

Historical and Archaeological Society The Museum of Antigua and Barbuda

“Knowledge to be of any Value must be Communicated”

HAS Newsletter No. 157

April, May, June 2022



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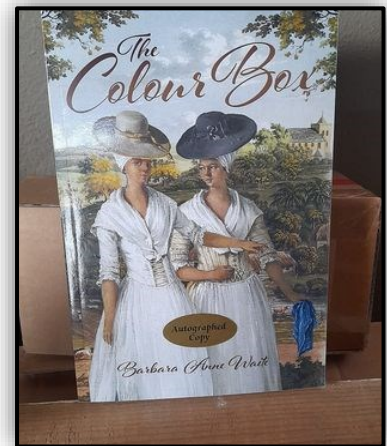
The Colour Box

By Janice Augustin

The Colour Box is a historical novel set in Antigua. This fact alone should pique the interest of readers who are browsing. How often is our country showcased in this way?

According to the writer Ann Waite, the story is about two committed teachers 'willing to cross the lines of culture and colour to bring education to the disadvantaged.' And indeed, the central plot follows the lives of two sisters Ann and Elizabeth

Hart who live their lives dedicated to the education of slaves.



What gives the plot width and depth is the method in which the Hart sisters 'cross the lines of culture and colour'. First, the sisters are free- coloureds in Antigua, their father a free- coloured planter who has slaves on his plantation. Here, the many contradictions in slave societies are demonstrated clearly by the writer. In several instances, there are more questions than answers, providing food for thought for the reader.

Another crossing of 'the lines of culture and colour' is that both sisters marry white men connected with the early Methodist Church in Antigua - Charles Thwaites and John Gilbert. The history of the Methodist Church in Antigua is well documented, and Antigua is regarded as the cradle of Methodism.

(Continued on page 2)

Book Review: Barbara Anne Waite;

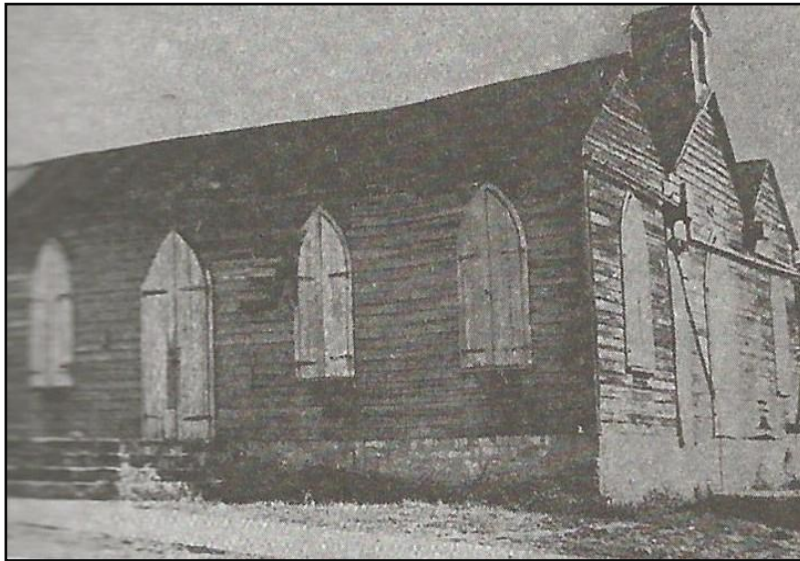
The Colour Box

(Continued from page 1)

The writer portrays attitudes of intolerance and bigotry by members of this early church to both couples that should engender lively discussion among readers.

Nevertheless, the good writer she is, Waite never loses sight of her main theme – the dedication of the two sisters as teachers, to educate the slaves. It was by no means an easy life for them. The writer has done quality research into this period of Antiguan history, and of the Hart sisters themselves, as set out in the section ‘Author’s Notes’.

This is an excellent text for middle and upper classes in Secondary Schools. Teachers will find it useful for discussion and group projects for history, social studies, geography, art and craft, and even economics. The Colour Box is truly a learning opportunity for all ages.



Methodist church school built in 1871 (museum collection)

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My Village Part 1

Extracted from book *'Boy from Popeshead'* by Leon H. Matthias

When I was a boy growing up in Cedar Grove, I always wanted to know who were the first people to settle in this area. I also wanted to know where they came from and about what time they settled here. I read several accounts of the slaves who had lived on the estates before emancipation in 1834. But it was my mother who told me the story just as she had heard it from her parents and grandparents.

