PARISH HISTORY PROJECT: A HISTORY OF ST. THOMAS

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PRELUDE: HOW THE PRACTICE OF DIVIDING JAMAICA INTO PARISHES STARTED AND DEVELOPED

The practice of dividing Jamaica into parishes was introduced by the English and even so, this did not happen immediately after the island was captured from the Spaniards in 1655. On what is probably the oldest English map of the island, published in 1661, in Hickeringill's "*Jamaica View'd*", only places such as Guanaboa, the Angels, St Jago de La Vega and a few towns on the seacoast were shown and there was no attempt to divide the island into parishes. By the following year, 1662, the division of the island into ten districts, including Port Morant, Morant and Yealoth (later Yallahs), seems to have been done largely for the purpose of carrying out a census.[1]

Following the pattern of English local government and reflecting the influence of the Church of England on the British government, Jamaica was divided into units called parishes in order to facilitate the effective administration of the young colony. In 1664, the House of Assembly passed a law, dividing the island for the first time into parishes and the seven that were created included St Thomas, St David, St Andrew, St Catherine, St John, Clarendon and Port Royal. As settlement expanded, so did the number of parishes and by 1677, the number of parishes had slightly more than doubled to include fifteen. These were St Thomas (as of 1677, the parish became known as St Thomas in the East to distinguish it from the new parish of St Thomas in the Vale); St David, Port Royal, St Andrew, St Catherine, St Dorothy, St Thomas in the Valley

(St Thomas in the Vale), Clarendon, Vere, St John, St George, St Mary, St Ann, St James and St Elizabeth.

When most of Port Royal was destroyed by earthquake in 1692, many of the survivors took refuge in nearby St Andrew and so by the following year, 1693, the parish of Kingston was carved out of a part of St Andrew. The increase in the number of Jamaica's parishes continued when Westmoreland was formed out of a part of St Elizabeth in 1703 and Portland was created out of a part of St Thomas in the East and a part of St George in 1723. In 1739, Hanover emerged from a portion of Westmoreland, followed in 1770 by Trelawny, which was created out of a section of St James. By the end of the eighteenth century, Jamaica had 20 parishes. This number was further increased in 1814, when Manchester was formed, taking parts from Clarendon, Vere and St Elizabeth. By 1841, the number rose to a grand total of 22 parishes, when the last parish to be created in the history of Jamaica, that of Metcalfe, was formed out of portions of St Mary and St George. [2]

An Early Map of Jamaica. Reprinted courtesy of the National Library of Jamaica

In 1867, in an effort to conserve resources and promote financial efficiency, the Crown Colony administration of Sir John Peter Grant introduced a law which reduced and fixed the number of Jamaica's parishes at the present total of fourteen. This massive reduction was accomplished by a process of amalgamation. In that year, Kingston was increased in size by absorbing part of St Andrew, a part of the parish of Port Royal and the entire town of Port Royal, while the rest of Port Royal parish went to St Andrew. The parish of St David was merged with St Thomas in the East and today forms western St Thomas, while St George became a part of Portland.

Manchioneal district, which had been a part of St Thomas in the East up to 1867, then became a part of Portland. Metcalfe was absorbed into St Mary while St John, St Dorothy and St Thomas in the Vale were all absorbed into an enlarged St Catherine. After 1867, St Thomas in the East was no longer called by that name, but rather was simply St Thomas, since its namesake, St Thomas in the Vale no longer existed as a parish by that name. Vere became part of Clarendon, while St Ann and Manchester remained as they were. Finally, in the county of Cornwall, all five parishes of St Elizabeth, Westmoreland, Hanover, St James and Trelawny remained as they were. [3]

MAP OF JAMAICA SHOWING THE PRESENT 14 PARISHES

OVERVIEW OF ST THOMAS:

Today, the parish of St Thomas extends from Bull Bay, which is its western boundary with Kingston, to Morant Point in the east and its south coast is washed by the Caribbean Sea. Covering about 300 square miles, St Thomas is a mountainous parish, graced by the eastern side

of the majestic Blue Mountain Range and the rich and productive foothills and valleys of the Blue Mountains. The three main rivers of the parish, the Yallahs River, the Morant River and the Plantain Garden River, the last being unique for its west to east flow, have contributed to the settlement patterns and socio-economic history of St Thomas. Famous for its natural heritage, the parish includes large wetland areas such as Cow Bay Swamp, Albion Swamp and the Great Morass. St Thomas embodies the historic role played by Black Jamaicans in the fight for social justice in all its forms, and the many tangible remains of its historic past, along with its rich cultural heritage make this parish one of the most significant in the story of a wider Jamaica.

St Thomas present-day

BEFORE COLUMBUS: THE TAINO INHABITANTS OF THE PARISH OF ST THOMAS

Descriptions left by the Spaniards, as well as discoveries by archaeologists allow us to conclude that before the arrival of Europeans, St Thomas was home to its very first settlers, the *Tainos*. It was on the fourth voyage in 1503 that we learn of the first interaction between the *Taino* people of St Thomas and a group of Spaniards, led by Diego Mendez, who had gone from village to village, searching for food supplies for the crippled Spanish ships and crew after they had run aground at Santa Gloria (now St Ann's Bay). Their search led them eventually to the eastern end of the island, to the village of *Aomaquique* (now Spanish Wood in St Thomas, well-documented by archaeologists as the site of an extensive *Taino* settlement). The cacique, *Ameyro,* gave the Spaniards a canoe and supplies, and in turn received a brass helmet, a smock and a shirt. Archaeologists also suggest that this *Taino* settlement at Spanish Wood may well have been the location for a second, but not so pleasant encounter between Mendez and the *Taino* people. The plan was for Mendez to sail by canoe to the easternmost point of Jamaica and from there, try to sail to Hispaniola to get help. While they awaited an improvement in the weather before sailing from "the easternmost cape" of Jamaica, Mendez decided to venture inland and was captured by villagers (most likely from the settlement at Spanish Wood) and threatened with death. Mendez later explained that while the villagers played a ball game (*batos*) to decide who should win the honour of executing him, he made good his escape. [4]

In addition to these accounts left by the Spanish, investigations carried out by archaeologists confirm that the present day parish of St Thomas was home to many *Taino* settlements. Investigations of reported *Taino* sites are ongoing and there are at least 12 known occupation sites and at least three burial caves in St Thomas. [5] The first Jamaicans gave their own names to their settlements but generally, *Taino* names were replaced first by Spanish names in some cases and on a wider scale by English names after the English capture of the island from the Spaniards in 1655. In the parish of St Thomas, we know that the present day Spanish Wood in Duckenfield was the location of the *Taino* region of *Aomaquique* spoken of earlier. But that name has disappeared from present day usage.

Findings by archaeologists reveal that Spanish Wood (Duckenfield) was perhaps the second largest *Taino* site on the island, covering an area of over 10 acres and that it consisted of a large number of middens (garbage heaps) which were spread over several acres. By excavating these middens, archaeologists are able to uncover artefacts which inform us about aspects of *Taino* life, including foods and implements used. Archaeologists have collected 324 artefacts from the Spanish Wood site.

Bowden in the parish is the site of an interesting Taino settlement which was located on the steep slopes of a hill south of Bowden Wharf. When archaeologist Tyndale-Biscoe carried out excavations on the kitchen midden at Bowden, he found that the pottery remains were decorated in a style unlike that found anywhere else in Jamaica (a discovery supported by another archaeologist, Vanderwal) and that this unique style of decoration could allow archaeologists to tentatively speak of a “Port Morant style” of decoration. One of the interesting discoveries at the Bowden site was a series of 10 perforated sharks’ teeth which could have been parts of a

necklace or a weapon. Belvedere, the area which emerged under English rule as a principal sugar producing estate in St Thomas, was in earlier days, home to *Taino* settlements. Excavations carried out on the site located northwest of Belvedere House revealed a variety of pottery finds and most significant, about 35 circular depressions spread out over about three acres. Archaeologists concluded that the *Taino* inhabitants of Belvedere most likely used these depressions either as storage for water during the dry season or as areas for cultivation of maize. [6]

On the northern ridge of Yallahs Mountain, in the area known as Orange Park, a medium-sized *Taino* occupation site has been located and studied. Additionally, along the St Thomas coastline, between Belvedere and Orange Park, the areas of Rozelle and Rozelle Falls were sites of *Taino* settlements and the middens found there have revealed an abundance of *Melongena melongena* (marine species) shells which indicate the interrelationship between these first Jamaicans and the nearby sea.

View of Rozelle Falls with White Horses in the Background. Photo courtesy of Stuart Reeves

Under English settlement, the area around this site was the home of Roselle sugar estate, which extended over 1,300 acres and went out of production in the late 19th century. Today, Rozelle is a traveller's rest stop where there is a small waterfall that gushes on to the roadside and serves as a point of refreshment for passers-by.

Taking a Bath at Rozelle. Photo Courtesy of Stuart Reeves

Green Wall, located near to the Rozelle sites, is another *Taino* site where the midden revealed finds similar to Rozelle. A well-documented *Taino* site is to be found at Hillside, located inland from the Yallahs Salt Ponds. Excavations of the midden at Hillside uncovered 196 artefacts, including notched net sinker stones which indicate their dependence on the sea for obtaining food. [7] Lowden Hill in St Thomas has also been listed by the Jamaica National Heritage Trust (JNHT) as a *Taino* site but this has not yet been mapped. Investigations at Retreat in Morant Bay revealed a *Taino* midden but this area has not yet been mapped. Rhodes and Braham are both hilltop *Taino* sites in the parish but neither has been mapped as yet. [8]

In addition to the considerable artefact recoveries made from all of the foregoing occupation sites in the parish, St Thomas is also home to two significant *Taino* burial caves, one at Botany Bay and the other at Cambridge Hill. These two caves, which contain bones of *Taino* inhabitants, are to be found in a hilly region of the south western part of St Thomas, known as Botany Bay District. The two caves are fairly close to each other, perhaps with only a quarter mile separating them. Located about four miles from the sea, the area commands a spectacular view of the surrounding waters.

Archaeologists have studied the evidence collected from the St Thomas caves and other similar ones located around the island, and they conclude that the Taino did not live in these caves but they attached great significance to them as the resting place for the bones of their people. This conclusion is also supported by accounts from early Spanish writers, such as Oviedo, who tell us that they sometimes brought their dead into “a grotto” (cave) and “lay a calabash of water and bread on his head.”

Discovery of skulls in earthenware containers in these caves also indicates that special care was taken in the laying to rest of the heads. Skull remains found both at Botany Bay and Cambridge Hill caves show frontal (forehead) flattening, as was the custom among the *Taino* peoples who saw this as a mark of beauty. Five nearly complete skulls were found inside Botany Bay cave, on a ledge at the rear of cave. At Cambridge Hill cave, which is a little to the south of Cambridge Hill, parts of seven skulls were found along with other human bones scattered throughout the cave. Interestingly at Cambridge Hill, a flattened skull was found, laid on its side in a finely decorated container, indicative of the special care given to the heads of the persons who had died. [9]

St Thomas has a rich legacy of *Taino* culture, a conclusion which is supported by the material reminders that have emerged from work done by archaeologists and the JNHT on the many *Taino* occupation sites and the burial caves which have been found around the parish. With further investigation, there may be a lot more that Archaeology can teach us about the first residents of this parish, how they lived and eventually, how they died.

For the people who today proudly proclaim their links to the parish of St Thomas, this legacy of the first Jamaicans should be embraced, protected and presented as one of the foundation stones that have helped to shape the rich and diverse history of the parish. Importantly, members of present-day communities where these sites are located should stand ready to support the JNHT, however possible, in the ongoing challenge of protecting and preserving these as heritage sites. With availability of resources (human and economic) as well as effective management, preservation and presentation of these sites, the *Taino* legacy could become an integral part of an

action plan to facilitate sustainable development through the careful promotion of the parish's cultural heritage.

THE FOUNDATION YEARS OF ST THOMAS

THE SPANISH PRESENCE IN THE AREA, 1494-1655

Partly because the island had no mineral wealth to command Spain's long-term commitment and also because Spain lost control of Jamaica to the English comparatively early, in 1655, the evidence of Hispanic influences in what was to become the parish of St Thomas was rather limited compared to the later English impact. Moreover, from an administrative point of view, since the capital of the colony was very early located at Villa de la Vega (Spanish Town), Spain did not focus as much attention on the eastern end of the island. Nevertheless, there is some evidence of Hispanic influence on place names and on economic activities in the area which is now St Thomas.

On the second voyage in 1494, Columbus was more interested in exploring the coastal features of the island. such as its natural harbours and the opportunities for trade, rather than with establishing a close relationship with the island. As the Spaniards navigated the coastal waters of Jamaica in a westerly direction along the north coast, Columbus observed and named places on his way to Cuba. On their return from Cuba, the Spaniards continued exploring Jamaica's coastline, this time in a southern and then easterly direction.

By August 19, towards the end of their exploration of the island on the second voyage, the Spaniards sailed in line with the eastern end of the island and named what is now Morant Point, *Cabo del Farol*, which means Cape of the Lighthouse or of the Signal Fire. Since there was as yet no lighthouse or signal tower built there, we may conclude that given its location, Columbus gave the easternmost tip of the island this name in recognition of the fact that for the future, there would have to be a light to signal approaching vessels. However, there is some variation in explanations as to which name was given by the Spaniards to Morant Point. According to Oviedo, Columbus named Morant Point *Cabo de San Miguel* while the Spanish geographer, Lopez de Velasco, referred to Morant Point as *Punta de Morante.* This was the first and only place in St Thomas to be named by the Spaniards on the second voyage. [10]

As Spanish colonisation of Jamaica got underway, only four locations, Sevilla La Nueva (New Seville) Melilla (most likely Port Santa Maria, now Port Maria) Oristan (probably Bluefields) and Santiago de la Vega (present day Spanish Town) proved to be relatively active settlements. Even then, New Seville was abandoned because it was deemed unhealthy and because the north coast was not ideal for conducting trade with the Spanish Mainland. Melilla and Oristan soon faded into obscurity, especially after the centre of Spanish administration was shifted to Santiago de La Vega. By the start of the seventeenth century, therefore, the town of La Vega was the only urban centre and this remained the case until Jamaica was lost to the Spaniards after the middle of the century.

Therefore, it is not surprising that there is no evidence of towns or urban centres being established by the Spaniards in the area that later became St Thomas. However, the low-lying lands on the sea-coast seemed ideal for cattle ranching and Spanish settlers established *hatos*

(large pastures or ranches for raising cattle) there. In what later became St Thomas (which after 1867 included the previously separate parish of St David), there were two extensive *hatos,* one of which was the *Hato de Ayala,* which belonged to the Spanish Ayala family and from which, the name Yallahs was probably derived. In its time, the Hato de Ayala extended over areas that would later span two parishes, St David and St Thomas in the East. It extended from Bull Bay (a part of St David's parish before it was absorbed into St Thomas in 1867) almost to Morant Bay and was home to vast herds of cattle but there was also some amount of sugar cane cultivation done there, as William J. Gardner tells us that there were "some small sugar works by the rivers." The *Hato de Ayala a*lso suffered from raids and attacks carried out by freebooters or pirates, who frequently landed at the unguarded areas of *Los Ana* (now called Bull Bay) and *La Cruz de Padre* (now called Yallahs Bay). A second *hato* in St Thomas was *Hato Morante* and this was located nearer to the eastern end of the parish. General Venables' description of *Hato Morante* tells us that it was a large and beautiful *hato,* which included all of the present day Morant Bay and extended all the way to Morant Point and that it supported a vast number of cattle and hogs on its many small savannahs. [11]

There is no controversy about the name *Morante,* which was an important place name legacy of Spanish colonisation of Jamaica. *Morante* was a place name originating in Spain and transferred to the eastern end of Spanish Jamaica. In its English form, Morant has placed its stamp upon the parish, forming a part of names such as Morant Point, the most easterly point of the island, with the Morant Point Lighthouse located there. This was constructed in 1841 by a group of Africans known as Kru-men, who were brought to Jamaica as free contract workers after Emancipation. The Morant Point Lighthouse has the distinction of being the oldest in the island and this

cast-iron structure is today recognised as a protected national monument.

Morant Point Lighthouse

Other place names, which were derived from *Morante* included Port Morant, later an important point of exports; Morant Bay, the chief town and capital of the parish; the Morant Bay Courthouse; and the Morant Bay Fort; as well as one of three main rivers in the parish, the Morant River, which the Spaniards had named Rio Morante and which is 16.1 miles long. No doubt, the most significant association of the Spanish name "Morante" has been with the historic Morant Bay Rebellion and its location in the town named with the English version of Morante. Morant Bay has become associated with important aspects, not only of the parish's history, but also with a historic legacy to the people of Jamaica highlighting the wider search for equal rights and justice.

However, the origin of the name Yallahs is not as clear cut. Edward Long associated the name Yallahs with "yalos" and according to his explanation, "yalos" was a reference to the frosty appearance of the high white cliffs which overlook the sea and which today are known as White Horses. However, Frank Cundall believed that Long inaccurately connected Yallahs to "yalos". Cundall pointed out that it was more likely that the name Yallahs comes from "Ayala", the Spanish family name of the owner of the *Hato de Ayala*. Cundall also suggested that Yallahs may have had no connection to the Spanish period and may have been named after a Captain Yhallahs, a privateer who was frequently in the area now known as Yallahs in the early 1670s. However, since Yallahs is shown on an English map of Jamaica in 1664, the naming of Yallahs must have pre-dated the privateer.

Cassidy offered another explanation, linking the name Yallahs to what may have been an Arawak word, *Aguaia*, which changed to *Ayala* and then became Yallahs under the English. Similarly, the Spanish name for the Yallahs River was *Rio Ayala*, which under English rule became the Yallahs River. Given that the Spanish *Hato de Ayala* stretched all the way from Bull Bay to Morant Bay and included the area now known as Yallahs, then *Ayala* is perhaps the most likely origin of the name Yallahs. [12]

The Spanish control over the destinies of Jamaica came to an end when the English captured the island in 1655. By comparison with other places in Jamaica, such as St Jago de la Vega (Spanish Town) and Ocho Rios, as well as some rivers which retained their Spanish names, such as Rio Cobre and Rio Minho, the place names in St Thomas that came from the period of Spanish

occupation became anglicized after the English takeover and the original Spanish names have faded into obscurity.

Under English rule, the administrative division known as the parish came into being and the political life, the economy, the settlement patterns and place names developed in keeping with the English way of life. Over time, the social and cultural fabric of the parish reflected the African connections to its rich history. As the parish of St Thomas took shape and grew, the Spanish presence became nothing more than a distant memory, with a legacy that may only be revealed through the parish's history.

