

# Historical and Archaeological Society The Museum of Antigua and Barbuda

“Knowledge to be of any Value must be Communicated”

HAS Newsletter No. 160 January, February March 2023



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## **Jamaica Kincaid visit at the Museum of Antigua & Barbuda.**

We welcomed Jamaica Kincaid an Antigua American Author who was born in St. John's, Antigua. Her highly praised books include the novels *Annie John*, *Lucy* and *At the Bottom of the River*, and *A Small Place* - an essay about the island of Antigua. She now resides in North Benningtons, Vermont in the United States.



## The 8<sup>th</sup> of March Project

### A Community Based Initiative



On the 8th of March 1744, an explosion ripped through English Harbor. A tent storing gunpowder ignited, killing eight enslaved African men. Their names were Billy, London, James Soe, Caramatee, Quamono, Dick, Joe, Scipio, and Johnno.

Named after the date of the explosion, the 8th of March Project is a collaborative, community oriented, interdisciplinary research initiative, headed by the Heritage Department at the National Parks Authority. The goals of the project are to recover and commemorate the names and lives of the enslaved and free Africans who labored in the Dockyard and lived in English Harbor, and to celebrate the continuous cultural landscape that is the English Harbor and Falmouth Harbor communities.

For the year 2023, **The 8<sup>th</sup> of March Project** was heavily focused on sharing the newly found research information with the immediate St Paul's Community and the wider Antiguan and Barbudan populace.

The components of this year's commemoration included two Community Workshops, School Visits/Lectures and media appearances. The activities were well received and the project continues to develop into a structured community based initiative that will celebrate genealogical connections, architectural innovation and West African communal practices that have transcended history.

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The NPA hosted two community workshops in the month of March at Cobbs Cross Primary School. The workshops were held on the 8<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> of March 2023, open to the members of the St Paul's Community. These workshops were intended to educate the community on the basis of **The 8<sup>th</sup> of March Project** and the history of the African Labourers who worked and lived in the Dockyard. The community members were also introduced to archival material being used by the National Parks Authority.



The names found within the archival material were cross-referenced with family records and oral stories shared by the attendees of the workshop. Archival records revealed names that still exist in the St Paul's Community and the wider Antigua and Barbudan communities,

names such as Martin, Bayley, Brown, White, Fortune, Shepherd, Nibbs, Burke, Gordon, Lovell, Lake, Francis, Claxton, Horsford, Kerwan and more. Names are still being added to the database as research progresses. This initiative increased public awareness of this Project and the history of the Dockyard.



The Heritage Department also visited a number of schools during the month of March to share the history behind **The 8<sup>th</sup> of March Project** and the necessary skills for archaeological and archival



research.

The presentations proved to be a very engaging with students learning naval history, architectural conservation, enslavement, World Heritage inscriptions and the development of the yachting industry in Antigua and Barbuda.

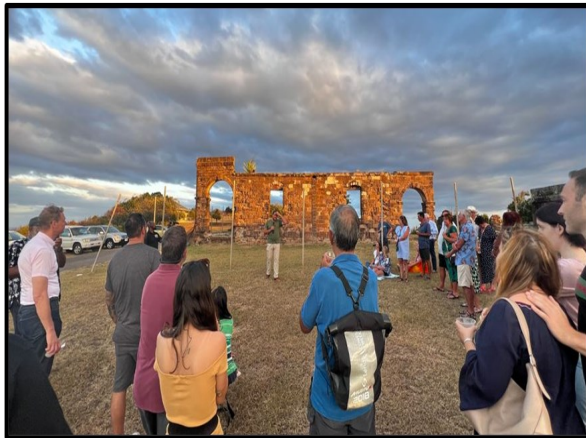
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The students were fascinated by the connections being made between existing

families and the archival materials and very were intrigued by the unique lifestyle of the African labourers of the Dockyard. Exposure to this new knowledge also opened their minds to possible career opportunities which many expressed extended their view of various professional careers.