The village of Cedar Grove was established in the 1840's. When the slaves were freed in 1834, they wanted to be on their own. They wanted to move away from the estate to begin a life of real freedom. Because Antigua is only 108 square miles, not much idle lands were available.

Much of the arable lands on Antigua were owned by the Estates. These in turn were owned by wealthy Feudal Barons in England. For several generations these lands were passed on to members of families, thus continuing a chain of land ownership. Only a few wealthy Antiguans were able to break this chain. They did so at a time when the output of sugar was declining and some owners were eager to relinquish their land holdings in Antigua.

The village of Cedar Grove is situated four miles north of St. Johns, the Capital city of Antigua. It is built on a hill which must have been unsuited for the cultivation of sugar cane. Several estates were located around it. These included Boons, Hart, Crosbies, Longfords, Weatherhill, Mount Pleasant, Thibou Jarvis, Royals, Judges and Hodges Plantations.

Some persons remained on the estates and entered into a special arrangement with the owners.

They felt attached to the little huts where they had lived all their lives. Their children were born here, and it was here their parents had gasped the last breath before passing peacefully into eternity. Some estate owners improved the workers living quarters as a means of encouraging them to remain on the estate. Other workers moved to this barren spot to establish the village of Cedar Grove. They traveled to the estates every day to earn their livelihood, but returned to their homes each evening.

My mother recalled some persons who left the estates under difficult and trying circumstances. "Many of the overseers took advantage of poor black people," she recalled, almost overtaken by her emotions. There was an overseer at Longford's Estate by the name of Mr. Byam, treated black people as if they were dirt. If he did not like you, "darg betta dan you". He would give a difficult task to perform and if you refused, he would ask you to give him "Bakra Bill" meaning that you will work at his pleasure. One day he asked a gentleman to weed some grass at a particular place. The man refused and Mr. Byam told him to leave the estate house he and his family occupied before nightfall."

As their economic conditions improved, some villagers bought small plots of land measuring 30' x 50' at \$30 per plot. This was a lot of money in those days. They built a small house on the land, using the discarded material from the estates. They cultivated the space around their house producing fruits and vegetables.

No one knows how the village actually got its name; however many theories have been advanced. There were some who believe that because the cedar tree grew here in abundance, the people called it Cedar Grove. The first recorded mention of the name "Cedar Grove" was made in a letter written by Reverend Charles Baum.

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My Village Part 1

(Continued from page 3)

Reverend Baum, the first Moravian Minister to serve in this area wrote to his superiors in England on May 29, 1841, informing them that the church had bought a piece of land from Mr. Cable of Cedar Grove.



The Gracefield Moravian Sanctuary in Cedar Grove opened August 11th, 1840

My mother could not remember ever seeing a "Wattle and Daub" house in Cedar Grove, but she believed there could have been some in the early days as the village developed. It was not easy to get building materials. You could not go to a store and purchase things as you can today. As a matter of fact, black people did not have the money. The village of Cedar Grove was divided into several sections even though there were no clear lines of demarcation. "Top Farm", "Bottom Farm", "La Passar", Stevens and "Topper Hill" are the names of these divisions. Our family lived at "Top Farm".

(Photo extracted from book *Down Puntty Hill* by

Leon H. Matthias)

In the early 1940's, it was recognized that there was a need for the village to expand to accommodate the new families which were being established, and those who were moving from the estates. But the villagers found themselves hemmed in by the public road on one side and the estate lands on the other.

A number of persons met regularly on Monday evenings at the Union Hall in Cedar Grove to discuss issues relating to the development of the village and the economic welfare of the villagers. These included Clarence Joseph, Denzil George, Ashley Peters, George Matthias and Denzil Manwarren.

These men encouraged their union leaders from the Head Office in St. Johns to approach the Shoul's family with the view of purchasing some lands for village expansion. The Shoul's, who were the owners of the Thibou Jarvis Estate, agreed to sell the government some lands west of the Anglican Church. It was recommended that the money to purchase the land and build the houses be taken from the Sugar Welfare Fund. This fund was established from monies received when the price of sugar was increased in 1946. It was managed by a committee under the Chairmanship of the Social Welfare Officer. The goal was to provide houses for factory workers, estate workers and peasants through the hire purchase system.