One of the most lasting effects of the Spanish presence on the settlement history of St Thomas, as well as other parts of the island, resulted from actions taken by the retreating Spaniards in the last desperate days after the English invasion in 1655. As they fled to the north coast with the intent to escape to Cuba, they freed and left behind their enslaved Africans. Some of the freed Africans would have been a part of the former labour force on the hato de Ayala and the hato de Morante, and they relocated themselves to the mountainous areas of St Thomas where they were soon joined by other freed Africans who migrated into the eastern end of the island from places like Guanaboa Vale. Together, they established independent settlements, raising their families in freedom as they lived off the land, hunting wild pigs, fishing and planting provisions and carrying out damaging guerrilla raids on English settlements on the plains of St Thomas in the East. These were the early Maroons of the parish, who would later join forces with others from Portland (when that parish was created in 1723) to form the Windward Maroons, freedom fighters and justifiably regarded as important early settlers of St Thomas. The *Cunha Cunha* Pass, an 8 km trail, located in the Blue and John Crow Mountains National Park, was used by the

Maroons in their journeys between St Thomas and Portland.

Blue and John Crow Mountains

THE FOUNDATION YEARS: THE PARISH OF ST THOMAS TAKES SHAPE UNDER ENGLISH RULE

CHANGES IN PARISH BOUNDARIES AND NAME OVER THE YEARS:

Jamaica's new colonial rulers wished to reproduce the English system of local administration based on parishes in the colony, and the division of Jamaica into parishes began in 1664. As seen earlier, in that year, the parish of St Thomas was created, along with six others, St David, St Andrew, St Catherine, St John, Clarendon and Port Royal, making St Thomas one of the oldest parishes in the island. The size and boundaries of St Thomas went through several changes over

the course of the next two centuries. In 1677, when the number of parishes increased to fifteen, the name of the parish was changed to St Thomas in the East to differentiate it from the new parish of St Thomas in the Vale. St Thomas in the East lost some of its northern sections to Portland when this parish was created in 1723. Under the Crown Colony administration of Sir John Peter Grant, efforts were made to reduce expenditure through merging of parishes, (22 by 1866) and in 1867, the parish again underwent boundary changes when Manchioneal, which had been part of the parish until then, was merged with Portland. However, in 1867 and for the same reason of financial efficiency, the parish of St David, located on the western side of St Thomas in the East became part of the parish. As the parish took on different dimensions, its name was also adjusted once more in 1867 to St Thomas as there was no longer a need to differentiate it from St Thomas in the Vale which became part of St Catherine in that year. [13]

HOW ST THOMAS GOT ITS NAME:

There are three main explanations as to how St Thomas may have gotten its name. Of the three, the least likely is that the parish was named after Sir Thomas Modyford, who began his term as governor in June 1664. When he wrote his "View of the Condition of Jamaica, October 1, 1664", Modyford made reference to a total of seven parishes, including St Thomas. Since there is nothing on record to suggest that Modyford had a hand in the establishment of the first seven parishes (the first House of Assembly met in January 1664 and introduced the parish system in its early sittings), then we may conclude that the parishes had been created before his arrival in June 1664 and that St Thomas was not named in his honour.

The second explanation argues that the parish was named after an earlier governor, Thomas Hickman, Lord Windsor, who had succeeded D'Oyley in 1662, but who remained as governor for only 10 weeks. Lord Windsor, as governor, was authorised to summon the island's first House of Assembly, but up until the time of his departure, this had not taken place.

It seems that the most likely explanation for the naming of St Thomas parish lies more in the close relationship that existed between the Church of England and the British government in the early period of settlement. A parish was originally an ecclesiastical division, which was to assist in the administration of the local affairs of that parish. The hope of the British government was that each parish would have its own parish church and that the affairs of the parish would be supervised by a group of church officials known as the vestry. The emergence of parishes in Jamaica would, therefore, assist in the spiritual well-being of the colonists and aid the administration of the colony by Britain. With this close relationship between church and state, it is most likely that the naming of many of Jamaica's parishes, including St Thomas, followed a well-established English tradition of naming places in honour of saints.

In this case, the parish was most likely named in honour of St Thomas the Apostle. Importantly, evidence that this may indeed have been the origin of the parish's name is to be found in a law passed in 1699 which named the Directors of the then recently acquired Bath Mineral Springs. The law stated the full name of the mineral springs, "the Bath of St Thomas the Apostle", a clear reference to the origin of the name, St Thomas. [14]

EARLY ENGLISH SETTLEMENT OF ST THOMAS: SETTING THE STAGE

In the early years after the capture of Jamaica from the Spaniards, the British government was led by Oliver Cromwell until his death in June 1661, at which time the monarchy, led by King Charles 11, was restored in England. The earliest years of the English settlement of the eastern part of St Thomas followed a pattern that was established under Cromwell's rule.

To safeguard against the possibility of the Spaniards re-taking Jamaica, the decision was taken in 1656 to station six regiments in areas of the island where Spanish *hatos* or ranches had been dominant. Soldiers from these regiments were given land incentives (on average about thirty acres each) to settle in these areas and Cromwell's plan was to also encourage English settlers from other colonies to take up residence in the six areas where the regiments were established. In this way, the coastal areas of Jamaica would be occupied and the settlers protected.

These regiments, along with the settlers who came were to form the basis for the establishment of the earliest settlements and towns that emerged in Jamaica under English rule. Two of the six regiments were sent to the eastern end of the island and became instrumental in the establishment of the first English settlements in what became the parish of St Thomas.

The first regiment, led by Captain Lynch, was sent in 1656 to secure and help settle the *hato de Morante,* which extended from what is now Morant Bay all the way eastwards to include Port Morant and ending at Morant Point. The second regiment, led by Lieutenant-Colonel Freeman, was sent to Yallahs in the former *hato de Ayala,* which became part of the parish of St David, later to be merged with the parish of St Thomas in the East.

FIRST ENGLISH SETTLEMENT IN ST THOMAS (1656): STOKESFIELD AND STOKES HALL

Cromwell was anxious to see Jamaica settled and prosperous and settlers from other English colonies, such as the New England settlements, Bermuda and Barbados, came to Jamaica with a promise of land grants and other incentives. In December 1656, St Thomas received its first batch of English settlers, led by Governor Luke Stokes of Nevis, who was accompanied by his wife and children and 1600 persons from St Kitts, as well as Nevis (including Englishmen, women and children and a few enslaved Africans).

Port Morant with Remains of Bowden Wharf at Sunset. Photo courtesy of Stuart Reeves

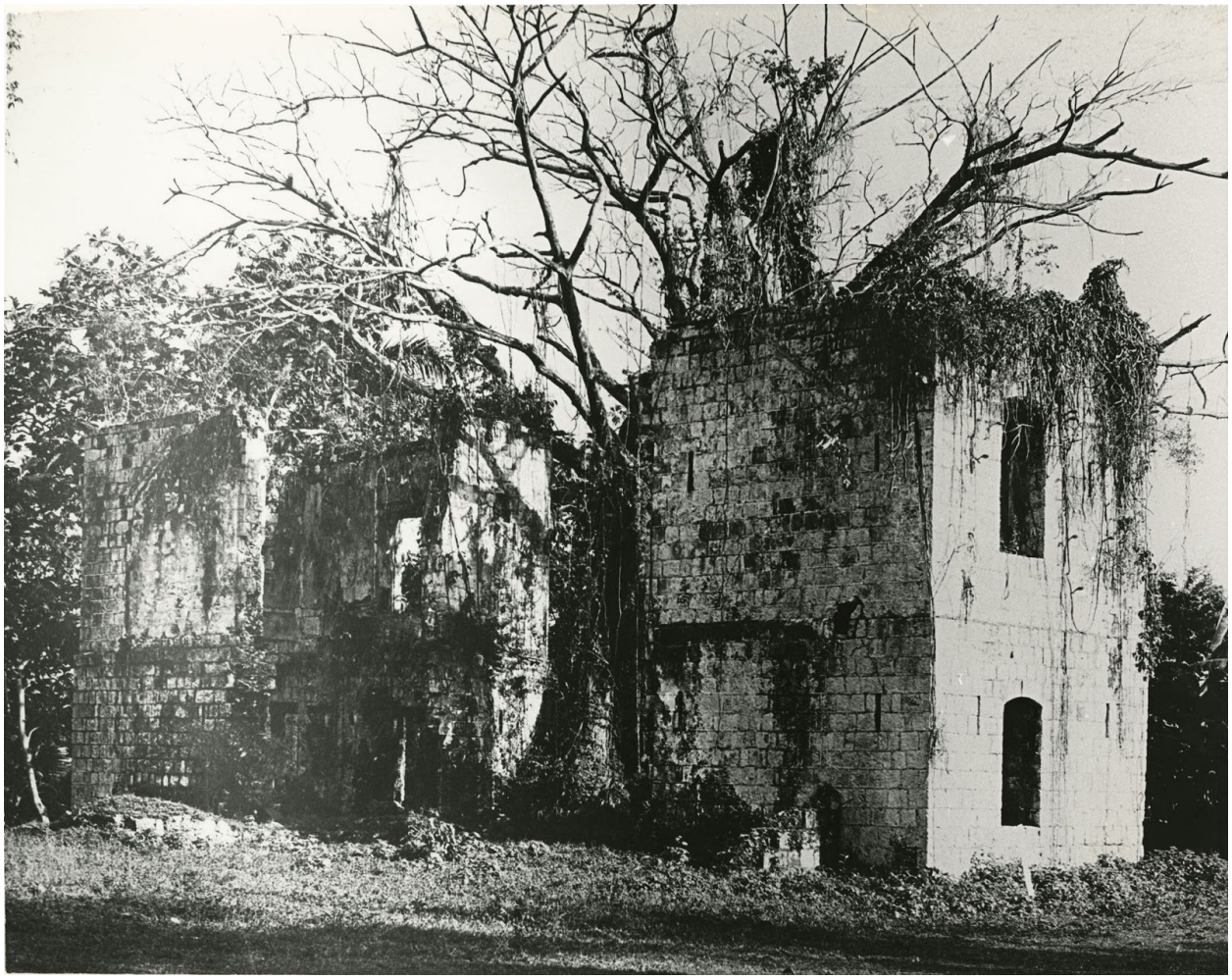
Port Morant. Photo courtesy of Stuart Reeves

They landed at the beautiful harbour of Port Morant and the site of their first settlement in this part of the *hato de Morante* was located in the Plantain Garden River Valley, with its fertile soil and abundant rainfall, which would eventually make it one of the most productive areas in the island. Stokes gave the name Stokesfield to this first English settlement in St Thomas parish.

Shortly after their arrival, a reinforced regiment of soldiers, led by General Brayne, was sent to help secure and settle this area. However, the frequent rainfall and swampy conditions, especially around Port Morant, encouraged the breeding of mosquitos and this proved to be a serious drawback to the health of soldiers and settlers alike. By the end of February 1657, both Luke Stokes and his wife had died, leaving three sons, the eldest being only 15 years old. Before the

end of March, two thirds of the original 1600 settlers had died from fevers (most likely Yellow Fever) and other illnesses.

Before his death, Luke Stokes made his first home at Stokesfield, located three miles to the north of Port Morant Harbour. After his death, the house was enlarged and improved, but in later years was badly damaged, first by the hurricane of 1903 and then by the terrible earthquake of 1907. Stokesfield was too close to the swamps of Port Morant and his surviving sons eventually relocated the family residence to Stokes Hall. Located on an elevation of about 200 feet, on hills between the Plantain Garden River Valley and the sea, Stokes Hall Great House as it was called, gave a commanding view of Holland Bay, about five miles away. Stokes Hall Great House was built with four towers to facilitate defence against frequent attacks by buccaneers and rivals of England. Today, Stokes Hall is most likely the oldest house in a reasonable state of preservation and is a protected heritage site administered by the Jamaica National Heritage Trust.



Stokes Hall Great House Ruins. Reprinted courtesy of the National Library of Jamaica

Luke Stokes' sons, along with the other survivors from Stokes' original group of 1600 settlers, and the regiment of English soldiers under the command of General Brayne, were able to overcome the early challenges. A careful system of drainage was introduced and this sufficiently alleviated the swampy conditions to allow the Stokes to establish the first sugar estate in the area, Stokes Hall sugar estate.

By 1671, over sixty properties, many of them sugar estates, were established and contributed to the reputation, which the Plantain Garden River Valley developed from quite early, as the richest

part of the island up to the time of the French invasion in 1694. These sixty properties were established mainly along the coast, in a line of settlements stretching from Port Morant eastwards. It is worth noting that Stokes Hall was still doing well in 1805, in which year it produced 269 hogsheads of sugar, as well as quantities of rum and that it remained productive in sugar right up to Emancipation in 1838.[15] Today, the community surrounding Stokes Hall Great House ruins, Stokes Hall community, is named after this historic early settlement.

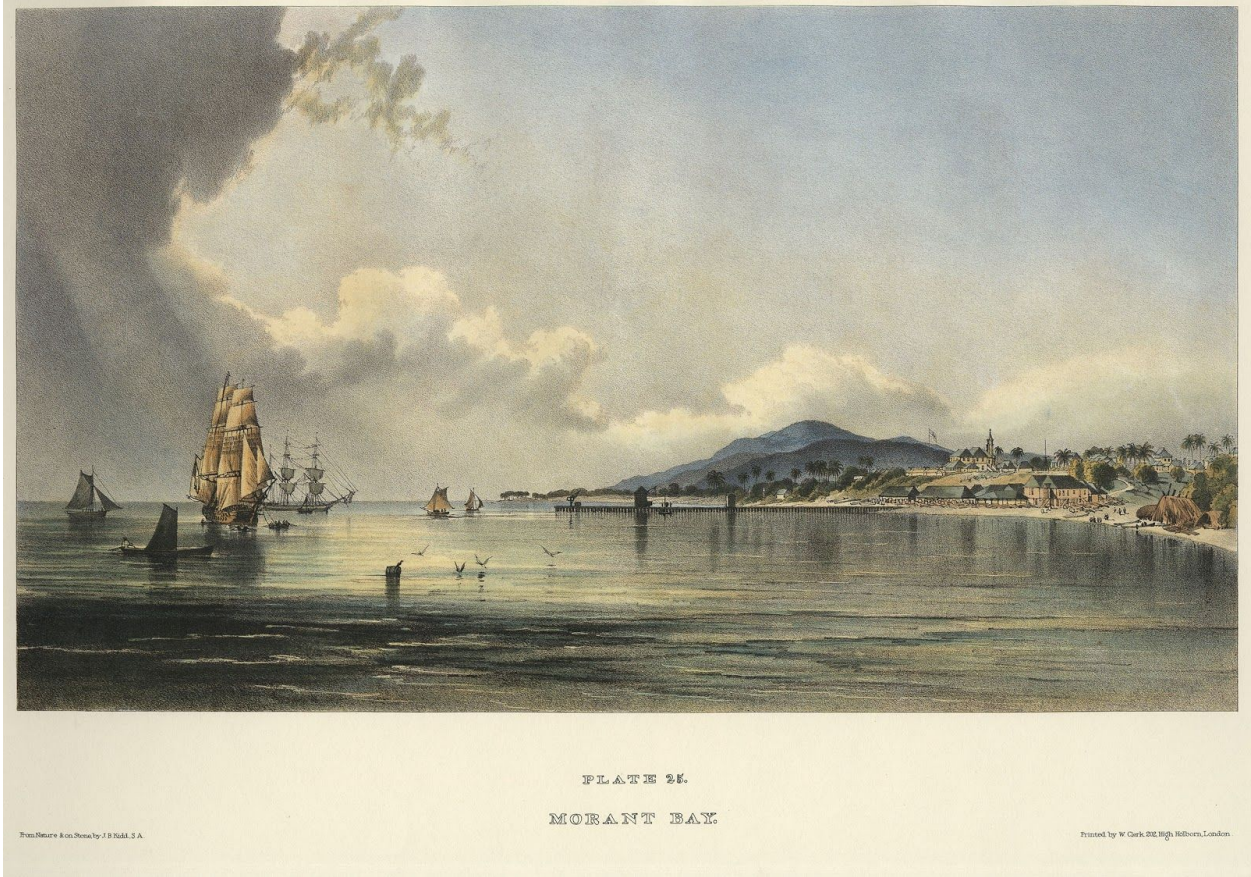
Stokes Hall Great House Circa 1905. Reprinted courtesy of the National Library of Jamaica

THE BIRTH OF MORANT BAY: CHIEF TOWN, IMPORTANT PORT AND LATER, CAPITAL OF THE PARISH:

The Cenotaph with the Court House and Nearby Structure in the Background. Reprinted courtesy of the National Library of Jamaica

As seen earlier, the first of the two English regiments sent to secure and help settle the eastern part of Jamaica in 1656 was Captain Lynch's regiment. They were stationed in that part of the *hato de Morante* through which the Morant River flows and this area is today known as the Morant River Valley. It was Captain Lynch's regiment of soldiers and the persons who would later settle there who gave birth to what would become the town of Morant Bay.

As settlers arrived in the area from England and from other English colonies, there was a clear need for infrastructure to support settlement in the shape of a town. The centre of the town was carefully laid out and this was most likely the work of official surveyors, who, as early as 1671, were instructed that no buildings should obstruct "any harbour, port or bay" and that land should be set aside for the building of churches and courthouses, as well as other structures required in a town. These were the English beginnings of Morant Bay, the chief town, important port and later the capital of the parish. [16]



Morant Bay. Reprinted courtesy of the National library of Jamaica

In keeping with the close relationship between the English state and the Church of England, the establishment of a church and Rector was seen as important to the successful development of early towns such as Morant Bay. According to archival notes displayed on the walls of the existing Christ Church (the parish church of St Thomas) in the Morant Bay square, the first Rector for Morant Bay, a Mr Nicholas, was appointed in 1666 and arrived in the town, only to die shortly after of fever (most likely Yellow Fever). Not long after, in 1671, Governor Sir Thomas Modyford informed the British government that Mr Pickering, the Rector of St Thomas and adjoining St David at Port Morant and Yallahs respectively, had recently died and that there was no one to replace him.

There was no reference to a church building in Morant Bay in these early years of settlement and Modyford explained in 1671 that the settlers met (for worship) at each other's houses. Eleven years later in 1682, the Rector for Port Morant and Morant Bay, a Mr Johnson, had either just arrived or was expected to shortly take up duties. It may safely be assumed that by 1682, the settlers were no longer meeting at each other's houses for worship and that Mr Johnson had a church from which to conduct services.

This church most likely was the original Anglican Christ Church built at Church Corner near the alms house, and the ruins of this church are still there today, sadly in a neglected and perhaps dangerous condition.