Additionally, the Heritage Department hosted three special edition 'Rum in the Ruins' events during the month of March. These special events were held on the 3<sup>rd</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> of March 2023. The first iteration was held on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of March 2023 at Dow's Hill Fortification.

The second iteration was held on the 10<sup>th</sup> of March 2023 at Blockhouse Military Complex. Specially invited guests were also present from the Ex-Servicemen Association and the event was filmed and broadcasted by We the People Radio.

The final iteration of the 'Rum in the Ruins' was closed to the public and catered for the Staff of the National Parks Authority.

This was well supported and enjoyed by the staff members.

A visiting delegation from Guadeloupe representing CARIFORTS was also in attendance.

Moreover, media outreach played another role in disseminating information about **The 8th of March Project** and other initiatives of the National Parks Authority.

The project is still in its early stages so this year's focus on community required increased media stimulation to share the concept of the project and the adjoining history of the naval dockyard.



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The connection of African ancestry to the modern descendants was the main highlight and focus for much of the media talks which peaked the interests of the TV/radio hosts and their audiences.

These media appearances also afforded the Heritage Department an opportunity to share the role and responsibilities of the National Parks Authority. The expanse and range of the National Park was addressed along with clarification of the UNESCO World Heritage status and what it entails.

To further celebrate this year's commemoration, T-Shirts were designed and are currently on sale in the Dockyard Museum Gift shop for \$50 XCD.

## **Suck-Teeth / Chups/ Schoops African Influences in Communication.**

**(This article is presented in recognition of Black History Month, February 2023)**

Most persons believe that we only communicate by using words (verbal communication), so that when we remain silent, we are not communicating.

This is not so. We communicate even when we remain silent (non-verbal). Your silence can communicate - I'm angry at what you're saying; I'm not interested in what you're saying; I don't agree with what you are saying; I agree with what you are saying (Silence gives consent). It has been suggested that 55% of our communication is non-verbal. One kind of non-verbal communication is *gesture*. Suck-Teeth / Chups / Schoops is gesture that is very common in communication in the Caribbean,

, and by inclusion Antigua and Barbuda.

*(Please note that for the rest of this article suck-teeth will be written as 'chups'.)*

Linguists describe chups thus: a gesture of drawing air through the teeth and into the mouth to produce a loud sucking sound. Chups is used to communicate several messages: anger, impatience, annoyance, amused tolerance (listening to jokes and stories), self-admonition (when the 'chupster' realises she has done something silly), sorrow (a series of chups with head shaking slowly from side to side). Sometimes chups used in anger can lead to blows. Although persons of all ages use the gesture of chups, for young persons to do so in the presence of parents or other adults is considered very disrespectful. Scolding may result.

There are several African equivalents of chups :

- Mende: *i ngi yongoi yofoin lo nya ma* – "He sucked his teeth on me."  
 Temne: *tos ne* - "to suck to self"  
 Igbo: *ima oso* - "to make a sucking noise with the mouth"  
 Yoruba: *kpose* (vb) "to make a sucking noise with the mouth"  
           *ose* (n)  
           "sucking noise made with the mouth"  
 Luo: *ichiya* (vb) "to make suck teeth noise"  
           *chiyo* (n) "suck teeth noise"  
 Krio: *no sok yu tit pan mi* - "Don't suck your teeth on me"  
           *no sok tit mi* - "Don't suck-teeth me."

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Cameroon

Pidgin: *no sok yo tif fo mi* - "Don't suck your teeth on me."

West African equivalents may also emerge for chups: *cho, chu, cha*. These may be shortened forms, as they carry the same meaning. There is Ewe *tsoo* – interjection of astonishment, anger, impatience, disappointment. There is also Twi *tweaa*, an interjection expressing utter disdain.

With further research, we will learn more about the influence of Africa on our communication habits. For example, in Antiguan Creole, the words *stick, stand*, become *tick, tan*. The word *truck* becomes *chuck*; Trinidad becomes *Chinidad*. Indeed, we cannot ignore the influence of Africa on all facets of our lives in the Caribbean, and most importantly, how we communicate. Communication is life.