Eight persons from Cedar Grove were chosen to be a part of this pilot project. These included Fabian Joseph, Gladys Weekes, Montique Joseph, Alvin Archibald, Albert DeSilvia, Joseph Ambrose, Aaron Samuel and Man George. They were required to sign an agreement with the Central Housing and Planning Authority to repay the loan of one thousand dollars over a twenty year period. Other members from the village were able to buy house plots from the government to construct their own houses. Those who did not benefit from this first housing project had their chance in 1951. The hurricanes which struck Antigua in 1950 completely destroyed about 1400 houses. The Labor leaders proposed a re housing scheme, which would rid the country of the wattle and daub houses. They also proposed that the monies received through the Hurricane Relief Fund and from the Colonial Office be used to construct about 400 houses in several parts of the island. A number of influential persons on the island did not like the idea but later signed on. The Governor, Sir Kenneth Blackburne gave the project his full support.

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My Village Part 1

(Continued from page 4)

The people of the villages were encouraged to establish self help groups to construct these houses. This was one way of using the local talent that was available and at the same time enabling the money to construct as many houses as possible. The Labor leaders had the opportunity to study an aided self help model which had been established in Puerto Rico.

A local committee was given the responsibility of selecting the members for each group. Each group was made up of fifteen persons. Special attention was given to the length of time the person resided in the district, their physical fitness, age and character. Each person was required to work two days each week for the duration of the project.

The idea of self help groups was not new to the people of Cedar Grove. Many of the houses in the village were constructed through the "lift" system. Its principles were already at work among the farmers, boat builders and fishermen. The boats were built and repaired by the fishermen helping each other.

The ownership of land was crucial to the development of the village and its people. In the early 1950's, there was some agitation in Antigua for the local government to proceed on a program of land settlements. The farmers wanted land to cultivate to provide food for their families and at the same time have an additional source of income. They were also aware that Royal Commissions had investigated this question of land settlements in Antigua in 1891, 1897 and again in 1928. On each occasion, the commissioners recommended that the government purchase lands

from the estates and distribute them to small farmers. This they argued would reduce the incidence of unemployment on the island.

With the government owning the land and renting it to small farmers this would be a giant step on the road to full freedom.

The farmers in the country would be less dependent on private individuals for their livelihood.

(Continued in next issue)

Old Parham School

Excerpt from *'The Footprints of Parham'*
by Joy Lawrence

The Anglicans built a school in the early 1800s to educate children from Parham and its environs. Many villagers speak fondly of attending Parham School. Some had to walk long distances each day. The building served not only as a school, but also as a social centre for dances, concerts, singing meetings, fetes and other activities that brought everyone together.

There is no known record of when the first Parham Government School building was constructed, but it is believed to have existed prior to the turn of the twentieth century. It is the only one remembered by current residents and their recent ancestors. Its foundation still exists at the corner of the cemetery grounds.

St. Peter's Anglican Church owned the property but rented it to the Government of Antigua to hold school. It was a large, one-room wooden structure with shingled roof and sides. A high gable faced east the street. Atop it stood the bell chamber, from which rang the call for students to come. A low porch on the front blocked rambunctious kids from running out the sole east door and falling to the ground.

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Old Parham School

(Continued from page 5)

Two flights of steps flanked the porch. The long sides of the building were symmetrical with a double door in the center and windows on both sides. There was a fairly wide platform with north and south steps leading to it from the main floor. At the back of the platform, two doors with steps led to the schoolyard.

Many, many students passed through that one-room school. For many years, it was the only government-run institution of learning for most people in the parish. Besides Parham, children came from Pares Village; Parham Lodge, the Cottons and Coconut Hall in the east; Parham Hill, Lindsay and Vernons in the south, and Blackman, Cedar Hill, Donovans and North Sound in the west. Some families from as far as Freeman's Village, All Saints and Pigotts sent their children. For some, it was a stepping-stone to higher education in St. John's.