Ruins of original Anglican Christ Church at Church Corner. Photo courtesy of Stuart Reeves

On the front right brick wall there is a rusted sign warning visitors not to enter the structurally unsound ruins. The exact year of construction of the original church remains uncertain because all the old church records were lost when the Morant Bay Courthouse was destroyed by fire during the Morant Bay disturbances. However, the dates inscribed on some of the tombs


this Place
Inter'd the Body of
JANE ELLIS Relict
Cap.t EDWARD ELLIS
late of the Parish, of
Mary Rotherhithe in the
County of Surry
who Departed this Life,
the 3.d Day of October
1763 Aged 68 Years

One of the Tombs Located inside the First Christ Church. Photo courtesy of Stuart Reeves

located inside the ruins of the church, for example, that of Marmaduke Freeman who died in 1709, suggest that the original church most likely was built in the late seventeenth century certainly in time to receive Rector Johnson.

This first Christ Church at Church Corner was abandoned because of its very dilapidated state and its replacement (on the site of the present Christ Church Parish Church in Morant Bay square) was being constructed during 1865. This newer Christ Church Parish Church was virtually destroyed by the hurricane of August 1880, but was soon enough rebuilt at the same location. The church was severely damaged by Hurricane Charlie which devastated the entire island but struck the hardest blow to the eastern parishes in August 1951. The Christ Church Parish Church was again resurrected from the ruins and remains an important landmark in the town square today. [17]


CHRIST CHURCH
Christ Church

The Present-day Christ Church Parish Church in Morant Bay Square. Photos courtesy of Stuart Reeves

Defending the young colony of Jamaica was important to the British government from the very start and as seen earlier, militia regiments were stationed at various parts of the island to aid in the establishment of settlements. By 1680, each regiment of the militia had its own headquarters with a parade ground (for training and organising the troops in the event of an attack) and ammunition and gunpowder were stored there.

Some of the officers in these regiments were survivors of the early years of settlement when diseases had accounted for so many deaths, but by 1680, several of them had risen to positions of leadership, both in their regiments and in their communities. One of these was Colonel Thomas Freeman and the headquarters for the St Thomas in the East regiment was located at his home near Morant Bay.

In the event of an attack, the various regiments which were spread out over a hundred miles of coastline needed a quick method of signalling each other by beacons so that they could take action to defend Jamaica's coasts. St Thomas in the East (as it was called after 1677 to distinguish it from St Thomas in the Vale) was a critical arm of this defence system as attack from England's enemies (such as France) was likely to come from the south-eastern end of the island, given the direction of the prevailing winds. St David's parish, on the western side of St

Thomas in the East was home by 1680 to an important signal tower (Yallahs Signal Tower), which was built on the beach near the Yallahs Ponds (discussed later).

Warning beacons would be flashed from there to Long Mountain, which would signal Port Henderson Hill, then Beacon Hill near Spanish Town and eventually, Guanaboa Vale. When regiments saw these warning beacons, they would quickly assemble on their various parade grounds and prepare for defensive action. The fact that they were spread out over one hundred miles of coastline proved a problem, however, as the regiments could not come together quickly to present a united front to an invading force.

The tragedy was that when the governor of French Hispaniola and famous buccaneer, Jean du Casse, launched his attack in 1694, the then governor of Jamaica, William Beeston, took the decision to allow the French to land and attack the parishes of St Thomas in the East and adjoining St David (later in 1867 part of St Thomas in the East) so as to mount a stronger defence of strategic places like the capital, Spanish Town.

By the time of du Casse's invasion, Port Morant was also guarded by Fort William, which had its beginnings in 1675 when it consisted of a platform with five guns to defend the harbour of Port Morant. However, Beeston's decision to focus attention on more strategic places meant that even the presence of Fort William did not help. Significant loss of life among white settlers and their enslaved Africans, as well as substantial damage of sugar properties in St Thomas in the East and St David resulted, and although the invaders were prevented from claiming the colony, the people of St Thomas in the East and St David had paid an awful sacrificial price. Later in 1770

when it was felt that Fort William was inadequate to defend the area, a neighbouring fort, Fort Lindsay, was erected opposite to Fort William near Old Pera.[18]

Most forts in the island were built in the eighteenth century, but as early as 1675, there was the need to further secure the early settlement. That year marked the beginning of the Morant Bay Fort. At this early stage, the fort took the form of a platform with three guns. In the seventeenth century, the early structure was called Mount Bay Fort. By 1758, an enlarged Morant Bay Fort was established at the same site overlooking Morant Bay, but this was better equipped with nine guns, each with a firing range of about a mile offshore.

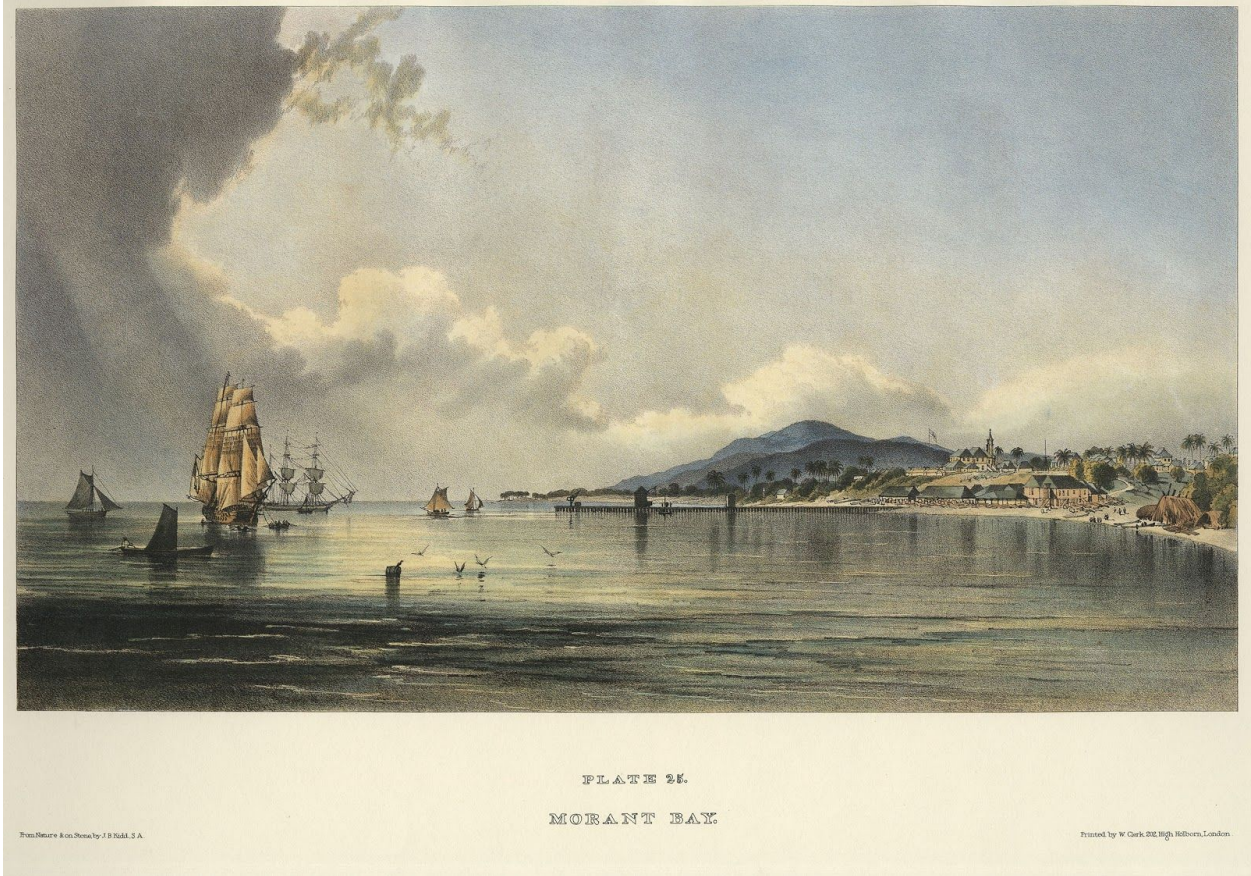
One of Three Cannons Mounted at the Old Morant Bay Fort. Reprinted courtesy of the National Library of Jamaica

View of Cannon Overlooking the Bay at Present-day Morant Bay Fort. Photo courtesy of Stuart Reeves

The exact year in which the Morant Bay Courthouse was built remains uncertain but the fact that the surveyors responsible for laying out the design of the town square in 1671 were instructed (as seen earlier) to reserve areas for the building of a courthouse might suggest that the Morant Bay

Courthouse was built not too long after 1671, perhaps by the end of the seventeenth century, or at the latest, the early eighteenth century.

The Morant Bay Courthouse was built immediately behind the fort and facing the town square. On Kidd's 1838 Lithograph, the courthouse is visible behind the fort.



Kidd's Lithograph of Morant Bay. Reprinted courtesy of the National Library of Jamaica

Right up until the time of the Rebellion in 1865, the courthouse served as the venue for court hearings and meetings of the St Thomas in the East Parish Vestry, but was also a place for storing important records, such as those of the parish church. Additionally, the court- house

housed important administrative officials of the appointed officers of the Vestry, such as the Clerk of the Vestry and appointed officers of the Court, such as the Clerk of the Peace.

View of the Burnt-out Morant Bay Court House. Photo courtesy of Stuart Reeves

In 1865, during the Morant Bay Rebellion, nearly all the public buildings, including the courthouse, were burnt. Nevertheless, by 1900, the town of Morant Bay boasted a hospital (originally Hordley Hospital) an almshouse, a rebuilt court house, a constabulary station, a post office and telegraph station, an Episcopal church (Christ Church Parish Church) and a Wesleyan chapel and the town had a population of about 656 persons. [19]

THE EMERGENCE AND EARLY YEARS OF OTHER TOWNS AND SETTLEMENTS IN ST THOMAS IN THE EAST:

YALLAHS:

After the parishes of St David and St Thomas in the East were merged in 1867 until today, Yallahs has been an important part of the history and identity of St Thomas. However, for the purpose of accuracy, it should be remembered that in the early history of St Thomas, Yallahs was really not a part of the parish of St Thomas in the East, but a part of the adjoining parish of St David. Today, the area which was then St David includes western St Thomas, especially the coastal area situated between Bull Bay and Yallahs.

The Yallahs River Valley. Photo courtesy of Stuart Reeves

In the period after the English capture of Jamaica, the community of Yallahs took shape in the area that had been dominated by the Spanish *hato de Ayala*. In 1663, when Sir Thomas Modyford had the island surveyed, there were signs of a settlement at Yallahs and at that time, the settlement was known as Yealoth. Not much is known about the majority of the earliest English settlers, but it is probable that as with Stokesfield and Morant Bay, early settlers also came from older English settlements. What is certain is that a small English regiment led by Lieutenant-Colonel Freeman was sent to help populate and secure the settlement at Yallahs. Sir Charles Lyttelton, deputy governor of Jamaica, indicated in 1664 that the regiments in charge of

Yallahs, as well as Port Morant and Morant, had contributed to the general success of settlement in the area.

The early years of the settlement at Yallahs were marked by the building of St David's Anglican Church in 1664, making it one of the oldest Anglican churches in the island. As its name indicates, St David's Church was important as the parish church of St David before that parish was merged with St Thomas in the East in 1867.

St David's Church, Yallahs. Photo courtesy of Stuart Reeves

The chalice and patten which belonged to St David's Church are among the oldest in Jamaica.

This historic church, which still stands today, would have had among its earliest members, the owners and settlers from surrounding sugar estates such as Albion and, at a later date, from the

coffee plantations of the Blue Mountain districts. By 1677, Yallahs and the surrounding settlements in the parish of St David were well populated, with the area containing about 80 settlements and these included the Church of St David's near Yallahs Bay, scattered houses in Cow Bay and White River and two ports of call for ships at Yallahs Bay and Cow Bay.

St David's Church, Yallahs. Photo courtesy of Stuart Reeves

UWI, Mona, Department of History and Archaeology Researchers View the Gravestone of Colina Blakely at St David's Church, Yallahs. Photo courtesy of Stuart Reeves

Unfortunately for the settlers of this part of the island, it was at Cow Bay that the invading force, led by French Admiral Jean DuCasse, landed in 1694 and carried out their terrible attacks upon the settlements before attempting a second wave of attack from Carlisle Bay which failed in its aim of capturing the capital, Spanish Town. Cow Bay was so called either because of the abundance of cattle in the area (a legacy from the days of the hato de Ayala) and the frequency with which Buccaneers hunted and killed the cows or because Manatees or sea-cows were harpooned in the bay and brought ashore to be butchered.

The area between Bull Bay and Grant's Pen is marked by a monument which commemorates the exploits of one of the more famous runaway slaves in the parish's history, Jack Mansong, known as "Three-Fingered Jack". Despite his daring string of holdups and robberies of plantation owners, he developed a reputation of never harming women or children. Two of his fingers were chopped off during a fight, hence his name. So daring and frequent were his attacks that the Assembly offered a reward of three hundred pounds for his capture. His exploits and his life were finally ended by a maroon called Quashie (later known as John Reeder) who cut off Three-Fingered Jack's deformed hand, as well as his head and paraded them all the way to Morant Bay and then back to Spanish Town, where he claimed his reward. [20]

Monument to Three-Fingered Jack. Photo courtesy of Stuart Reeves

Today, there are two large ponds that can be seen from the main road in the Yallahs area of St Thomas, with the larger pond being about two miles long and three-quarters of a mile wide and the smaller pond being about a mile long. These are the Yallahs Salt ponds, and they are very much a part of the history and identity of this part of the parish. They are as famous for their high level of salinity (or dissolved salt content of the water), which is about twice the amount as that found in the sea, as they are for the stories that explain their origin.

Anyone who is from St Thomas will happily share the traditional explanation which points to a story of two brothers who bitterly quarrelled over ownership of the very fertile land which their father had left behind without benefit of a will. They awoke one morning after a vicious quarrel to find that the land was completely covered by water, which was separated by a narrow strip of land and, as the story goes, the water which formed the two ponds was as bitter as their feud. Scientists, however, provide a geological explanation. They argue that during the earthquake of 1692, the land where the ponds are presently located sank, leaving pockets of seawater almost completely enclosed by land.

Regardless of their origin, the salt ponds were an important source of livelihood for some of the early settlers of Yallahs, who obtained supplies of salt from the ponds. This was in high demand for meat preservation, especially by buccaneers who frequented the area, particularly Cow Bay. One of the earliest settlers of Yallahs, Captain Joseph Noyes, owned the salt ponds and reportedly made 10 thousand bushels (one bushel has the equivalent weight of 50 pounds) of salt in a single year. As mentioned earlier, the Yallahs Signal Tower, built on a strip of land beside

the ponds, was an important feature of the early warning system which the British used for the defence of Jamaica's coastline and it still stands today as a protected heritage monument. [21]

EASINGTON: THE FORMER CAPITAL OF ST DAVID'S PARISH:

Just north of the town of Yallahs lies Easington, which is a small community on the banks of the Yallahs River. Easington was the capital of St David's parish from 1836 until 1867 when it was merged with St Thomas in the East. This small, quiet community has been associated with several events and landmarks of historical importance, one of which is Judgement Cliff, which is near Llandewey but which is best viewed from Easington. Along the Easington main road on the way to Llandewey, there are spectacular views of Judgement Cliff, which was formed as a result of a geological catastrophe which occurred during the great earthquake of 1692. The earthquake caused a massive landslip, resulting in a large part of the hillside (about 1,000 ft. above sea level) collapsing and sliding down to bury everything and everyone in its path.

Traditional accounts still held as truth by the residents of Easington, declare that before the earthquake, there was a vast plantation located below the hill which had been reportedly owned by a Dutch planter who was notorious for his cruelty to his enslaved workers. The collapse of the hillside, entombing the planter and the entire estate, was regarded as a fitting divine judgement for such a legacy of cruelty, hence the name, Judgement Hill or Judgement Cliff.

When we view Judgement Cliff today, what is visible is the massive scar in the hillside and this gives us an idea of just how much of the hillside gave way during the earthquake. Judgement

Cliff is also an instant reminder that the earthquake of 1692 which so devastated Port Royal, also brought disaster to parts of St Thomas parish. The Jamaica Historical Society has erected a plaque on a playing field at Easington to commemorate this tragic event.

Judgement Cliff. Photo courtesy of Stuart Reeves

Easington and the rest of St David suffered significant loss as a result of other natural disasters, including the hurricane which devastated the area between October 18 to 19, 1815. What was described as “a fearful hurricane and an unprecedented deluge of rain” caused the Yallahs River to overrun its banks, causing severe damage and loss to every plantation along the river banks. Landslides on the mountain sides swept away entire coffee fields and provision ground crops, resulting in extreme hardships for planters and their enslaved labourers as food became scarce

and communications were interrupted because over 14 miles of roadway had been completely washed away.

Cholera epidemics between 1850 and 1851 also seemed to have targeted the entire parish of St Thomas in the East, but the area around Easington suffered significantly. Reports reaching the government indicated that “a large number of the inhabitants in and around Easington have been swept away” by the disease.

Central to the history of Easington was the historic landmark known as the Easington Suspension Bridge, which had facilitated transportation across the Yallahs River from Easington to areas such as Norris in the nineteenth century. As a result of a petition signed by several settlers of the area, a suspension bridge was built across the Yallahs River in 1826. Today, all that remains of the Easington Suspension Bridge are the towers on each bank of the Yallahs River.

One of the Pillars of the Old Easington Suspension Bridge. Photo courtesy of Stuart Reeves

In 1944, the suspension bridge was replaced by an iron bridge which still stands and is still known as the Easington Bridge.

Easington Bridge Today. Photo courtesy of Stuart Reeves

In recent years, the existing Easington Bridge also acquired some cultural significance for the area, as Revival groups notably one led by Brother Brown, regularly held revival meetings under the Easington Bridge. Perhaps the most famous historic link between Easington and the rest of St Thomas in the East, and by extension with Jamaica's history, is the association which Paul Bogle

had with Easington. On his historic journey to Spanish Town in 1865 to present the grievances of small settlers and others to the Governor, Bogle and his supporters held a meeting under a guinep tree located very close to the present day St David's Community Development and Skills Training Centre before proceeding to Spanish Town.

St David's Community Development and Skills Training Center. Photo courtesy of Jenny Jemmott

To commemorate this significant link to Easington's history, the Jamaica National Trust Commission, in 1965, erected a monument and plaque at the site where Bogle had his gathering, in tribute to this heroic son of St Thomas.