Much gratitude is expressed to the researchers Angela and John Rickford, who kindly made their research findings available for this article.

Source: The Journal of American Folklore, Vol 89, No 353 (Jul. - Sep. 1976). Pp. 294-309



A suck-teeth (chups) made with the inner surface of the lower lip pressed against the lower teeth.

## RADIO STATIONS IN ANTIGUA

Today in 2023 there are quite a few radio stations operating here in Antigua and very few people know the history of who operated the very first radio station, where or when it was started.

When googling "radio stations in Antigua", the following list emerged. Ten radio stations.

I would imagine each has its following. For years there was the Caribbean Relay Station run by the BBC (UK) and Dutchavelli (Germany), each running the station alternatively every two years.

The towers and buildings still stand on the road to Seaview Farm just past the Factory dam on the left.

Radio has been and still is, an important media in which to get the word out.

Second Advent Radio	101.5
Caribbean Radio Lighthouse	1160.0
Nice FM	104.3
Antigua Observer Newspaper	91.1
Zoom Radio	95.7
Healthy choice	94.9
Red Hot Flames	98.5
GFR	102.9
Liberty Radio	97.1
Liberty Radio ZDK	97.1FM

The very first radio station in Antigua was started by Clement de Silvia who operated out of his Nevis Street home.

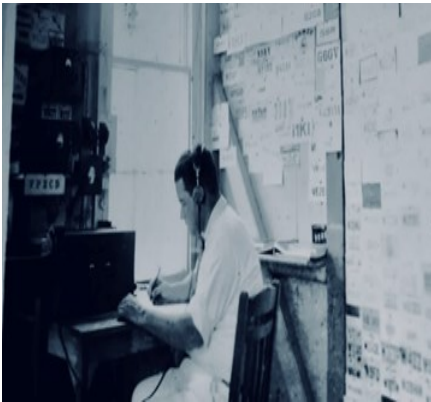
It appears to have been a government initiative around the late 40's, early 50's and a picture taken in the garden show the staff or "casting members" at the time.

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They were – Clement de Silvia, Avis Athill, Edina Edwards, Eunice White, Clarence Harney, Henry Harney and Dolly Harney. (One person not named)



The inset picture shows Clement de Silvia “at work” in a room set aside within his home, with headphones, and behind him a

board filled with notes.

His daughter Elsie de Silvia remembers that whenever they were broadcasting, all of the children – Elsie (de Silvia), Mooney, Evelyn (Westcott) and Ronnie – had to be quiet “as church mice”, because the mike picked up every sound. She also remembers various people of note arriving as visitors to be included in the broadcasts and news items. She was not sure what time the broadcasts were, probably just once a day but definitely not ongoing throughout the day. This was a new initiative, and in spite of several newspapers and a town crier, many tuned in to hear the latest news on Antigua’s first radio station, both around the world and what was happening in Antigua.

Clement de Silvia was born in Antigua to a Portuguese family from Madeira.

## The Adventures of a Black Edwardian Intellectual

### The Story of James Arthur Harley

Pamela Roberts; Signal Books of Oxford, 2022

This is a new book which chronicles the life of an Antiguan, James Arthur Harley, born 15 May 1873. He was baptised in July 1873 at All Saints’ Anglican Church, and confirmed by the Bishop of Antigua Charles James Branch in 1887. His father was Henry James Harley (landlord) and his mother Josephine Eleanor Lake, a seamstress, formerly of Anguilla. He had an older sibling, a sister Alice Maude.

James attended the All-Saints Primary School, the Mico School in St. John’s, and the Teachers’ College at Spring Gardens. He was an excellent student who was successful at all his exams. After Teachers’ College, he taught at the Vieques School in Puerto Rico for a short time, and returned to Antigua when US troops invaded Puerto Rico at the start of the Spanish American War. He left for New York the same year.