The classes ranged from kindergarten to seventh standard. To cater for numbers and ability levels, some classes had more than one group. Sixth and seventh standards usually occupied the platform with the head teacher's table. She sat center front to view clearly the whole floor. The hand bell, used to check any rising noise, sat on the table. A manageable buzz would not prevent teaching and learning. Sometimes, especially in the hot sunny days, teachers would take their classes, blackboard, easel and all out under one of the many trees around the yard-tamarind, mahogany, and wild almond. Children could take in the natural surroundings including the burial ground while they had reading and poetry.



Old Parham School in 1977

(Photo by Genevieve Browne)



Foundation of Old Parham School, 2007

Classes went from nine to three with a short mid-morning break, one hour off for lunch, and a short afternoon break. School buses did not exist and regular buses were almost non-existent even up to the 1950s. Most students living outside of Parham walked, taking shortcuts where possible. It was no big deal for a student to walk barefoot. Sometimes they arrived soaked and had to dry themselves; nevertheless, most students enjoyed school and parents were anxious for their children to get an education to improve their lives.

During breaks and in spite of the wall, children spilled over into the road between the burial ground and schoolyard.

They played a variety of games-rounders, corkings, cricket, and catcher also known as hide and seek. Girls decked themselves with coralita, a wild vine with little pink flowers, as they played bride and groom.



Coralita flowers
Children, naturally, sought out any in-season fruit within their reach.

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Old Parham School

(Continued from page 6)

The favorites were *chickie* (green tamarind), dumps, *dool-dool* (Pride of Barbados), almond and sweet meat. It is tough these days to imagine how so many activities took place in and around the schoolyard.



Early on, teachers came through the pupil-teacher system. Students often sat and passed more than one Seventh Standard Examination. Those who wanted to teach entered the system at an early age, as early as 14 years of age, and were tutored by the head teacher until they could take the various pupil-teacher examinations. This system was phased out when secondary schools produced school-leavers with suitably high academic standards. Other seventh standard leavers learnt a trade or entered the labour force.

A few enrolled in one of the three secondary school-Antigua Grammar School, opened in 1884; Antigua Girls' High School, 1886; and T.O.R Memorial High School, 1898. Parents would have to sacrifice if their children did not get one of the few scholarships available. Children born out of wedlock were barred from attending AGS and AGHS. As other secondary schools came on stream, more and more students could get a secondary education in institutions like Pares Secondary in our parish.

The old Parham School, as a community centre, was used by church groups for Sunday School, the Mothers' Union, and later the Anglican Young People's Association. If an issue of general community concern arose, a meeting was called at this venue. It also served a convenient place for weddings, the bride, groom and principles up at the head table with the wedding cake and treats. Guests occupied the main floor.

The spacious floor accommodated dances, which the townspeople and many in the vicinity enjoyed immensely. Lodge dances, in particular, were set events every year. These included the Grand United Order of Odd Fellows with its sister branch The Household of Ruth. They held dances on Easter Monday, while the Jacob's Lodge had Whit Monday. These were moneymaking affairs for the lodges and the church that owned the building. Oscar Mason's band was favored to play at dances attended by people from all over Antigua. Now and then a fight would break out. Other groups hoping to hold a dance had to choose other holiday dates. The building, with its spacious floor, accommodated several polling stations at election times. The ruins of Old Parham School sit immediately north of the funeral urns at the entrance to St. Peter's cemetery.

Parham Primary School

The government opened a new school, Parham Primary, early 1970 at the southern end of Church Street. Education continues there today. Although the teachers received small remunerations for their services, they worked hard at Parham School to make a difference in the communities they served. We salute those teachers who have served or are currently serving in the community.

The Women Behind Street Names Part 3

By Janice Augustin

The Wehner Sisters - Ina (c.1895-1975) and Effield (c. 1910-1992)

Wehner Road runs east to west, from Bendalls Main Road to the Golden Grove Main Road, and it is south of the All Saints' Road.

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The Women Behind Street Names Part 3

(Continued from page 7)

The first difference that readers will notice is the difference in the spelling of the specific road. The relatives of the Wehner sisters have insisted that the spelling on the street signs is incorrect.

Ina and Effield Wehner were originally from Parham. When they were young girls, they emigrated to the Dutch West Indian Island of Curacao.

They remained there for many years, working and becoming fluent in Papiamentu, a Dutch Creole.