Easington Monument to Paul Bogle. Photo courtesy of Jenny Jemmott

It remains uncertain whether the very old guinep tree which stands towering over the monument and enclosed park today is the tree which was there in 1865.


EASINGTON
CAPITAL OF ST DAVID
1836-1867
ERECTED BY THE JAMAICA
NATIONAL TRUST COMMISSION
IN HONOUR OF PAUL BOGLE
23RD OCTOBER 1965

Easington Monument to Paul Bogle (photo 2) and *the Nearby Guinep Tree* (Photo 1). Photos courtesy of Stuart Reeves [22]

HOW THE TOWN OF BATH CAME TO BE:

Both the early history and the name of this little community of Bath are closely tied to the late seventeenth-century discovery of the healing properties of a mineral spring, located about one and a half miles outside of the present-day town of Bath. During the wet season, the mineral water that springs from rocks at different levels reaches a temperature of 128 degrees and gets to a high of 130 degrees in the dry season. The Bath mineral water has high concentrations of lime and sulphur, and once it became clear that taking a bath in the healing waters coming from the

spring proved helpful for skin diseases and rheumatic illnesses, arrangements were quickly put in place to lead the water to a bathhouse where persons could experience the curative powers of the mineral spring. So began the series of events that led to the establishment of the town of Bath, named after the healing powers of its famed mineral baths, today known as Bath Fountain.

Colonel Stanton, one of the earliest settlers in the area, was the owner of the huge property (in excess of 1,130 acres) on which the springs were accidentally discovered towards the end of the seventeenth century. Traditional accounts link the discovery of the healing powers of the waters to one of Stanton's slaves, a runaway named Jacob who came across the spring water while hiding away in the bushes on Stanton's property. Having noticed that an ulcer on his leg gradually healed after bathing in the pool of water over several days, the enslaved man reportedly took a risk and informed his master.

Another account attributes the discovery to Stanton himself, who confirmed the benefits of the water when two persons known to him and who were suffering from "a painful malady" were healed after bathing in the waters. When news of this amazing discovery reached the ears of the Jamaican Assembly, negotiations were immediately started with Stanton, and in 1699, the Jamaican Legislature purchased 1,130 acres and the rights to the mineral springs from Stanton for the "princely sum" of one thousand, two hundred and fifty pounds. In the same year, a law was passed giving control of the land to the "Directors of the Bath of St Thomas the Apostle", including the governor at the time, Sir William Beeston, five justices of the peace from St Thomas in the East and St David, among others.

Facilities were soon put in place to allow public access to the mineral springs. In 1731, the Assembly provided funds for the construction of a house where sick persons and other visitors could stay while experiencing the benefits of the healing baths. Before this, the baths were not very accommodating because there was no place for visitors to stay. The water was channelled through a pipe into the bath house and soon enough, other buildings were established to accommodate visitors to the baths.

In later years, changes in the river bank facilitated the location of the bath house on the same side as the hot spring, so the water flowing into this bath house retained its heat.

Bath Fountain with Bath House. Reprinted courtesy of the National Library of Jamaica

Most importantly the building of a “fine road” after 1731, connecting Kingston to the area of the baths, paved the way for greater public access to the bath. Provisions were also made in the 1731 Act for the granting of land to soldiers and others who agreed to settle down in the area, and to encourage settlement, they would be exempt from taxes for seven years.

All these factors contributed to the emergence of what became the town of Bath. By 1749, the Directors of the bath were instructed to set aside land from the original 1,130 acres for the establishment of a town and that this was to be named the town of Bath.

The Town of Bath. Reprinted courtesy of the National Library of Jamaica

The land was subdivided into lots, the well-to-do built houses there, public buildings, including a hospital, were constructed in the town square, and enslaved labour was used to maintain the road and the vegetable gardens which supplied the hospital and the visitors who stayed at the bath houses. In the later history of the town, the Bath Court House was built on the foundation of the hospital.

*Bath Court House***.** Reprinted courtesy of the National Library of Jamaica

Facilities at the bath were also expanded with the construction of a two-storey building with two apartments for ladies upstairs and two downstairs for gentlemen. Additional baths and dressing rooms were also built. Although the visitors to the baths were mainly the well-off, it is

interesting that some poor persons who needed treatment were able to get this because of annual grants from the Assembly and charitable donations. For a relatively short time, between its emergence in 1749 and the end of the century, the town of Bath became a "society resort" complete with billiard tables and card tables, a playground of the rich and famous, with visitors flocking to the town for parties, dances and general entertainment, as much as for the health benefits of its famed baths.

Also associated with the history of Bath, was the establishment by the government of Bath Botanical Gardens in 1779 on lands which had been set aside for the layout of the town. Dr Thomas Clarke, who was the doctor in charge of Bath hospital, was also appointed first superintendent of the gardens. The Bath Botanical garden is not only famous for being the oldest on the island, but has great significance to Jamaica's natural heritage because it was there that many plants identified with Jamaica, such as the Breadfruit, Jackfruit, Cinnamon, Crotons, Jacaranda and Bougainvillea, were first planted. The gardens added to the attractions of the bustling town of Bath.

Although Bath's glory days as an elite resort did not last beyond the ending of the eighteenth century, it had evolved into a well-populated village by 1900 when it was described in the Handbook for that year as having a large number of dwelling houses, an episcopal church, a Wesleyan and a Baptist chapel. The baths still attracted visitors and by 1900, there was a lodging house operated by Lucretia Duffy in the vicinity of the baths.[23]

SUGAR, LIVESTOCK PENS AND COFFEE: ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES AND SETTLEMENT PATTERNS IN ST THOMAS IN THE EAST UP TO 1838

SUGAR ESTATES SHAPE THE PARISH:

By 1700, choice of economic activities had greatly influenced decisions as to which parts of St Thomas in the East were to be settled, predominantly by persons from England or by their Creole descendants (in this case persons of English parents born in Jamaica). For the most part, (except for Maroon communities and a precious few free Blacks) persons of African descent had no say in choice of economic activity or where they were located in the parish, having arrived here as a result of enslavement and forced migration. This would not change until 1838.

Economic activities in the parish and indeed throughout the entire island in the pre-Emancipation period were focussed on the large-scale plantation production of an export crop which would reap considerable profit for the owners of these estates. This export commodity was sugar, and it was sugar cane that played the greatest role in how St Thomas in the East was settled and how

the landscape was shaped by man for more than a century and a half before 1838.

The Sugar Mill Ruins at Llandewey. Photo courtesy of Stuart Reeves

Sugar cane was best grown on a large amount of flat, fertile and well-irrigated land, and because sugar was largely an export crop, these estates were ideally situated on the plains of the parish, and where possible, near to the coast in order to reduce transportation costs. Because sugarcane was grown on large estates, a large, reliable labour force was required if the industry was to be successful.

Llandewey Sugar Works Showing the Interior of the Wheel House. Photo courtesy Stuart Reeves

The decision by English settlers to use West Africa as the source of forced labour significantly

and permanently shaped the racial composition and cultural patterns of the society of St Thomas in the East and indeed of Jamaica in general.

Sugar cane remained the major cash crop for the entire period before Emancipation and its noteworthy success was achieved at the expense of African enslaved workers, making them important contributors to the economic and socio-cultural history of the parish of St Thomas in the East and indeed, to the wider fortunes of the "mother country" of Great Britain, even if their significance went unacknowledged at the time.

Of the parish's three main rivers, the Plantain Garden River, the Yallahs River and the Morant River, it was the Plantain Garden River that had the greatest impact on how the landscape in the parish was altered to meet the needs of the sugar industry. Not only was the Plantain Garden River significant for its unusual easterly flow, but the land on both sides of the river and indeed, the entire Plantain Garden River Valley, possessed the most fertile soil in the parish and this largely flat plain was therefore ideal for sugarcane cultivation.

It is not surprising that this river valley was home to several of St Thomas in the East's most successful and famous sugar estates from the late seventeenth century until the ending of slavery. Just below Bath, water was channelled from the Plantain Garden River to the Plantain Garden River Estate, Winchester, Golden Grove and Duckenfield estates to power the sugar works of these estates. Another canal system led water from the northern part of the river and supplied Wheelersfield, Hordley, Amity Hall and Holland estates.

But, unlike other sugar properties in the parish, the landscape around these eight estates shows no remains or ruins of brick arches and stone aqueducts which would have carried the water from

source to sugar factories. This is so because the Plantain Garden River flowed through an almost completely flat plain and the water could be easily channelled through ground level canals to the sugar works. [24]

In the pre-emancipation history of the parish, successful sugar estates contributed to the growth and development of the local and metropolitan economies, while shaping the social history of the parish in several ways. Duckenfield Hall dates back to 1719 when Robert and Samuel Duckenfield established the estate. Robert Duckenfield was a member of the Jamaican Assembly in 1731.

The estate was one of the most productive in the eighteenth century and included a total area of about 2,361 acres, with 439 acres of land just south of the Plantain Garden River devoted to cane cultivation. The "Duckenfield legacy" of sugar production continued into the twentieth century, when the estate remained one of only a few St Thomas estates in sugar production at that time. Duckenfield was eventually taken over by St Thomas Sugar Estates, but the Duckenfield name left its mark on an entire community in Eastern St Thomas, which still bears the name Duckenfield.

In the early nineteenth century, Hordley estate on the northern bank of the Plantain Garden River was owned by Matthew Gregory Lewis (Monk Lewis), who ordered that his enslaved population be treated in a more humane way. He abolished the flogging of females and gave his slaves a yearly holiday, which he termed a "royal holiday", while insisting that they be given every Saturday free. Although he visited the island very infrequently (1815 and 1818), Lewis gained an

early reputation among his enslaved population as somewhat of a humanitarian, a reputation which also resulted in his unpopularity with several other planters of the parish.

The original great house at Moro was replaced by a new great house sometime between 1818 and 1856. In 1865, during the Morant Bay Rebellion, white settlers of surrounding areas sought refuge at the new Hordley Great House. Today, the ruins of the Hordley Great House still stand and this has been declared a protected heritage site by the Jamaica National Heritage Trust. [25]

Several other sugar estates contributed to shaping the economy and society of St Thomas in the East before Emancipation, and as was the case with most of the estates, the surrounding communities still bear their names today. Among these were Golden Grove, Holland Estate and Amity Hall, all in the rich sugar belt of the Plantain Garden River Valley. Holland Estate, located on the flat land at the mouth of the Plantain Garden River, was one of the largest sugar producers under slavery, with about 487 acres under sugar cane cultivation in 1780 and having an enslaved population of about 600 in 1820. Given the proximity of Holland Estate to the bay, it is very likely that Holland Bay was so called because of its association with Holland Estate.

Holland Estate. Reprinted courtesy of the National Library of Jamaica

Not far from Holland was Golden Grove, which was one of the largest estates in St Thomas in the East, extending over 2,000 acres, with about 500 slaves and exporting about 600 hogsheads of sugar in some years. There was an Anglican church missionary school, as well as a chapel at Golden Grove Estate, and there is an interesting account of efforts made by the enslaved workers to contribute 20 pounds (from sale of provisions at market on their day off) towards the purchase of a communion chalice for the chapel.

At a time in our history when the enslaved had no legal rights and in many cases, were treated as less than human, and in light of the fact that enslaved labour was unpaid labour, the significance of their efforts is a remarkable reflection of the very humanity that was denied them. The inscription at the base of the chalice (which is preserved in the archives of the Anglican Church in Kingston) reads “Purchased for Golden Grove Chapel by the slaves of the estate, 1830”, a lasting tribute to their contribution.

Also located on the eastern end of the parish, not too far from Hordley, was Amity Hall Estate, which benefitted like all the other estates discussed so far, from the rich soils of the Plantain Garden River Valley. The Amity Hall Great House, located on a hill overlooking the Plantain Garden River Valley, provided a spectacular view of the entire area. Although the early owners were Thomas Cussans and then his son, Alexander Cussans, Amity Hall in the eighteenth century was owned by Simon Taylor, perhaps the wealthiest planter in Jamaica and certainly in St Thomas in the East up to his death in 1813. He had control over several estates in the parish, including Holland, Golden Grove, Amity Hall, Albion and Lyssons (which was named after Nicholas Lycence, who was the member for St Thomas in the Jamaican Assembly between 1671 and 1672).

Simon Taylor was considered one of the most influential men in the parish and was member of the House of Assembly for St Thomas in the East from 1784 until 1810. He also owned three cattle pens (ranches), one of which was Prospect Pen (now Vale Royal) in St Andrew. This explains why both Simon Taylor and his brother, Sir John Taylor, were originally buried at what we now know as Vale Royal. When Vale Royal was sold, their bodies were removed and

reinterred at Lyssons Estate in St Thomas. Amity Hall today remains largely an agricultural community, with cane, bananas and coconuts as the main crops.[26]

One of the largest and oldest of the sugar estates in the parish was Belvedere Estate, located to the west of Morant Bay and owned in the 1660s by Colonel Thomas Freeman, who was also Island Secretary in 1664 and a member of the Council in 1671. An extensive property of 2,200 acres, Belvedere's legacy of sugar production is still seen in the ruins of the aqueduct, the functioning water-wheel and the ruins of sugar works. Belvedere's Great House was built on a hill overlooking the sea.

Belvedere Plantation Today. Photo courtesy of Stuart Reeves

Today, Belvedere is owned and managed by Serge Island Dairies, and dairy cattle as well as hay production are the focus of the property, but mangoes and papaya are also grown for export.

*Belvedere Estate today with Cattle and Bales of Hay***.** Photo courtesy of Stuart Reeves

Before it became part of St Thomas in the East in 1867, St David was home to Albion, owned by Simon Taylor in 1802 and one of the largest and most prominent sugar estates in the area.

Ruins of Albion Aqueduct. Photo courtesy of Stuart Reeves

Located on the west bank of the Yallahs River, Albion was comprised of 1,492 acres, with 294 acres under cane cultivation during Taylor's time. This vast size was partly the result of having acquired Cow Bay Pen (discussed shortly) with its 600 acres around 1789. Just before Emancipation, Albion had about 450 slaves and was producing about 400 hogsheads of sugar for export.

Ruins of Albion Great House. Photo courtesy of Stuart Reeves

In the late 1870s, Albion was famed for being the leading producer of sugar in the island and the only Jamaican estate at that time, using the vacuum-pan system of boiling, along with the centrifugal drier, which resulted in a clearer, "light-coloured" crystal sugar which became distinctively known as "Albion sugar". Today, ruins of the Albion cut stone and clay aqueduct,

so important to the irrigation of the estate's vast lands, along with ruins of the mill house, still stand.

Ruins of Albion Estate Sugar Works. Photo courtesy of Stuart Reeves

Like so many other areas in St Thomas, the surrounding community took its name from the estate, and Albion today is a mixture of upscale residences and informal settlements. [27]

LIVESTOCK PENS

One form of economic activity that emerged across Jamaica, beginning in the seventeenth century, was the raising of animals, on properties known as livestock pens. Cattle, horses,

donkeys and mules were raised for purposes of sale to estates, either as draft animals (for example, to turn animal mills and pull estate machinery) or as a method of transportation of both goods and people. An additional function of some pens sometimes involved the purchase of overused animals from estates for the purpose of fattening them for sale on the local meat market.

Some sugar and coffee estates devoted part of their own lands to pasture and rearing of livestock. Settlement patterns were influenced by the need for fairly large expanses of flat land for pasturage, and in view of the interdependence between pens and estates, livestock pen owners preferred to be located within proximity to estates. Frequently, pen owners had to settle for flat lands further in from the coastal areas, which were dominated by export-oriented sugar estates.

African enslaved workers not only provided the labour required, but also influenced the racial and therefore cultural patterns that characterised the society at this time. In the period of slavery in St Thomas in the East, there were relatively few properties designated purely as livestock pens, but in the post-slavery period, more estate owners converted their land usage to livestock rearing as sugar fortunes experienced worsening decline. The former parish of St David was home to the well- known Cow Bay Pen, which was located on the western bank of the Yallahs River, near to the coast. It was a sizeable property of 600 acres, of which 304 acres were cleared and devoted mainly to pasture and guinea grass, as well as cultivation of some corn and cotton. Land was also set aside for the pen keeper's house and houses for the slaves.

However, Cow Bay Pen did not last beyond 1789 as around that time, it was absorbed into Albion Estate. Other pens in the Yallahs area included Heartease, Smithfield and Mount Clare.

Boxford Lodge was another livestock pen in St Thomas in the East and this was owned by Nathaniel Phillips, who also owned Phillipsfield and Suffolk sugar estates around the 1760s, but spent most of his time in England as an absentee owner. [28]

COFFEE PRODUCTION IN ST THOMAS IN THE EAST UP TO EMANCIPATION

Although the coffee plant was first introduced from Martinique to Jamaica in 1728 by Governor Sir Nicholas Lawes, its cultivation increased significantly in the 1790s when the Haitian revolution resulted in an interruption in the supply of coffee from that territory for the export market. In the years before Emancipation, there were considerable numbers of coffee estates in St Thomas in the East and adjoining St David, which eventually became part of the parish.

Unlike the sugar estates which had altered the landscape and influenced settlement patterns on the flat coastal areas of the parish, predominantly in the Plantain Garden River Valley, coffee production was to transform the landscape and expand settlement further inland, mainly on the hillsides and slopes of the Blue Mountains and hilly areas of the Yallahs River Valley which were ideal for cultivating excellent quality coffee beans.

Before the introduction of coffee, these hilly and mountainous regions were heavily forested and the areas were sparsely populated. Taking advantage of the opportunities provided by the problems in Haiti, English settlers, with labour provided by enslaved Africans, cleared the forests, terraced the hillsides, planted the coffee fields, built great houses and other accommodation for white owners and supervisory staff, as well as villages for the enslaved.

Soon enough, these parts of St Thomas in the East were populated by English settlers and their families, as well as by Africans and their descendants. As was the case with the sugar estates, coffee influenced the racial composition and cultural traditions of the parish, as hundreds of enslaved Africans were brought into the area to provide the labour required for the coffee industry.

One of the earliest coffee properties established in the parish was Radnor and Springfield, which were located high up in the Blue Mountains at present day Hagley Gap. In 1808, this was owned and operated by Robert Morgan as a unit. Radnor and Springfield occupied about 689 acres, with about one third of this under coffee bean cultivation. By 1825, Radnor's coffee production required an enslaved labour force of about 215 persons. The property had the advantage of very steep lands, rising to about 3,000 feet above sea level at the Anchovy River and lands in the north-eastern section of the property were at an elevation of 5,000 feet above sea level.

Radnor's coffee works were only two miles away from the Blue Mountain Peak, which was closer to the peak than any other coffee plantation. This gave Radnor the reputation of producing a superior quality coffee bean. Radnor's location, strengths and reputation in coffee production have allowed it to survive until today.