These are the main facts which tie James Arthur Harley to Antigua, for he never returned and there is very little in the biography that indicates that he kept in close contact with his island home over his long life spent in America and England. The word ‘**Adventures**’ in the title of the book prepares the reader for a story full of action, and is in contrast to the photograph of Harley in his clerical collar.

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What adventures could a priest have at the turn of the nineteenth century in America and England? Is this a 'pirate' story?

Harley's greatest ambition was to become an Anglican priest. It was an ambition that drove him every day of his life. He wanted to attend the best universities both in America and England, and become a well-educated priest. It was this ambition that made him some friends, but very powerful enemies.

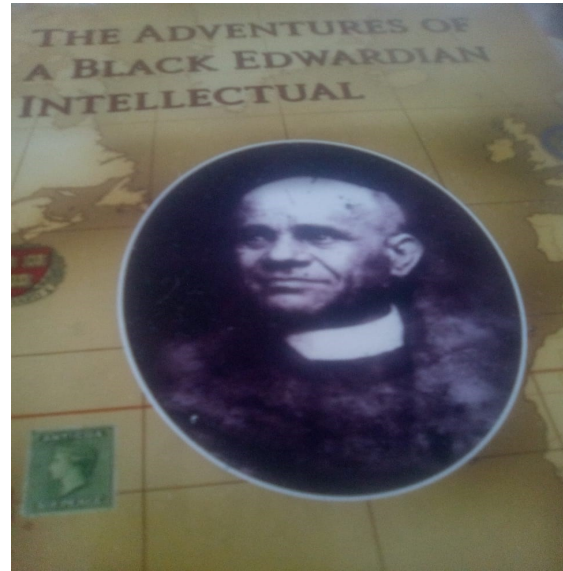
Harley never gained the respect of his colleagues or professors, and was at odds with the bishops and other church leaders wherever he served. Some readers may see him as a brilliant West Indian who never reached the position to which he belonged through his education and training for the priesthood.

He was a brilliant student at Howard, Harvard, and Oxford. He won debating and essay competitions. He was an excellent priest. He filled churches which were previously empty. He cared for the poor and marginalised in his parishes; he did community work, helped during both wars, and kept the Town Council on its toes when he was elected as a council member. And yet, other readers, like some of the persons who had to interact with him as student and priest, may see him as a good example of the usual West Indian 'smart man', the Anancy character whose every move was for more money, more power, more status. When news reached the Dean of Harvard of Harley's ordination in October 1910, he reflected, 'I am glad he has done well, but somehow, I cannot even now, feel that I should want him for my spiritual adviser'.

To both Americans and English, he was regarded as a nuisance, wanting financial assistance and favours continually. His landlady had to write to Harvard complaining about his debts for room and board; his wife of just two years filed for divorce citing adultery with a friend's wife. He had the reputation of having a quick temper and a sharp tongue.

He was brilliant. But Harley had no money. As the Creole saying goes - '*his ambition was more than his position*'.

He spent a lot of his time working out schemes to get larger grants, to reduce



campus expenses, to shorten his required number of courses, to increased pay in his little village church.

Harley was never able to find happiness. He could always find something or someone wrong. He died on the 12th May 1943 in England.

**THE END**



# What's Happening At The Museum

## St. Nicholas Primary School visit to the Museum



# DR.reg Murphy and MR. Walter conducting a walk around and inspection on the building for termites



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 2023 No. 159

## UPCOMING EVENTS



Imagine St, John's in the year 1897. Your own vintage tour of then and now. Walk the streets as you compare the buildings of then and now, where was Gutter Lane and Crow Lane? Did you know that the Public Market was situated at the bottom of Long Street? There are so many secrets to reveal. Coming soon in 2023..QR Code friendly. Staff are presently researching street names and building for the exhibit. Stay connected for further information, by visiting our Facebook page, *The Museum of Antigua and Barbuda*. Also visit our website [www.antiguamuseums.net](http://www.antiguamuseums.net)

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

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