Ms. Effield Wehner

Ina and Effield Wehner eventually returned to their island of birth; purchased land and were the first to build a house on the land or 'pa' that now bears their family name.

The sisters became well known not only for the meals they sold, but also for their cakes, jams and jellies. As excellent entrepreneurs, they established their business in a part of a building then known as Bargain House in the heart of town.

According to their relative Sandra Wehner, Ina was the more politically active, speaking at political meetings island wide, and was mentioned in the 1981 Workers' Voice magazine, published for the island's Independence celebrations.

The sisters were devout members of the St. John's Cathedral.

Reference

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Antigua & Barbuda

For Your Information...

NEW MEMBER

The Historical and Archaeological Society & Museum of Antigua & Barbuda would like to welcome our newest member:

Mrs. Margaret Vousden of the United Kingdom



Acquisitions

Special thanks to our newest member Mr. Rob and Mrs. Margaret Vousden, for donating to our Research Department the following publications:

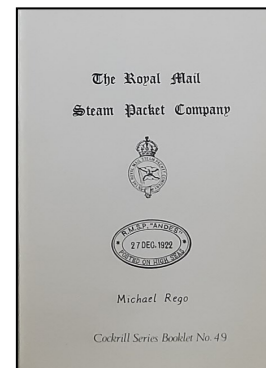
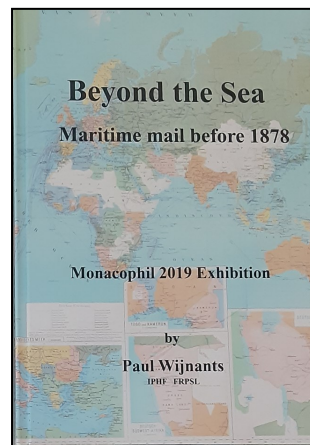
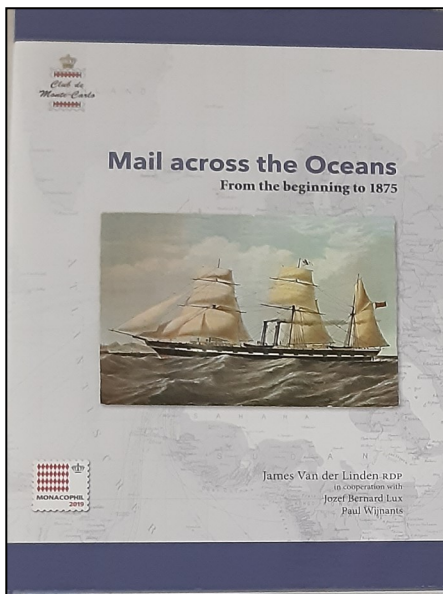
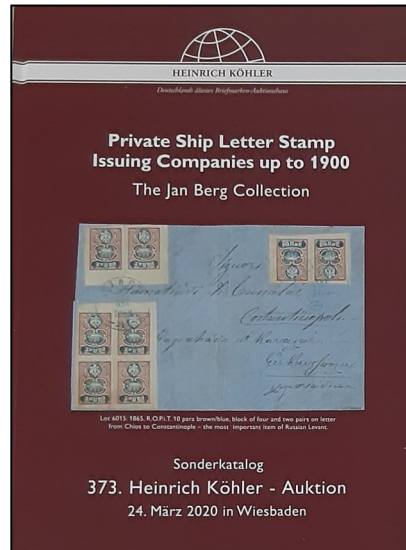
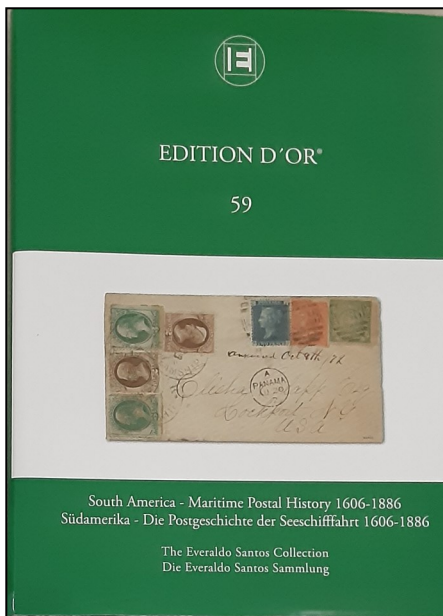
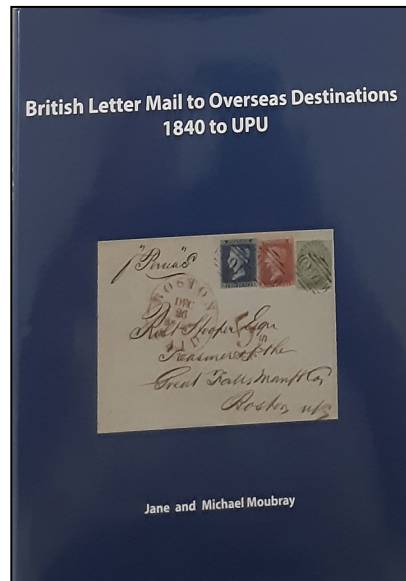
- *The Postal History of the Universal Postal Union: the Postal Card Worldwide 1869-1974 Voll and 2*, by J.P. Gough.
- *Private Ship Letter Stamp Issuing Companies up to 1900*, The Jan Berg Collection.
- *The Royal Mail Steam Packet Company, The Legendary Days of the Caribbean Mail Packet Ships*, by G. Migliavacca.
- *British letter mail to overseas destinations 1840 to UPU*, by J. and M. Moubray.
- *A Text -book of Tropical Agriculture Re-printed 1940* by Sir H.A Nicholls.
- *A Text -book of Tropical Agriculture*, by Sir H.A Nicholls, 1st published 1892, Re-produced 2018 by FB&C Ltd.
- *Famous Regiments, The Royal Northumberland Fusiliers*, by B. Peacock.
- *The Royal Steam Packet Company*, by M. Rego.
- *British West Indies, The Postcard Collection*, by N.Sadler and S. Arias.