Brook Lodge and Windsor Lodge were located on either side of the Yallahs River at elevations rising from 1,500 feet to about 3,000 feet above sea level. Shortly before Emancipation, the 473-acre Brook Lodge had 105 slaves working the 138 acres which were under coffee cultivation. On the other side of the Yallahs River, Windsor Lodge consisted of 336 acres, of which 74 acres

were cultivated in coffee and an enslaved labour force of 94 persons shortly before Emancipation.

Orange Park Estate was an important coffee plantation which dated back to the eighteenth century. Located in the Yallahs hills at an elevation of 2, 500 feet above sea level, the estate consisted of 515 acres at the height of its coffee-producing years. The Orange Park Great House, a two-storey cut-stone structure has been remarkably preserved over the years and remained significant in the island's history long after the estate ceased production of coffee in 1882.

In more recent times, the Great House became home to renowned artist, Barrington Watson, who transformed the outdoor kitchen and the carriage house into his studio and focus of his creative achievements. Other coffee plantations in the parish included Old Monklands in the lower Blue Mountains and Arntully, which along with Brook Lodge, was owned by William Rae on the eve of Emancipation. [29]

ST THOMAS IN THE EAST IN THE POST SLAVERY NINETEENTH CENTURY (1838-1900)

ACCESS TO LAND AND THE EMERGENCE OF THE PEASANTRY IN ST THOMAS IN THE EAST:

Freedom meant many things to the once enslaved population of the parish. Historical evidence shows us that although legally defined as property under slavery, the enslaved had not bought into white society's view which saw them as "things" and whenever possible, they had adopted

strategies to assert their self-worth and that of their families and friends, often times suffering the consequences which went with “daring to speak up to massa”. Above all, for the former enslaved, Emancipation meant that they could renew and intensify their efforts to reclaim this sense of personhood and their entitlement as freed persons and as free citizens of Jamaica to the same rights and opportunities that other persons held under the law.

Freedom provided men and women with legal autonomy, allowing freedom of movement, the ability to make choices related to earning a living and if they chose to work on estates, the ability to negotiate fair compensation for work done. With 1838 also came opportunities to secure the wellbeing of themselves and their families, especially with regards to the education of their children. Eventually, for those adult males who could satisfy the property requirements, freedom also held the promise of being able to vote for persons whom they felt would best represent their interests, whether at the local level in the form of the Parish Vestry or in the House of Assembly.

Access to land, whether through purchasing plots of their own, or rental of grounds for cultivation, or even through squatting on Crown lands, could contribute to a greater or lesser extent, to the realization of the true meaning of freedom for the former slaves. Access to land or lack of it, would influence decisions of whether to continue giving their labour to the sugar and coffee estates and if so, under what conditions, where and how often they would need to work on the plantations. No access to land after 1838 meant that the employers of labour, the planter class for the most part, would continue to dictate terms of employment and wages and, if the freed people had to rent house and grounds on the plantations, the conditions of tenancy and rental

would be dictated to them, severely curtailing their ability to realize economic and therefore social autonomy.

Clearly, access to land of fair to good quality would lead to varying degrees of economic independence from estate labour, and land of their own would also allow them a home of their own, resulting in security of tenure for themselves and their families, while enhancing the dignity and honour of family members and ensuring freedom from abusive exploitation, particularly of the female members of their families. For these reasons and more, the desire to acquire land of their own was an important aim of the freed people throughout the post-slavery years.

The ability of the freed people of St Thomas in the East and St David to gain access to land after 1838 was influenced by several factors. Having sufficient money to afford to buy land was one factor. Under slavery, the planters' practice of allocating provision grounds on the estates to the enslaved for the purpose of growing food crops had not only reduced the planters' expenses but had also allowed the slaves to sell the surplus at markets. The money gained was quite often saved by the enslaved who had hoped to one day use these funds to purchase their freedom if the opportunity arose.

During the Apprenticeship period (August 1, 1834 - August 1, 1838), during which time they were no longer legally enslaved but not yet fully freed, they were paid wages for the work that they did outside of the three-quarters of the work week that they were still bound to work for the planters without pay. Therefore when full freedom came on August 1, 1838, some ex-slaves had money saved which would facilitate their purchase of land. For others, saving enough money to buy land would continue for several years after 1838. Prices of land in the immediate

post-slavery period averaged about six pounds per acre in most parts of the island and later, in the 1860s, prices fell to between three to five pounds per acre.

However, even if the price of land could be afforded, land was not always easily available for purchase by the freed people. Land available for sale was usually provided by plantation owners who were willing to subdivide and sell portions of estate land (usually marginal or unused), either because they were facing financial difficulties or because they wished to have a ready supply of potential workers living nearby. Several planters, for the same reasons, opted to rent unused portions of their land to ex-slaves who were entitled to the benefits of the land as long as they abided by the planters' terms and conditions of tenancy.

In the immediate post-slavery years, some of these terms governing rental of house and grounds were very harsh, with planters charging very high rentals or in some cases, per capita rentals (a separate rent for each member of the family living in the same house and evicting tenants at a moment's notice). These harsh planter policies worsened labour relations on the estates and must have contributed to the decision by many of the freed people to relocate their residence away from the estate as soon as circumstances permitted. Not all planters over the period were willing to sell land to ex-slaves as they realised that in some cases, land acquisition would discourage them from giving regular estate labour.

Another source of land was Crown Land. These were huge amounts of land mainly in the interior, un-cleared areas which were owned by the government but arrangements were not yet in place for these to be sold. So ex-slaves usually took informal possession of some of this crown land (squatting). Unlike other parishes where the Non-Conformist missionaries were active from

very early and where these missionaries purchased land from planters, subdivided it and resold the land to ex-slaves (missionary free villages), the freed people of St Thomas in the East and St David acquired land through individual purchases, on their own initiative and so most of the smallholding settlements that emerged in this area after Emancipation were independent smallholdings.

Challenges facing both the sugar and the coffee estates in the parish after 1838 contributed to the ability of the freed people to gain access to land. Even before Emancipation, in the last decades of slavery, there had been a gradual decline in the productivity of sugar in the island generally, and the inability of planters to command a ready and cheap labour force after 1838 contributed to a decline in profits on the part of planters. This situation was worsened by the Sugar Duties Equalisation Act of 1846, by which the protection on the British market of British West Indian sugar against foreign sugar was gradually withdrawn.

Coffee planters faced similar problems with uncertain labour supply and reduced profits. In 1844, equal duties were charged on all foreign and colonial coffee entering Britain and so Jamaican coffee producers began to suffer from the international competition which resulted. This led to a reduction in the acreage under coffee cultivation and eventually, to the abandonment of some coffee estates, especially in the Yallahs River Valley.

Under these circumstances, more land became available for small settlers. So for example, although Windsor Lodge had 336 acres, only 74 of these were in coffee cultivation in 1847 and the plight of other coffee and sugar estates in the parish told a similar story of declining acreage

under cultivation, thus making land more accessible to the freed people of the parish, whether through sale or rental. [30]

As a result, but also largely as a testament to the freed people's drive and initiatives, land ownership and land settlement patterns in St Thomas in the East and neighbouring St David underwent a profound change after Emancipation and continuing on into most of the nineteenth century. Hundreds of small settlements emerged across St Thomas in the East in areas such as Font Hill, Prospect, Seaforth, Barracks, Pleasant Hill, Middleton, Soho, Stony Gut, Mount Lebanus, Dalvey and Somerset, while, in the Yallahs River Valley, Heartease, Smithfield, Mount Clare, Hampstead, Pomfret, York, Pleasant Hill, Friendship, Islington, among others, were now dominated by peasant holdings.

Present-day Sign near the District of Pomfret. Photo courtesy of Stuart Reeves

Some of the freed people moved into the towns of Bath and Morant Bay where they purchased small parcels of land. A summary of the number of small settlements in 1845 under 10 acres each in St Thomas in the East and St David shows the extent to which, in a few short years after Emancipation, the land ownership and land settlement patterns had undergone remarkable change.

In St Thomas in the East, in 1845, in the Manchioneal District, there were 207 smallholdings under 10 acres, the Plantain Garden River District, 158 holdings, the Bath District, 145, the Port Morant District, 49, the Morant Bay District, 84 and the Blue Mountain Valley District, 108. In the same year in St David, there were 505 small settlements under 10 acres. In 1845, some of

these early small settlers included Elizabeth Chrystie and W. Johnson who owned 10 acres each in Stony Gut and in Font Hill, B. Francis (13 acres), A. Logan, (14 acres) and D. Smith (10 acres).

Under slavery, Stony Gut (spelt Stoney Gut in the early documents) was a fair-sized property of about 360 acres and it shared boundaries with Middleton, York and Spring Garden plantations. Jamaica Almanacs from 1824 until July 1838 list the owner as J. Collard, but the later almanacs indicate that he was deceased for quite a while before 1838. The 1838 Almanac lists Stoney Gut as having 44 apprentices on the eve of full freedom, so the property must have been in operation up until then. However, by 1845, it is clear that Stony Gut was being subdivided and sold in 10 acre lots, to persons such as Elizabeth Chrystie and W. Johnson. By 1860, Paul Bogle owned enough property in Stony Gut to qualify for the voter's list (to qualify for the right to vote after 1838 required ownership of property worth six pounds or payment of 30 pounds in rent or three pounds in direct taxes). [31]

Access to land provided the freed people with a greater amount of security, as well as some social and economic independence, and they could now make decisions as to whether and under what conditions they needed to give their labour to nearby estates or livestock pens so as to supplement the income that they obtained from small farming. Depending on the size of their holdings and the quality of the soil, many of these small settlers could afford to withdraw from estate labour entirely. Members of the family provided the labour needed for these small farms and crops grown for subsistence, and sale on the local markets included provision crops that they had traditionally cultivated during slavery, such as plantains, yams, cassava and pumpkin. Additionally, small settlers also raised a few livestock and poultry to meet domestic needs.

Importantly, small settlers contributed to the diversification of the economy throughout the post-slavery period by growing export crops, including ginger, pimento, arrowroot, cotton, small amounts of sugar cane, coffee and bananas.

Small settlers of St Thomas were to become the principal players in the early emergence of the banana export trade. By 1865, sugar and its by-product, rum, as well as coffee, still dominated exports from Jamaica. However, from the 1850s, small settlers in both St Thomas in the East and St David began the cultivation of bananas on a small scale. These parishes were ideal to meet the needs of the banana plant, which required fertile soil, good rainfall and sufficient drainage in order to do well.

In the 1860s and 1870s, the banana export trade was largely controlled by peasant producers of three main parishes, St Mary, Portland and St Thomas in the East. The small settlers of St Thomas carried stems of bananas on their heads, down from their hillside farms to the shipping ports of Port Morant and Morant Bay, where the bananas were speedily loaded onto waiting ships, a process which had to be quick in order to avoid spoilage.

In the 1860s and 1870s, bananas sold for sixpence per bunch on the local market, and in this early period of the trade, small settlers owning less than 10 acres, including those from St Thomas in the East, supplied 80% of bananas exported to the United States. It was not until the last two decades of the nineteenth century when Lorenzo Baker exercised greater control over the banana trade that the significant position of the peasants of St Thomas in the trade was lessened. [32]

St Thomas played a major role in the massive expansion in the banana trade as it moved from a mainly peasant-grown crop in the middle decades of the nineteenth century to plantation production and finally to control by large corporations towards the end of the century and the early part of the twentieth century. In 1865, sugar, rum and coffee made up two thirds of Jamaica's income from exports. However, by the end of the nineteenth century, exports of sugar and rum were only worth a quarter of the export value of bananas.

Between 1882 and 1888, Lorenzo Baker established great control over banana production through the purchase of several major sugar estates across the north-eastern part of the island and converted them to banana cultivation. For example, he purchased Bowden Estate at Port Morant, and with its proximity to the sea and its excellent harbour, Bowden and Port Morant soon became the centre of the banana export trade from St Thomas and the site of the United Fruit Company's operations in the parish. Because UFC's fleet of ships transported passengers as well as bananas, the United Fruit Company was also responsible for the early increase in visitors to St Thomas and these "banana boats" and the banana trade, in general, contributed to the start-up of early tourism in the island.

Spectacular Bowden and beautiful Port Morant, at the height of the banana trade, were important visitor destinations and at the turn of the century, United Fruit Company owned Bowden Hotel, which was opened during the winter months, November 1 to April 30, to accommodate visitors.

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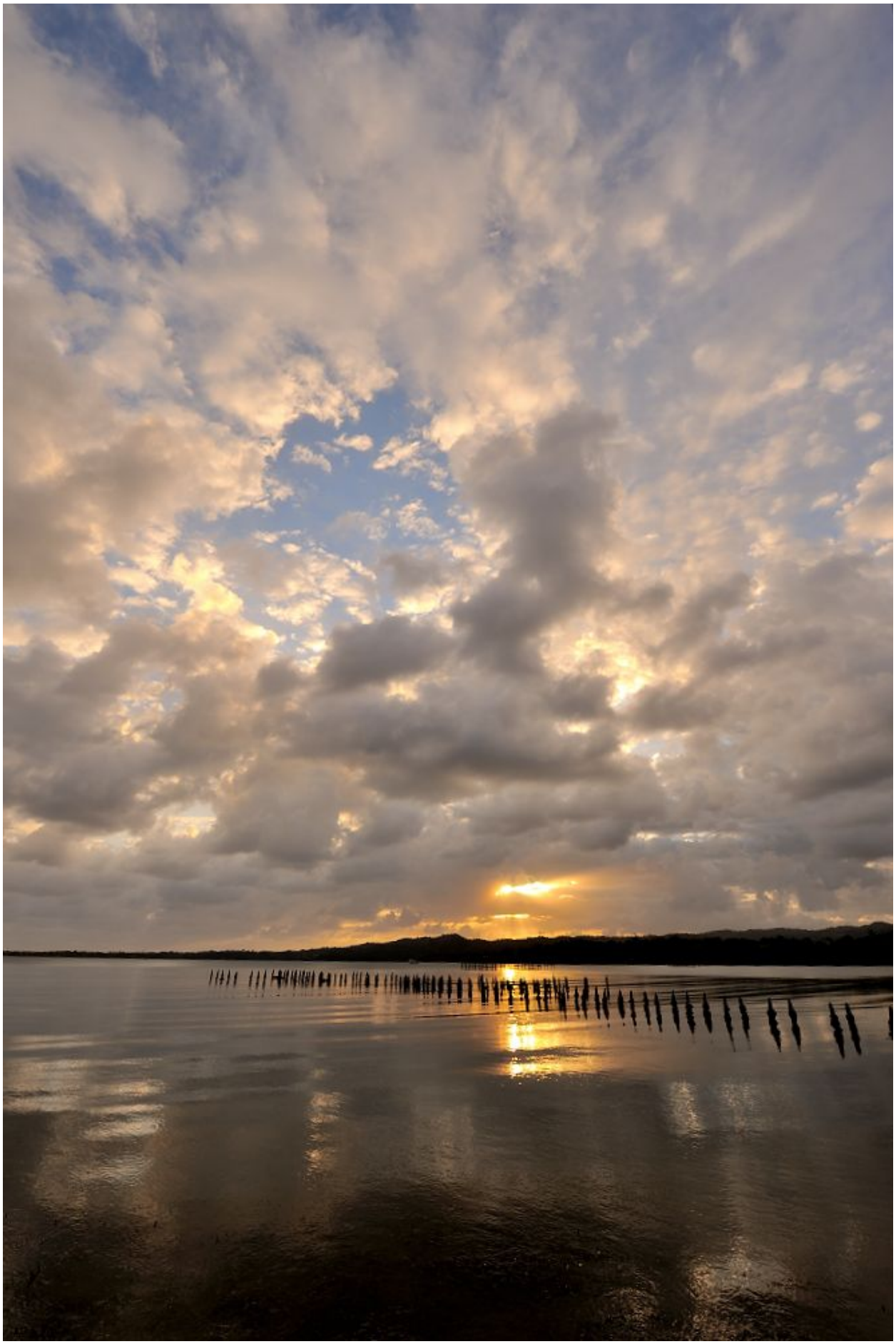


Bowden Wharf, Port Morant and the Ruins of the United Fruit Company's Depot at Port Morant. Photos courtesy of Stuart Reeves

By 1899, 14 of St Thomas' 18 sugar estates had converted to banana cultivation. For example, Amity Hall, Golden Grove, Hordley, Phillipsfield, Plantain Garden River estate, Rhine, Stanton, Stokesfield, Wheelerfield and Winchester had all become predominantly banana-producing properties. Importantly, by the early twentieth century, the banana trade from St Thomas and indeed, all of Jamaica, was dominated from cultivation through to export by the multinational corporation, the United Fruit Company. An important social effect of this expanding banana trade was that there was an increased importation of East Indian workers into the island and this was reflected on some of the St Thomas properties, such as Golden Grove.[33]

THE ROAD TO AND FROM MORANT BAY: THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE 1865 MORANT BAY REBELLION FOR THE PARISH AND THE WIDER JAMAICA:

By the 1850s, actions of man and nature had combined to make life more challenging for most of the freed people across the island, regardless of whether they had acquired land of their own or whether they remained dependent labourers. These problems were felt acutely by the poorer classes of all parishes, but it was in St Thomas in the East that events found expression in the inspired leadership provided by persons like Samuel Clarke, Black politician from St David, James McLaren, Native Baptist preacher and spokesperson for landless labourers and Paul Bogle, Deacon of the Native Baptist Church in the village of Stony Gut, successful small farmer and charismatic leader for the cause of the people of Stony Gut and the wider community of St Thomas in the East.

Declining fortunes, in both the sugar and the coffee industry, worsened by the withdrawal of protection for both crops through the equalisation of duties in the 1840s and the closure of some estates altogether, resulted in lower than usual opportunities for estate employment and excessively low wages for both landless labourers and small settlers who sometimes found it necessary to supplement their income from small farming. Renewal of East Indian immigration by the early 1860s further depressed wages and reduced employment and bargaining power for landless labourers. Added to this was the terrible uncertainty over the collection of wages which often went unpaid for weeks and the impossibly expensive and tedious process of seeking a solution through the courts.

The experience of Charles Walker, a labourer of Rocky Point was painfully typical of too many workers across St Thomas in the East and across the island. He worked long hours at Pera Pen and also at Golden Grove Estate, but along with several of his coworkers, he could not collect wages for work done and could not afford to take out a summons against the overseer at Golden Grove for non-payment of wages.

