vulnerable to a French invasion. With most of the population concentrated in the north and west side of the island, there was little to defend against an attack on the southern and eastern sides of the island. The fast pace of construction, however, made for little quality control. Once completed, it was found that the pavement of the battery was too low and the parapet walls too high, meaning that the cannons could not fire over the wall. The contractor was sent back to fix the problem.



Fort Isaac continued to be held by the Antiguan planter government until 1783 when it, and most of the other fortifications, were demobilized and sold off. John Luffman, visiting the island at the time, predicted that these fortifications would be either used as quarries for their stone, or held until the next war and sold back to the government for a profit. In 1790, the Fort Isaac was recommissioned, bearing out Luffman's prediction.

Fort Isaac (Continued from page 7)





Images:

Kane William Horneck courtesy of the John Carter Brown Library, Christopher K. Waters, and Dockvard Museum Collection.

The Arrowroot Factory of Old Road

From The Spring Gardens Teacher Training College Magazine, 1956 By R. Pryce

The parishioners' dream of 10 years has materialized itself into the constructional works of the Arrowroot Factory, of Old Road, 13 1/2 miles from St. John's.

Long and tiresome were the days when sturdy men and women were employed in the grinding, washing, and drying processes of the rhizomes of the arrowroot. Two men had the arduous task of turning the wheels of the mill and these were replaced by two other men when the first two were tired. The laborious work of the season was however lightened by the lively spirits of the working party who sang creole folk songs, and other songs which they themselves had composed probably on the spur of the moment; old folk tales caused the group to roar with peals of laughter. The friendship of those good old days are still cherished and dear.

The palm-leaf sheds of the old mills are being slowly replaced by a building 150' by 40' of corrugated iron, and there are modern engines which will be electrically controlled. Roads are being built from the main road to render easy access to the building and to a tank of 50,000 gallons capacity, the waters of which will be used for the final rinsing of the finished product. It is hoped that the rinsing water will be run through pipes to an adjacent plot of land where vegetables will be nursed and grown.

Already, peasants are busy planting the rhizomes from the Arrowroot nursery of Morris Estate and their efforts seem to foretell a successful start from the initial crop of 1957. Steady work is being done on the installation of the different parts of the machinery and it is estimated that by November, St. Mary's Parish will be ready to throw open the doors of a complete building to the Public.

(Continued on page 9)

The Arrowroot Factory of Old Road

(Continued from page 8)

The successes of the Arrowroot Factory will cause the island of Antigua to increase its revenue by another economic crop which will be just as highly esteemed as cotton, corn and sweet oil.



Native Arrowroot Factory 1905

It is also interesting to learn that when an adequate amount of sweet potatoes can be produced, they will also be ground in the Factory; here, we will have the home-made cereal of potato flour which every housewife will undoubtedly prize.

The Arrowroot Factory in Antigua's; let every islander support it. Someday, we will extend its size to cope with the imported goods of the Leeward Islands.



Arrowroot Factory in Antigua 1963

World Monument Day April 18th 2020

For World Monument and Sites Day remember our own UNESCO World Heritage Site Antigua Naval Dockyard and Related Archaeological Sites on Nelson's Dockyard National Park. We were inscribed in 2016 due to amazing people who work on keeping it beautiful everyday.





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World Monument Day April 18th 2020

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Scenes from Antigua from Smithsodian Bredin Caribbean Expedition 1958 and 1959



Market 1959



Fishing 1959



Nelsons Dockyard 1959

Scenes from Antigua from Smithsodian **Bredin Caribbean Expedition 1958 and** 1959

(Continued from page 10)



Bendals and Greencastle Hill before quarry 1959



Darkwood/Dead Sands Beach 1959



Sheep grazing 1959

Scenes of Antigua 1958 By David Harris



Beach Bonanza plane at Coolidge Airport 1958



Tractor hauling cut cane for loading 1958



Rough pasture near long bay, Indian Town Creek beyond 1958

MUSENEWS

The Historical and Archaeological Society/ Museum of Antigua and Barbuda has been in existence since 1985. Never in our history has we been impacted by an external event like the Covid-19 pandemic of 2020. In March, we saw the abrupt ending of the tourism season which we depend on heavily for income, both from visitors' door receipts (residents of Antigua and Barbuda enter at no cost) and from walking tours. Then in April, residents were asked to stay at home and large gatherings were prohibited. Income from the gift shop, from fundraising events, and from the rental of the upstairs gallery abruptly came to an end.