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Acquisitions

(Continued from page 8)

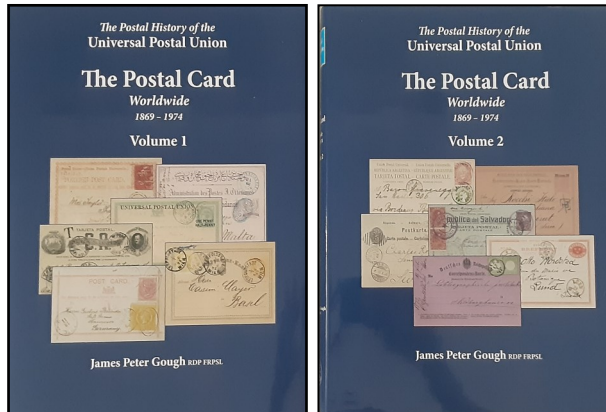
- *Mail Across the Oceans from the beginning to 1875*, by J. Van Der Linden with J.B. Lux, and P. Wijnants.
- *Beyond the Sea Maritime before 1878*, by P. Wijnants.
- *Edition D'OR 59 South America-Maritime Postal History 1606-1886*, The Everaldo Santos Collection Die Everaldo Santos Collection.



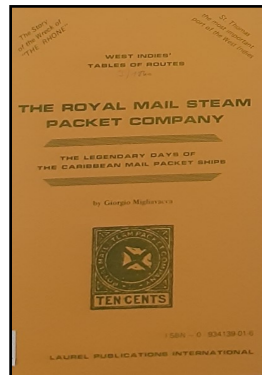
(Continued on page 9)

Acquisitions

(Continued from page 8)



Manillas from Schooner 'Duro' sunk 1843



Mr. and Mrs. Vousden also donated a few postcards and artifacts to add to our collection.

We deeply appreciate all their contribution which will be of much benefit to the Museum.



Mr. Rob and Mrs. Margaret Vousden



Our Research Librarian Myra Piper received a copy of *The Color Box* from Dan Waite, written by his mother Barbara Waite. The book is fictional with historical facts, surrounding the lives of Anne and Elizabeth Hart in Antigua.



Dr. Reg Murphy and Dan are no strangers to each other. As youths they both worked with the late Desmond Nicholson in setting up the Museum.

MUSE NEWS

Here is what’s happening at the museum...

Children’s Group visit

Heritage Educator Ms. Mary Johnson received a certificate and a token of appreciation from the visitors. Thank you Salvation Army Girl Guides, Brownies, Tweenies for visiting us.