A severe shortage and sharply inflated prices of imported staples during the American Civil War in the early 1860s served to deepen the crisis facing the small settlers and labouring poor across the parish. Nature contributed its own brand of suffering, beginning with the devastating cholera epidemic of 1851, which affected many communities in the parishes, but which proved particularly deadly to entire areas in and around Easington. Outbreaks of smallpox in the following year further decimated families and seriously affected people's ability to help themselves and each other. Prolonged droughts followed by punishing floods during the early 1860s cut deep into the ability of the parish's hard working peasants and landless labourers to produce, to find work and to afford the prices of basic food items. [34]

For quite a few years before 1865, in the parish of St David, now western St Thomas, black leaders were emerging at the level of the parish vestry, the instrument of local government which had come into existence in 1677. Vestries looked after matters such as education, health, operations of the market, local police and maintenance of roadways within the parish. As Swithin Wilmot has shown in his research on Blacks in Vestry politics, when compared with the high property qualifications needed to run for a seat in the Assembly, membership of the parish vestries required the potential member to have property to the value of six pounds.

With the increase in small settlements across St David after 1838, the opportunities arose for blacks to elect their own to the St David Parish Vestry and, as Wilmot shows, from 1853 until the vestries were abolished in 1866 in the aftermath of the Morant Bay Rebellion, black smallholders controlled the St David Parish Vestry. Samuel Clarke, a black carpenter by trade and a small farmer who owned about 10 acres in the peasant settlement at Heartease in St David, was elected to the St David's Vestry in 1853. He worked tirelessly and successfully at the grassroots level, encouraging black males who qualified for the franchise to exercise their recently won political rights and to register on the St David's voting list and vote. This effort reaped tremendous success at the 1853 Vestry elections, when twelve black settlers were voted into the twelve elective seats in the Vestry by St David blacks.

Clarke's vision of leadership was one in which he and other black vestry members sought to improve social conditions for small settlers and, as shown by Wilmot, these vestry members campaigned for improvements in the few schools available for children of black settlers in the parish and improvements in the quality of teaching. At community meetings, they urged parents to ensure that their children received an education. Black leaders like Samuel Clarke saw community activism such as this as one step on the road to improving the lives of small settlers and the landless labourers of the parish, but his efforts at black self-improvement and his association with George William Gordon made him suspect in the eyes of Governor Eyre's administration. Samuel Clarke, like Gordon, was put to death for his alleged role in the events of October 11, 1865, although neither Clarke nor Gordon were in Morant Bay at the time. [35]

A landless labourer, son of St Thomas in the East and Native Baptist preacher and staunch supporter of Paul Bogle and the cause of all the poor people of St Thomas in the East, James

McLaren knew only too well the challenges faced by the dependent labourers of the parish. His parents were former slaves, but James McLaren was born into freedom. Although his father, John McLaren, could neither read nor write, he spoke proudly of his son who could read and write because he had sent him to school "when he was a little bit of a boy."

As a field labourer at Coley Estate, James McLaren experienced the frustratingly low and unreliable payment of wages to workers throughout the parish, receiving only two shillings and sixpence after five days of work, for which he should have been paid one shilling a day, but like others, he could not get access to justice. Like Paul Bogle and many others, McLaren believed that if he and all the landless workers could get access to rental of some of the unused lands which remained in the hands of the British government (Crown lands) they would be better able to help themselves and their families. At the same time, Mclaren, like others, made it clear that black people were not looking for a handout from whites and indicated their willingness to work hard on these lands, cultivating cane, coffee and cotton and pay taxes to the Queen. McLaren expressed what numerous letters and petitions such as the "Petition of the Poor People of St Ann" to the authorities had done: that the problems facing the freed people were by the early 1860s dishearteningly unbearable, but that they were thinking of peaceful solutions in the form of requests for access to unused Crown lands, which would pave the way for better for themselves and their families.

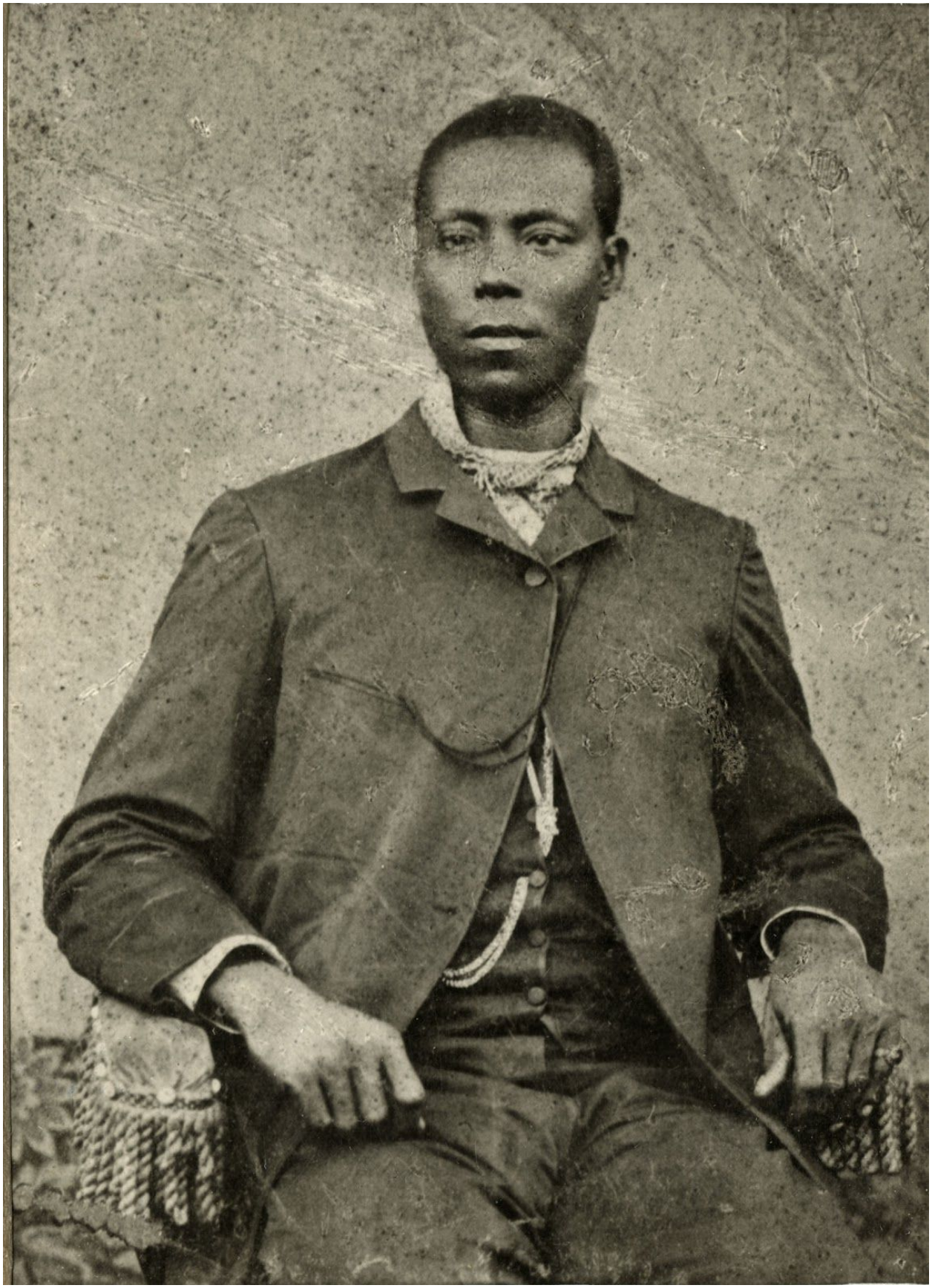
But the British Government's response in 1865 (known as the Queen's Advice") seemed to ridicule the genuine efforts at self-help and ignored all the issues set out in these petitions. The "Queen's Advice" laid the blame for the problems faced by the freed people squarely at their

own doorsteps, alleging laziness and unwillingness to work industriously while stating that all their difficulties would be resolved if they worked hard and consistently on the estates.

It is therefore understandable that McLaren could reach no other conclusion, but to recommend the next course of action which was for them to "come together and go down to Morant Bay in lump" so that it could be made clear to the whites that "there was plenty black in the island" and that they intended to take no more. McLaren accompanied Bogle and others on that fateful journey, meeting first at Morant Bay, stopping on their way, at Easington, then on to Spanish Town (a distance of 40 miles one-way) with the intent of outlining their grievances to Governor Eyre. The governor's refusal to see or speak to them had everything to do with the next phase of events known as the Morant Bay Rebellion. James McLaren, like so many other sons and daughters of the parish, paid with his life for his struggle to gain justice. [36]

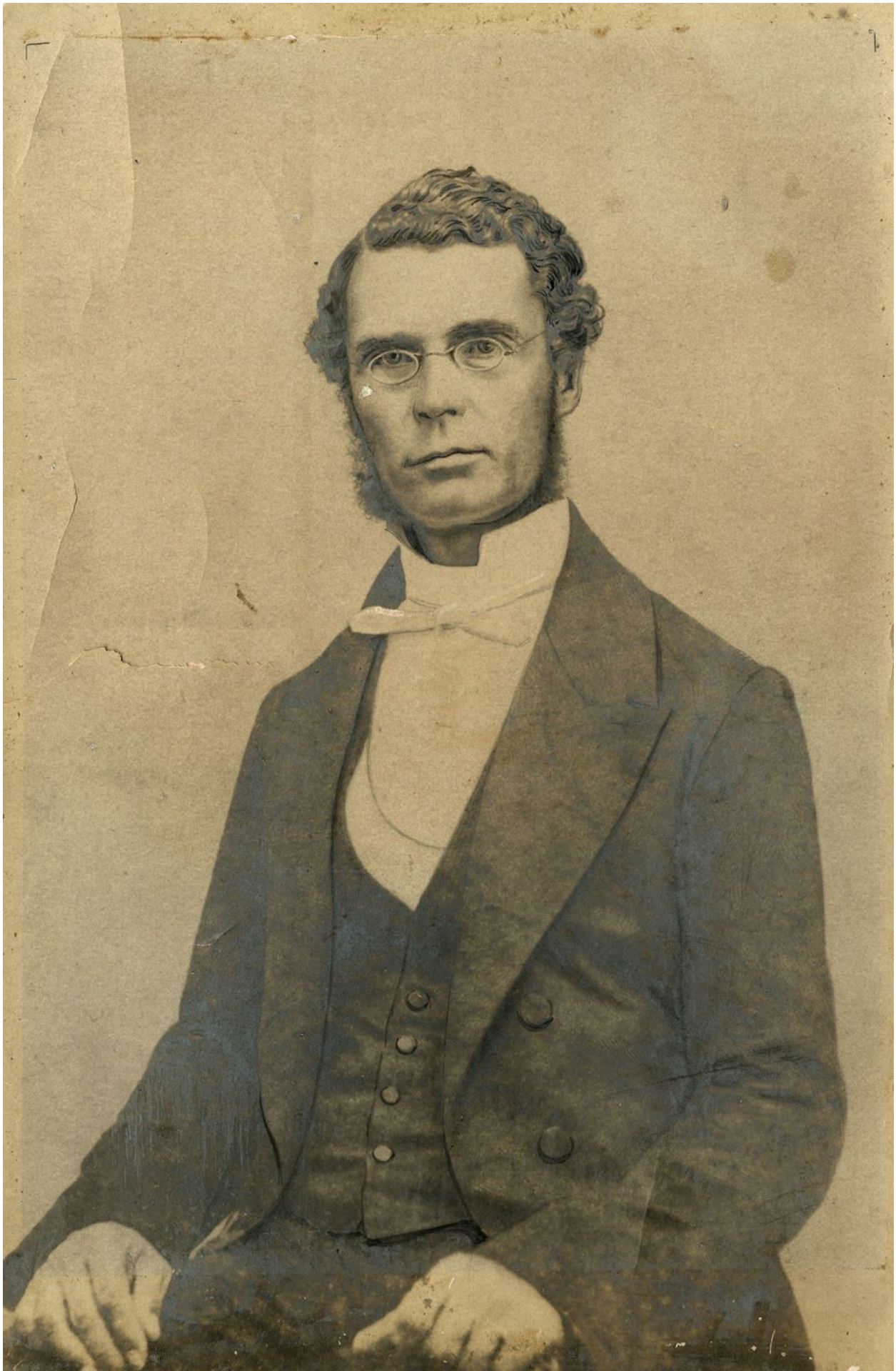
The most famous and honoured son of the St Thomas soil, Paul Bogle, was born sometime between 1815 and 1820 and by the 1840s, this baker and small farmer had managed to acquire sufficient land in the free settlement of Stony Gut which allowed him to satisfy the six pounds'

property value required to qualify him as a registered voter by 1860.



Paul Bogle. Reprinted courtesy of the National Library of Jamaica

A Native Baptist, he emerged as the spiritual leader of the settlement with his own chapel (Highland Castle Chapel) at Stony Gut and was ordained as Deacon in the Native Baptist Church by his political associate and friend, George William Gordon.

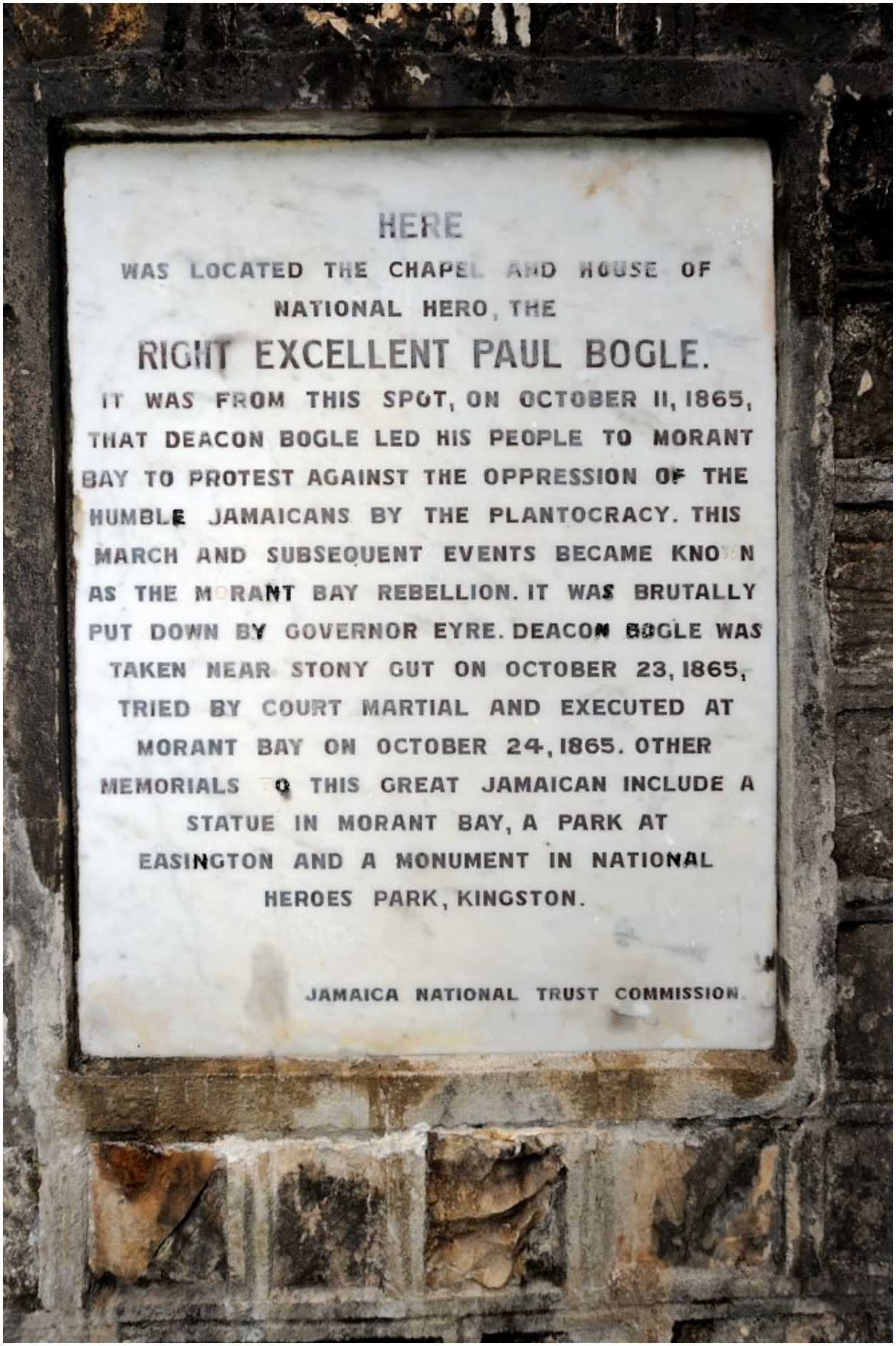


George William Gordon. Reprinted courtesy of the National Library of Jamaica

Bogle also emerged as an inspirational political leader in his own right, using his influence among the small settlers of Stony Gut and surrounding areas to garner support for George William Gordon, helping him to win a seat in the House of Assembly and in the Vestry in 1863. Working through the Native Baptist chapels throughout St Thomas in the East, Bogle organised parish wide gatherings of small settlers and workers in the two months preceding the Morant Bay Rebellion. These meetings highlighted the painful issues that went to the heart of their daily existence, emphasising the high prices, low and uncertain wages, lack of access to unused lands, the last being driven home by the harshness of the so-termed "Queen's Advice".

Having repeatedly tried and failed to get the authorities to give a listening ear, the last attempt being met with rejection by Governor Eyre, Bogle began to drill his supporters and to have them take oaths of loyalty to the cause. When police attempted to arrest Bogle at Stony Gut on October 9, 1865 for having prevented the police from arresting a man during a case hearing on October 7, they were unable to take Bogle because of the strength of Bogle's supporters. On October 11, 1865, Bogle and over 400 men and women marched into Morant Bay, and there at the courthouse, came the clash with the militia (which Eyre had summoned in anticipation of trouble), which at the time must have seemed to Bogle and his supporters the only recourse left open to them. Bogle and all others with him marched into history, shaping events in the parish and indeed in the entire colony of Jamaica. [37]

Ruins of *Highland Castle Chapel at Stony Gut* built by Paul Bogle. Photo courtesy of Stuart Reeves


HERE
WAS LOCATED THE CHAPEL AND HOUSE OF
NATIONAL HERO, THE
RIGHT EXCELLENT PAUL BOGLE.
IT WAS FROM THIS SPOT, ON OCTOBER 11, 1865,
THAT DEACON BOGLE LED HIS PEOPLE TO MORANT
BAY TO PROTEST AGAINST THE OPPRESSION OF THE
HUMBLE JAMAICANS BY THE PLANTOCRACY. THIS
MARCH AND SUBSEQUENT EVENTS BECAME KNOWN
AS THE MORANT BAY REBELLION. IT WAS BRUTALLY
PUT DOWN BY GOVERNOR EYRE. DEACON BOGLE WAS
TAKEN NEAR STONY GUT ON OCTOBER 23, 1865,
TRIED BY COURT MARTIAL AND EXECUTED AT
MORANT BAY ON OCTOBER 24, 1865. OTHER
MEMORIALS TO THIS GREAT JAMAICAN INCLUDE A
STATUE IN MORANT BAY, A PARK AT
EASINGTON AND A MONUMENT IN NATIONAL
HEROES PARK, KINGSTON.
JAMAICA NATIONAL TRUST COMMISSION

Monument to Paul Bogle located inside Paul Bogle Memorial Park, Stony Gut. Photo courtesy of Stuart Reeves

The immediate and long-term effects of October 1865 on the parish were devastating and tragic. Governor Eyre responded with a declaration of martial law and a brutal suppression that extended to every section of St Thomas in the East, St David and beyond, from Morant Bay to the Plantain Garden River District, the Yallahs River Valley, the Blue Mountain Valley, Manchioneal, Port Morant and as far as Port Antonio. The number of persons killed in the course of Eyre's "swift and terrible" retribution was approximately 437 and this seems a conservative assessment.