Museums all over the world are facing similar challenges. An estimated 90% of the world's approximately 60,000 museums are facing either full or partial closure. We do not want that to happen to us. We have identified three main challenges to remaining available to our community:

- —Protecting our staff by ensuring their safety and health during this period.
- —Dealing with the financial issues resulting from the decline in door receipts, donations, memberships, gift shop receipts, and fundraising events.
- —Devising strategies to remain engaged and relevant to the public.

The Museum must move swiftly to ensure its survival by addressing these issues. We are working feverishly to open by June 2020. In order to comply with government health protocols, staff will need masks and gloves. Our own protocols and signage for visitors must be put in place. Hand-washing stations have to be installed, as well as sneeze screens, directional markers, and Plexiglas covers for touchable exhibits. The frequent cleaning and sanitization of the building and the exhibits will be an additional expense. Welcome to the new normal for museums everywhere!

We will be reaching out to local benefactors and our overseas supports for financial support for all these expenses. We are also looking at best practices for engaging with our supporters and the wider community that are being implemented by our sister museums in the region and internationally. "Museums are more than just places where humanity's heritage is preserved and promoted," noted Ernesto Ottone R., Assistant Director-General for Culture of UNESCO. "They are also key spaces of education, inspiration and dialogue.

At a time when billions of people around the world are separated from one another, museums can bring us together." We are in the process of enhancing and strengthening our social media presence and are planning for an increased use of videoconferencing tools such as Zoom. Zoom is already being used for Museum Board meetings and we plan to use it for events as well.

At this juncture, I would like to express sincere appreciation to the Museum's Curator, Michele Henry, and her staff for their dedicated work during these difficult times, and to the other members of the Board for their leadership and direction. If there is any way that we can serve you, our audience, better, please send us any suggestions. Together we can not only survive this pandemic but hopefully expand our offerings and reach an even wider community that we have in the past.

Walter Berridge Chairman of the Board Historical & Archaeological Society



What's Happening Around the Museum

Conservation of our objects for our "Time Switch" exhibition. These objects were carefully conserved by our volunteer Marley Tracey. More objects to be displayed..get ready for "TIME SWITCH"



DID YOU KNOW.....

LANGUAGE - The Antiguan Creole today, has several words which are of West African origin, based on the tribes who came to the island. Here are some of them:

Bassa bassa: "fooling around". Antroba= 'trober (plant).

Catta: A wad of cloth placed on the head to facilitate the carrying of heavy loads. From Twi kata to cover or protect

Congo: nkata

Cum cum saw: Just come, thinks he knows it all. On-a-me=An na me (It's not me!").

Dukuna: A small pudding made of varying mixtures of grated sweet potatoes, coconut, cornmeal plantain-flour.

From *Akan*: doko na sweeten mouth *Twi*: boiled maize *Ga*: Adangme dokona

Fungee: Boiled cornmeal From *Twi*: fugyee *Yoruba*: funje

Kunumunu: A man easily controlled by a woman. From *Yoruba:* kunun, lacking in self-confidence. kong-kong-sa, to take sided, biased. From *Twi*

Nyam: To eat greedily.

From a number of overlapping African languages.

Wagie/waggi/wajy: Used clothing; hand-medowns.

From *Igb*: wa, to divide. Je, to wear.

Yabba: A round, open, earthen ware vessel used mostly for cooking. Varies in size. From *Twi*: ayawa earthen vessel or dish.

Yampi/yampie: Mucus exuded in the corner of the eyes especially after sleeping From *Twi*: mpe

Warri: A game played with marbles or nichars. From: *Twi:* ware *Fante:* nware

Sources: Dictionary of Caribbean English Us-

age: Richard Allsopp

Colours and Rhythms of Selected Caribbean

Creole: Joy Lawrence

Some <u>Antiguan Proverbs</u> are stemmed from West Africa. For example: "When man dead, grass grow at he door".

The Historical & Archaeological Society Newsletter is published at the Museum quarterly in January, April, July and October. HAS encourages contribution of material relevant to the Society from the membership or Other interested individuals

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Historical and Archaeological Society

JANUARY, FEBRUARY, MARCH 2020HAS NEWSLETTER, No. 148

UPCOMING EVENTS

NO EVENTS UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE

Join HAS! Discover & Preserve Antigua & Barbuda's Heritage

NAME:	CIRCLE MEMBERSHIP	
ADDRESS:	CATEGORY	
	Individual	\$ 50 EC/\$ 25US
TELEPHONE: (H)(W)		(Mailing included)
MAIL:	Student	\$ 15 EC
	Family	\$100 EC/\$45US
IGNATURE:		(mailing included)
ATE:	Life	\$ 500 EC/\$ 200US
	Business Patron	\$ 500 EC