Museum Research Department Staff Visit to The National Archives of Antigua and Barbuda

The National Archives of Antigua and Barbuda Staff was pleased to have a visit from the Museum Research Staff. The Staff got a tour of different departments in the Archives, and various records/material which are stored and where and how they are stored.

It was a pleasure for our staff, as we got hands on operating the microfiche reader to view old newspapers on microfilm.

Thanks to the Head of National Archives Mrs. Esther Henry and staff for having us. We look forward to doing more visits as a group in the near future.

Staff taking a look at old records and viewing old newspapers using the microfiche reader



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MUSE NEWS

(Continued from page 11)



Introduction Seminar of the Interreg CINUCA Program in Antigua

The Curator of the Museum of Antigua and Barbuda Mrs. Michele Henry, and Research Officer of the Research Department Mrs. Myra Piper, attended a launch of the Caribbean Interreg Project in Antigua, which was held at the Hawksbill Hotel.

CINUCA means Cinémathque NU^mérique de la CARaïbe (Digital Caribbean Film Institute). The Interreg CINUCA's Project, is a network of film professionals and librarians that will be populating and developing an online Caribbean digital film library.

The challenges of the preservation and access to collections have changed in the last years for digital productions and broadcasting. The Caribbean digital film library joins innovation and preservation by offering a Caribbean's contents, 100% digital, available only online.

This project will permit:

- The implementation of an inventory of Caribbean content,
- The building of a common strategy of digital valorization,
- The development of a broadcast system via a dedicated digital platform,
- All this will ensure the referencing and the accessibility of Caribbean films archives for use in art, media, business and tourism.

The theme is *'Yesterday's films are Today's archives and Today's films will be tomorrow's archives. Let's preserve them'* The Museum of Antigua and Barbuda looks forward to being a part of this project.



Curator Michele Henry and
Research Officer Myra Piper at Interreg CINUCA
seminar .

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MUSE NEWS

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Workshop

A workshop was held by Dr. Reg Murphy with the museum staff on registration of new artifacts donated to museum.



Vousten Family Visit to the Museum and their Contribution

Dr. Reginald Murphy, Curator Michele Henry and Museum Research Officer Myra Piper sat with Mr. Rob and Mrs. Margaret Vousden as they donated new artifacts and material to the museum.



Donation

National Parks staff Mr. Chris Waters (left), Ms. Justine Henry (center) and Ms. Desley Gardner (right) was a recipient of a monetary donation from our Life Member, Florence Bell. They expressed gratitude for her timely contribution.



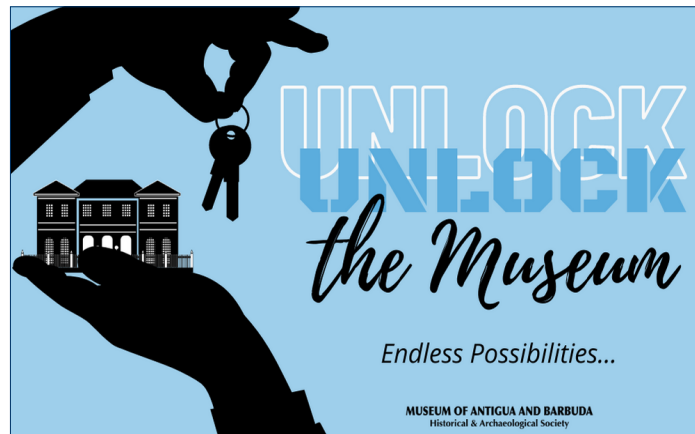
The Historical & Archaeological Society Newsletter is published at the Museum quarterly in January, April, July and October. HAS encourages contribution of material relevant to the Society from the membership or other interested individuals.

Tel/Fax: 268-462-1469, 462-4930 E-mail: museum@candw.ag Website: www.antiguamuseums.net

Historical and Archaeological Society

APRIL, MAY, JUNE 2022 No. 157

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 buildings 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

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

TO BECOME OR REMAIN A MEMBER OF THE SOCIETY, FILL IN & SNIP OFF. Mail to P.O. Box 2103, St. John's Antigua.

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CIRCLE MEMBERSHIP CATEGORY	
Individual	\$ 50 EC/\$ 25US (Mailing included)
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