Many of those killed were shot down in their homes, yards or on the streets, by enforcers of the suppression, whether they were white or black soldiers or Maroons and most met their deaths without benefit of a fair hearing or trial. Even when court martial hearings were held, as in the cases of persons like Bogle, Gordon and McLaren, these were hastily contrived and equally hasty executions carried out. Communities which were predominantly small-settler communities, such as Font Hill, Thornton, Coley, Easington, Garbrand Hall, Duckenfield, Nutts River, York Village, Long Bay and Stony Gut were targeted and residents suddenly deprived of life, home and hard-earned property. The fact that over one thousand homes were deliberately burnt to the ground struck a lethal blow to the lives of ordinary black Jamaicans who had struggled over at least two generations since 1838 in the most challenging of circumstances to acquire homes of their own. Stony Gut, home to so many small settlers, was razed to the ground.

Politically, the significant strides that had been made by black Jamaicans in voting for persons who would represent their interests, both at the level of the parish Vestry and the House of Assembly, were abruptly terminated as the members of the House of Assembly, in fear of a Black-dominated Assembly, voted themselves out of operation in 1865. Thereafter, Britain would rule Jamaica under the authoritarian Crown Colony system and for a long time to come, the opportunities for political choice would no longer be exercised by Jamaicans, regardless of colour or class.

But the real lessons taught to us by the people and events of October 11, 1865 at Morant Bay are worth treasuring as a legacy that reminds us that freedom was not taken lightly by Paul Bogle, Samuel Clarke, James McLaren, George William Gordon and the many who stood ready to challenge a system that denied them or deprived them of the very rights to which Emancipation had entitled them. Behind the burnt out Morant Bay Courthouse stands the *Monument to the Martyrs of 1865*, in memory of the *"437 Jamaican Martyrs of October, 1865, who fell because they loved freedom."*

The Reburial Site of the Martyrs of 1865. Photo courtesy of Stuart Reeves

This is the lesson and the legacy left for all Jamaicans by these sons and daughters of St Thomas in the East and surrounding districts, and two hundred years later, we must ensure that the freedom for which they died is never taken lightly and that in the words inscribed on the

monument, *"They did not die in vain"*. [38] **[**

Monument to the Martyrs of 1865, Morant Bay. Photo courtesy of Stuart Reeves

Reburial Site of the Martyrs of 1865. Photo courtesy of Jenny Jemmott

SCHOOL AND CHURCH: POST-SLAVERY NINETEENTH-CENTURY DEVELOPMENTS IN THE PARISH:

Apart from a very inadequate fund known as the Negro Education Grant, which the British government had established to assist with basic education and which was exhausted by 1845, the government left the task of educating the former enslaved population to the churches. For most

of the post-slavery nineteenth century, efforts to provide education for the freed people were, therefore, closely linked to the activities of the various religious bodies in the island.

Instruction was at first provided in the Sunday schools and later, Day schools, which were attached to the churches and chapels of the various denominations around the island. One of the burning ambitions of the freed people was to have their children gain access to education, which in their minds was an important characteristic of freedom. In the immediate aftermath of Emancipation, parents, as well as children, flocked to these Sunday and Day schools.

However, education for the freed people in the early stages meant a heavy emphasis on religious instruction and the ability to read, learn by heart and recite various scripture passages and the catechism. Education was heavily rote learning and did not necessitate comprehension, nor did it necessarily lead the freed people to conversion. They and their children may have flocked to the churches and chapels to partake of this education, but they did not necessarily rush to embrace religious beliefs which they did not fully understand. Gradually, the Day schools added writing and counting to what was already taught, but the emphasis was still on rote learning. [39]

In the early years after Emancipation, the religious bodies which had a significant role in establishing churches and schools in St Thomas in the East and St David were the Anglican Church, the Wesleyan Methodists and the London Missionary Society (LMS). Unlike other parishes, St Thomas in the East and St David did not have a significant English Baptist presence until much later in the nineteenth century (by which time, St David had been merged with St Thomas) although one or two were present at Emancipation.

John Kingdom who was the English Baptist minister at Belle Castle, Manchioneal in 1839, commented on the increase in marriages among the freed people in his congregation and their desire to send their children to his school. In 1865, there was only one English Baptist missionary in the parish in charge of three congregations at Manchioneal, Leith Hall and Stokes Hall. It was the Native Baptists (discussed shortly) who were really influential in the parish at that point.

The Wesleyan Methodist missionaries were very active in the parish immediately after Emancipation, establishing a church and school at Morant Bay, where the minister, Francis Whitehead, observed in 1839 that within a five-month period, there had been considerable improvement in both the "morals" of the freed people and in their desire to learn. They also established a church and school at Bath, and by 1847, this school had 114 boys and 30 girls from "the labouring classes" in attendance.

By 1877 the Wesleyan Methodists were well established in Bath and Port Morant and in that year, Reverend William Melville also operated a school opposite the Courthouse at Bath. Other Methodist schools in the 1870s included Sunny Hill school. about three miles from Bath, and Reverend Melville believed that the proximity of this school to the hilly, small farming districts explained why the children of peasant families were the main pupils at the school. He also suggested that these peasant families had better attitudes towards their children's education, ensuring regular attendance at the school.

The very opposite appears to have been the case at the Rocky Point Methodist school, located two miles from Golden Grove estate, where Melville explained the small and irregular

attendance by the fact that the children enrolled there were also working on the estate. There was also a Methodist school at Manchioneal (incorporated into Portland in 1867) and schools also at Pear Tree River and Yallahs, where there was one day school with about 80 pupils in 1850.

Mico Teacher Training College had been established in Kingston in 1834 and by the 1870s, some of the schools in St Thomas (as the enlarged parish was known as of 1867) had teachers who had been locally trained at Mico. Mr Samuel Gregory, the schoolmaster at Pear Tree River from 1870 to 1872 and then at one of the Methodist schools at Bath between 1872 and 1877, was trained at Mico. He underscored the interest which both small settlers and estate labourers showed in their children's education, emphasising that parents were anxious to see progress in reading skills and that they were prepared to pay the standard school fee of threepence a week as long as their children advanced to at least "second book" in reading.

Parents were also careful judges of the character and ability of the teachers at these schools and were quick to remove their children from a school where the teacher was deemed to be either incompetent or of poor character. Reverend Alexander Smith attributed the sudden decrease in attendance at the Methodist school at Yallahs to dissatisfaction with the teacher, who, parents described as an "immoral teacher". [40]

As seen in an earlier section, the Anglican Church had a strong presence in St Thomas from the very outset, with the parish church (Christ Church) for St Thomas in the East being established at Church Corner, then in Morant Bay. When it was a separate parish, St David also had its parish church, St David's Anglican Church. By 1899, there were Anglican Churches throughout the parish, including Bath, Golden Grove, Bull Bay, Blue Mountain Valley, Woburn Lawn and Mt.

Felix. The churches which were in existence in 1838 offered instruction (reading) in their Sunday schools at first and thereafter in Day schools.

Reverend Walter Drought, Curate of the Anglican Church at Golden Grove, commented on the excellent reputation which the day school at Duckenfield had, among both the parents and clergy. Duckenfield School, about three quarters of a mile from Golden Grove, catered to children from the community of Duckenfield, as well as from nearby communities, including children whose parents rented house and grounds on the estates. There were 114 children registered at the school in 1877 and Drought made an interesting reference to the fact that the children who worked part of the time on nearby estates took pride in using some of their money to pay the threepence a week school fee.

A long-standing freed village at Winchester, about three miles from Duckenfield, also had an Anglican Day School, and by the 1870s this seemed well attended, but only by children from the community of Winchester. Although Golden Grove Estate had its own Anglican Church and school room attached by the 1870s, Drought explained that the children who lived on this estate attended neither the church nor the school as most of them were children of East Indian indentured workers and had different religious traditions. In the Mount Felix district, located in the mountains about seven miles from Bath, the Anglicans had both a church and a school under the control of schoolmaster, Robert Pitter in the 1870s. The independent London Missionary Society (LMS) established a school at Morant Bay, which was deemed to be among the best mission schools in Jamaica by 1851, in terms of quality of teachers and the reading and basic numeracy abilities of the students,, one third of whose parents worked on neighbouring estates. [41]

Despite the initial enthusiasm displayed by the freed people for both church and school in the immediate years after Emancipation, judging from official reports emerging in the middle 1840s into the 1850s, the was a clear falling off in attendance at both the traditional churches and most of the Day schools operated by these churches. As far as church attendance was concerned, the emphasis on rote learning and recitation of scripture and biblical passages were not conducive to a deepened understanding of religious teachings, and this may have contributed to feelings of disconnection and some failure to embrace these churches on a large scale.

The worsening economic situation on the estates in the parish impacted on the standard of living of dependent labourers, whose attendance at church and school would have suffered accordingly. But, whereas traditional churches were losing their appeal, the Native Baptists of St Thomas in the East and St David were strongly and widely supported by blacks in the parish. The Native Baptists had early connections from the eighteenth century with the Black American Baptists, George Lisle and Moses Baker who came to Jamaica. The Native Baptists of St Thomas in the East had deep roots in the spiritual traditions and worldview of West Africa, and from their very foundation, emphasised communication with the spirit world and blended with Myal traditions, which emphasised spirit possession.

They were “Native Baptists” because they represented the Jamaican blend of orthodox Baptist teachings with strong African spirituality. Native Baptist traditions were practised in secret under slavery and their leaders were the spiritual leaders among the enslaved communities. With Emancipation, the movement broadened and deepened its appeal as its followers could understand, identify with and freely embrace its meaning unreservedly. Communion with the spirit world did not require literacy or knowledge of biblical verses. Importantly, Native Baptist

meeting houses and chapels were established in virtually every district and community in which black small settlers, artisans and labourers located themselves after Emancipation, in places such as Font Hill, Stony Gut, Thornton, Yallahs, Seaforth, Middleton and Somerset.

Most Native Baptist chapels also had schoolrooms attached where Native Baptist preachers were also the teachers. Even when Native Baptists sent their children to the Day and Sunday schools of the traditional churches, the adults remained faithful to their meeting places and chapels. The appeal of the movement had everything to do with the network of spiritual and material support offered to its membership. Therefore, for example, Native Baptist leaders, like Paul Bogle, had their own traditions of community justice in the form of "the People's Courts", which aided in the resolution of issues in a society in which the people were short changed by the official justice system.

Reports of erratic attendance at some of the Day schools in the parish may be explained by a number of factors. Although attendance at all Sunday and Day schools was initially free of cost, by the 1840s, a standard fee of threepence a week was introduced by all of the denominations. In a context of declining and uncertain wages, it was sometimes difficult for labouring parents to pay these fees. It is instructive that rather than keep their children out of school altogether, when parents could not find the fees, they almost always removed the children from that school and relocated them to another in the parish, even if it was further away.

European clergy often commented on the appearance of some of the children in attendance, noting that some were always dressed in clean clothing while others were in rags. The ability to look after the outward appearance of children was important to the freed people, and when

circumstances did not permit them to do so, children were then kept at home. There is no doubt that the use of family (including children) labour to tend to peasant plots sometimes required children to stay away from classes periodically. For example, the Anglican Rector for St Thomas, Reverend J.G. Richards, commented that eight years of observation had shown that the two Anglican schools in Morant Bay were very well attended but at the schools located in the hilly and mountainous districts where small farms predominated, children often stayed away from school to work on their family freeholds.

As the 1850s and 1860s became economically more difficult, attendance fell off even more as children who were not normally sent to work on estates had to do so to help out. Both Golden Grove and Holland Estates reported employing "children's gangs" on the estates from time to time.

By the 1870s, serious efforts had been implemented to offer industrial education to Black children. This was all part of a Eurocentric view that education for black children should be utilitarian, that is, it should equip them to fulfil what was designated by white society as their role in society. That role was to be suppliers of labour, whether agricultural, artisan or later, industrial. Hence the basic nature of the instruction which was presented by these schools was intended to fulfil this purpose and this alone.

In various parishes, the government introduced "model schools", which were organised and assisted by government funds. Bath in St Thomas had its own model school run by Mr Elworthy and this was the only model school about which favourable reports were received up to 1878. The students were to be trained in repairing buildings, making furniture and farming. Those who

joined the industrial classes had their fees remitted while those who did not had to pay the regular fees.

By the late 1870s, most of these model schools were not being supported by the black population, as they objected strenuously to having their children trained for manual labour, insisting that they did not send their children to school to learn how to work. [42] One by one, the nineteenth-century experiment with industrial training collapsed. As the nineteenth century drew to a close, this was the state of education in the parish of St Thomas. Whereas a few other parishes were benefitting from the introduction of secondary schools (although at first quite exclusive), St Thomas would not become the beneficiary of secondary education until the twentieth century when the first secondary school in the parish, Morant Bay High, was opened in 1961.

ST THOMAS IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

CHANGING ECONOMIC FORTUNES IN THE PARISH

The Sugar Industry

Faced with worsening problems of competition from producers of cheaper and superior quality sugar, increasing costs of production and decreasing profits, the sugar industry in Jamaica

experienced a steady downturn, with sugar production dropping by 29 percent between 1850 and 1910. Towards the end of the nineteenth century into the first half of the twentieth century, these changes in the profitability of the sugar estates were reflected in changes in land use and in the sugar industry itself in St Thomas.

Reflecting sugar's decline, by 1899, there were only seven sugar plantations still operating in St Thomas and these included Albion, Blue Mountain, Coley, Duckenfield, Lyssons, Norris and Serge Island. Many former sugar properties had switched to banana cultivation by 1899 and as seen earlier, these included Amity Hall, Clifton Hill, Harbour Head, Hordley, Morant, Phillipsfield, Plantain Garden River, Potosi, Rhine, Stanton, Stoakesfield, Wheelerfield and Winchester.

However, by 1948, over 180,000 tons were produced annually as compared with 17,000 tons a year in 1910. The turnaround in profits by 1948 was due to a combination of factors, including wartime interruption in supplies of European beet sugar, a major competitor, and the continuous increase in the demand for sugar on the European market. Changes in manufacturing technology, such as the centrifugal filter which separated the molasses from the sugar more effectively, resulting in a finer quality sugar; the introduction of central factories, supplied with cane by the surrounding estates; and changes from private to corporate ownership (which had started from the late 19th century) of the larger estates, also contributed to improvements in production.

Changes from private to corporate ownership were seen in Coley sugar estate, which was owned in 1900 by Melhado, Bros. & Co. and Norris and Serge Island sugar estates, as well as Stanton

Banana estate, were all owned by I. J. Mordecai & Company. Corporate ownership of sugar estates allowed more capital investment and, therefore, a greater chance of production improvements. [43] Perhaps the biggest and most significant change in the later twentieth-century sugar industry came with the investment by the West Indies Sugar Company (WISCO), a subsidiary of the England-based investment company, Tate and Lyle. Sugar properties in various parts of the island were bought up and the cane processed in large, central factories equipped with modern technology for manufacturing sugar. Gone were the days of many, privately owned sugar estates, with small and by comparison, inefficient factories.

This pattern was reproduced in St Thomas by 1980. Duckenfield Sugar Factory was the only one still operating in the parish and was one of only eight remaining sugar factories in the island by 1980. A new, modern factory was built at Duckenfield (located at Golden Grove, Stanton and Suffolk Park) and was named Jamaica Sugar Estates when the new factory came into production around 1926. Duckenfield experienced a number of changes in ownership over the years, with the more recent, including Jamaica Sugar Estates, up to 1976 and National Sugar Company (1979 to 1986).

St Thomas Sugar Company controlled Duckenfield until 2009 when Seprod Ltd. acquired the business and renamed the factory, Golden Grove Sugar Company. Seprod remains determined to make St Thomas' last sugar factory a viable operation. Although some of the cane is grown on the property, a great deal of the cane is supplied by St Thomas small farmers from nearby areas. Golden Grove Sugar Company, therefore, contributes to income generation for employed factory workers and small cane farmers. [44]

The Banana Industry in Twentieth-Century St Thomas

In 1895, thirty years after the Morant Bay Rebellion had been triggered by problems such as the lack of access to land, the Crown Colony government, led by Sir Henry Blake, began the scheme to sell Crown lands to small settlers. These lands were to be no less than five and no more than 50 acres. Between 1896 and 1910 when the scheme was terminated, 107 lots, with a total of 989 acres, were sold to smallholders in St Thomas, contributing to the expansion of the peasantry in the parish by the end of 1910.

In the early twentieth century, many of the parish's smallholders chose to enter into banana cultivation in an attempt to benefit from United Fruit Company's ever expanding control of the thriving banana trade with Eastern St Thomas, Portland and St Mary. But, in several respects, the policies of United Fruit proved disadvantageous to those small settlers who persevered in banana cultivation.

The multinational giant continued to favour large plantation producers of the fruit in St Thomas over the small farmer. Most importantly, although the small growers had contracts with United Fruit, they had no control over the prices that they were paid. Upon delivering their bananas to United Fruit Company's depot at Bowden, the price offered was determined by inspectors at Bowden who could downgrade prices at will or out-rightly reject the bunches of bananas, forcing the small cultivators to accept what was offered or face the harsh reality of returning with their unsold bananas by foot or donkey to their home communities.

In an effort to provide some competition to United Fruit and also some protection to small growers of bananas, in 1925, the Jamaican Government agreed to support the formation of a

cooperative of small growers of the fruit, and this was known as the Jamaica Banana Producers' Association (JBPA), which began operations in 1929. Unlike the UFC, the JBPA took most of its bananas for export from the small growers, including those from St Thomas, and soon acquired a small shipping fleet.

In spite of its early success in supporting small growers, by 1936, the JBPA was forced to abandon its status as a cooperative (which would have done more to empower the small producers) and to re-organize as a limited-liability company. Nevertheless the JBPA (the Jamaica Producers Group Ltd. since 1992), was successful in preventing United Fruit from totally controlling Jamaica's banana industry.

Throughout the twentieth century, St Thomas producers experienced many challenges, including several damaging hurricanes and the spread of Panama disease, which was countered by the introduction of the Lacatan banana after World War II (resistant to Panama disease). Today, St Thomas proudly boasts ownership of the largest banana property, Eastern Banana Estates, a 2,300 acre banana plantation at Golden Grove, which was the largest employer of labour in St Thomas. [45]

The New and the Old: The Dairy and the Coffee Industries in the 20th Century

Twentieth-century St Thomas has seen changing economic fortunes in traditional industries, but has also witnessed the emergence of new enterprises. Serge Island Estate, which started out as a

sugar estate in the eighteenth century, remained in sugar production until it was purchased by the late Isaac Matalon in 1974, converted to dairy farming and became Serge Island Dairies Ltd.

Although Matalon was not born in St Thomas, he made it his home shortly after marriage when he moved there to manage Stanton Banana Estate, owned by his wife's aunts, Ivy and Pam Mordecai. Matalon made a success of Serge Island Dairy, introducing what we know as Long Life Milk. Improved breeds of dairy cows, the "Jamaica Hope" and the "Holstien", were introduced to the vast dairy farm under his watch. Matalon served the parish of St Thomas well in other areas, being a member of the St Thomas Parish Council between 1960 and 1964 and serving as Custos of the parish for several years.

Since its acquisition by Seprod in 2005, Serge Island Dairies has expanded to become the second largest business in the parish (next to Golden Grove Sugar Company) and one of the largest employers of labour in St Thomas. [46]

As a result of the challenges faced by the coffee industry after Emancipation, followed by the equalisation of duties in 1844, the industry continued to experience decline up until the middle of the nineteenth century. Assisted by a relatively stable price for coffee on the export market and aided by smallholders' participation in coffee cultivation, the industry experienced signs of revival in the later nineteenth century. By 1899. 12 St Thomas coffee estates remained in production, including Radnor, Middleton, Arntully, Monklands, Sherwood Forest and Whitfield Hall. [47]

The mid-twentieth century saw some organizational improvements to the industry with the creation of the Coffee Industry Board in 1953, which significantly raised the standards and

quality of coffee production in the island. Only coffee grown in the designated areas of St Thomas, St Andrew and Portland, at altitudes of between 3,000 to 5,500 feet above sea level, qualifies for the brand name, Jamaican Blue Mountain Coffee. Coffee grown at altitudes between 1,500 and 3,000 feet carry the label of Jamaica High Mountain Coffee.

Twentieth-century St Thomas boasts a proud tradition of continuing to supply the finest brand of Blue Mountain Coffee, grown high up in the Blue Mountains which grace the parish. A group of three coffee estates, collectively known as RSW Estates, nestled high in the mountains above the Yallahs River and owned by the Langford family (a family which has a long history of coffee growing in St Thomas) have continued this historic tradition of the finest coffee in the parish.

RSW Estates include Resource Estate, which is 1, 200 metres above the Yallahs River; Sherwood Forest, one of the earliest coffee plantations; and Whitfield Hall, also dating back to eighteenth-century production of coffee. The lands which now form Abbey Green, 4,500 feet up in the Blue Mountains and Mount Lebanon Estate, both owned by Dr Charles Lyn, have both had a long history of coffee production in St Thomas and continue to provide the highest quality of Blue Mountain coffee. Abbey Green is the only Jamaican coffee farm which currently supplies the Starbucks chain of coffee shops. In addition to these large St Thomas properties, small farmers from the parish (who often are part of cooperatives) have also continued their tradition of coffee growing and sell their coffee to the Coffee Industry Board. [48]

The Coconut Industry in St Thomas

Despite the ever present threat of the lethal Yellowing disease and several damaging hurricanes over the course of the twentieth century, the coconut industry in St Thomas has prevailed. Coconuts, along with pimento, logwood, ginger, oranges, as well as bananas, had contributed to a much more diversified economy by 1890. Like bananas, coconuts had started out as a predominantly peasant-grown crop and by the end of the nineteenth century, a number of larger properties in St Thomas had included coconuts, along with other crops.

In the twentieth century, coconuts became important for the bottling of coconut water as well as for copra.

A Coconut Farm in St Thomas. Photo courtesy of Stuart Reeves

Copra is the dried coconut kernel which is then processed to make virgin coconut oil. Coir fibre from the dried coconut husk is also used in plant nurseries. The demand for copra fluctuates because of controversy about the health benefits of coconut oil, with critics citing its high cholesterol content. Moreover, Soybean and vegetable oils have provided stiff competition. To counter this, St Thomas coconut farmers have focussed more on bottling of coconut water.

Michael Black's coconut plantation, *Michael Black Farms Ltd*., a 600-acre property at Nutts River in Morant Bay, established by Michael Black of St Thomas over 43 years ago (some aspects of the business are operated by his son, Stephen) is a tribute to the perseverance shown in the face of severe damage from hurricanes, the worst being Gilbert in 1988 and periodic outbreaks of Yellowing disease, which can do more to eliminate an entire coconut crop than any storm.

Michael Black started out in the livestock business and then, like many St Thomas farmers, he turned to coffee cultivation and experimented with coconuts. His success with coconuts led him to concentrate on coconuts at a time when many deemed this to be a risky business. To combat the deadly Yellowing disease, Black rigorously inspected his coconut palms, and at the first sign of the disease, the tree was immediately cut down, all parts burnt to prevent spread and shortly thereafter, a fresh plant was introduced to ensure that the coconut trees were not depleted.

Black's strategy for dealing with the disease proved successful on his own farm and through the guidance of the Coconut Industry Board, this strategy was recommended to planters, not only in St Thomas, but the rest of Jamaica as well. Widely revered as the most experienced and passionate coconut farmer in the parish and perhaps in the entire island, Black was awarded the

Badge of Honour for Meritorious Service to agriculture in general and especially to the coconut industry in 2010.

Plant Pathologist at the Coconut Industry Board, Dr Wayne Myrie, in praising Black's strategy for stemming the advance of Yellowing Disease, underscored the importance of this farmer from St Thomas: "We call that the Black Approach, because the first person to start this approach is Michael Black in St Thomas." The Malayan Dwarf coconut plant, thought to be more resistant to the disease than the widely planted Jamaican Tall, was introduced after the hurricanes of 1944 and 1951 and seemed to do well, but after Hurricane Gilbert, signs of the disease resurfaced on some of the Dwarf plants. Consequently Black and his son Stephen continued their daily patrols of their coconut farm, complete with chainsaws at hand, ready to implement the "Black Approach". [49]

Manufacturing Industries: Goodyear and the Lightbourne Legacy

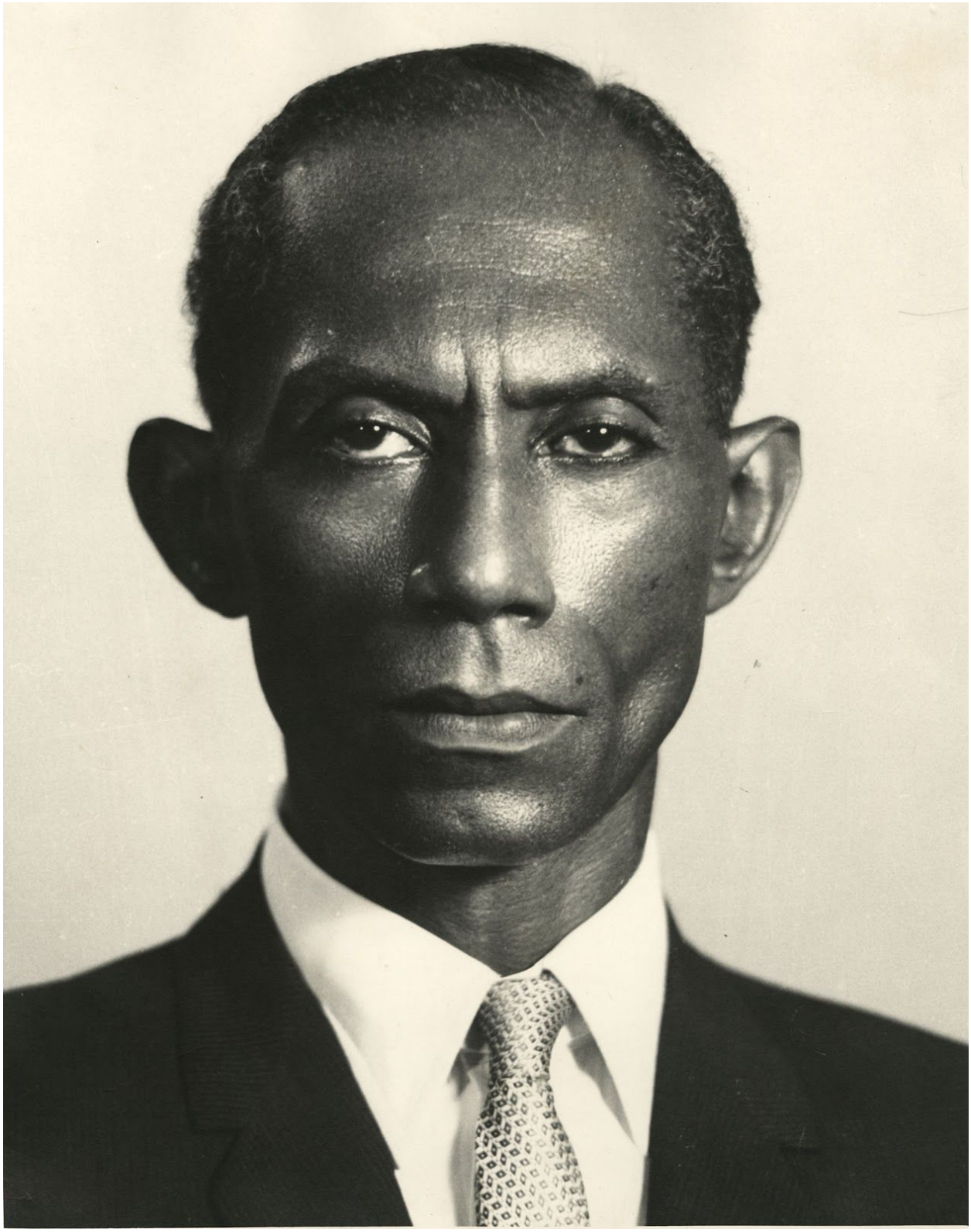
Although agriculture continued to be important to the economy of St Thomas in the twentieth century, a number of other industries also developed over the period. While it lasted, the Goodyear Tyre Factory had quite a positive impact on the parish and by extension, the wider economy of Jamaica. In 1966, Goodyear opened its tyre factory on a 30-acre site on the former Springfield estate at Duhaney Pen, which is just outside of Morant Bay. The factory manufactured car tyres, truck tyres, farm equipment tyres and other related products and provided employment for over 200 St Thomas residents for 31 years until its closure in 1997.

Goodyear Jamaica was very successful and supplied the local market and also exported tyres to every CARICOM country. However, labour disputes over wage and fringe benefit packages for

its hourly-paid workers, followed by two crippling strikes in January 1995, which affected the company's ability to supply the export market, contributed to the company's decision to discontinue production of car tyres in that year. Although the St Thomas factory continued to produce truck and other tyres, the writing was on the wall and Goodyear announced that it was making a transition away from production and focussing instead on sales and marketing. In 1977, the Goodyear Tyre Factory in St Thomas closed its doors for good, taking with it, the livelihoods of many. [50]

When he served as the Jamaica Labour Party's representative for Western St Thomas from 1959 until 1976 and in his capacity as Minister of Trade and Industry, The Honourable Robert Lightbourne (OJ) spearheaded the establishment of several factories in Yallahs, including a telephone assembly plant. The push towards the development of viable manufacturing enterprises in the parish was characteristic of Lightbourne's tenure as Minister.

The many initiatives underway in the parish in the 1960s included the Caribbean Button Company Ltd. (Lyssons, 1963); I.T.T. Standard Electrical Company of Jamaica Ltd. (Yallahs, 1965); Hosiery Company of Jamaica Ltd. (Eleven Miles, 1966); National Fibres Ltd. (Lyssons, 1966); Pride Manufacturing Co. Ltd. (Eleven Miles, 1967); and General Distributors Ltd. (Seven Miles, 1968). Minister LIghtbourne was also instrumental in the decision to locate the Goodyear Tyre Factory in St Thomas in 1967. In tribute to his contribution to the parish, the Robert Lightbourne High School in Trinityville, St Thomas has been named in his honour. [51]



The Honourable Robert Lightbourne. Reprinted courtesy of the National Library of Jamaica

POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN TWENTIETH-CENTURY ST THOMAS

A Tradition of Political Activism in St Thomas

Political action takes place, not only in a formal official way through exercising the vote during elections, but very importantly, consists of action deliberately taken, outside of electoral politics, with the clear intention of changing situations which are seen by the people as unjust and in need of attention from the authorities, whoever they may be. These actions may include a range of strategies including, but not limited to, the presentation of petitions, public meetings and demonstrations, strikes and sick-outs, riots, rebellions and revolutions. The Morant Bay Rebellion has established the significance of the parish in this kind of political action, which the downtrodden people of St Thomas took when the system failed them. But the tradition of protest and political activism did not end in 1865 and was very much in evidence, particularly in the decade of the 1930s in the parish.

Beginning in the early 1930s, residents, mainly from eastern St Thomas, including rural workers, tenant farmers and small-scale peasant producers, started to express their concerns about issues that affected the standard of their daily lives. One of their own, Dorrell Reid, sent petitions on behalf of the group to the Governor and also to Rudolph Ehrenstein, owner of Serge Island estate and sitting member for St Thomas on the Legislative Council.

These petitions highlighted the insecurity of tenant farmers who were often evicted from the lands at short notice and forced to leave the fruits of their labour behind for what they regarded as “slight differences”. As a solution to this, the petitioners asked that they be given assistance with getting access to land. They also requested the building of a structure to house the Golden

Grove market and the appointment of a sanitary inspector for the area. Reid and some of the residents met with Ehrenstein in November 1935 and were promised a loan bank and a government land settlement scheme.

To strengthen their bargaining position, Reid and the other residents formed The Tax and Rate Payers Association of St Thomas in December 1935. At meetings of this Association, Reid called for unity among poor black people and stressed that land work and agricultural education were their greatest needs, insisting that the government should help them to achieve these goals. By December of the following year, Reid expressed the frustration of the group at Ehrenstein's failure to keep his promises and issued a call to the residents of eastern St Thomas to strengthen their cause by increasing the membership of the Tax and Rate Payers Association and depending in future, not on others in the Legislature, but on their own actions. Perhaps this was a foreshadowing of events which were to unfold in St Thomas by December 1937. [52]

The 1938 Labour Disturbances and the Parish:

The 1938 labour unrest and disturbances across Jamaica were a major step on the road to the recognition of workers' rights and the strengthening of trade unions, which soon became associated with the country's first political parties, with the formation by Alexander Bustamante of the Bustamante Industrial Trade Union (BITU) in June 1938. This would become allied to the Jamaica Labour Party (JLP), formed by Bustamante.

In 1938, Norman Manley i also launched the People's National Party (PNP), which was associated first with the Trades Union Council (TUC) and later with the National Workers' Union (NWU). The Labour protests also influenced the emergence of trade union legislation (the

Trade Union Act, 1939), which empowered trade unions to mediate in disputes between workers and employers. Another significant outcome of the labour rebellions of 1938 was the recognition on the government's part, that peaceful picketing of the workplace was legal and that workers should be protected against "breach of contract" as a result of taking strike action.

In descriptions of these labour disturbances, emphasis is placed on the central role of the workers of Westmoreland, particularly at Frome Sugar Factory. However, it was St Thomas that led the way,, as the first expressions of worker unrest were demonstrated in December 1837 at Serge Island Central Factory, when workers there took a stand against painfully low wages and unjust conditions of work.

Several 100 persons who had turned up to work as cane-cutters at Serge Island in December 1837 refused to begin reaping the crop at the rates of 10 ½ pence per ton (a shilling was 12 pence), offered by Rudolph Ehrenstein, the proprietor of the estate. There were angry protests and reports of intimidation of those workers who were willing to work. When police were called in, over 63 workers were arrested.

In January 1938, three of those arrested who were determined to be the leaders of the protest were sentenced to one month in prison at hard labour, while seven were fined two pounds each (there were 20 shillings in a pound) or 30 days in prison. Eleven others were fined 21 shillings each or 21 days in prison. The remaining 45 workers were "admonished and discharged." [53]

In early 1938, when the labour protests and strikes gathered momentum and spread into different parishes, other estates in St Thomas were also the scene of labour protests. Terence Nalor worked on Duckenfield Sugar estate in 1938 and was 78 years old when he was interviewed in

1989. He described how during the disturbances, "people march from field to field and they shut down the factory, they burn the cane, [and there was] a little fighting. The management tried to stop them by asking the leaders to stop them. Police [also] arrived." [54]

Stanley Reid, who was 93 years old when he was interviewed in 1987, worked at Amity Hall Estate, owned by Mr Pringle, in 1938. Reid described how the confrontation between the police and striking workers turned deadly as "Mr Jack, 'im was de ring leader of de group…Mr Jack was shot in the forehead, an 'im drap backway at de wall." The banana workers were ordered to stop working: "Dem sey stop working, an' everybody fe go 'ome fa dis a serious time. So everybody go 'ome a dem yard." In June 1938, workers at Serge Island Estate again took strike action and banana workers on 10 other St Thomas estates also went on strike. [55]

The Road to Self-Government and the Contribution of Isaac Barrant

An important outcome of the labour movement of the late 1930s was that its leaders demanded not only recognition of workers' rights, but also political changes. In short, they argued for the abolition of the Crown Colony system of government and the introduction of a system which would allow more participation by Jamaicans. In November 1944, Jamaica was given a new Constitution, which among other provisions, allowed for a new Legislature consisting of two sections, firstly the Legislative Council of nominated members and secondly, a House of Representatives consisting of 32 members, who were to be elected.

For the first time in Jamaica's history, these elections would be done on the basis of Universal Adult Suffrage, that is, all males and females 21 years and over (later changed to 18 years), were given the right to vote as of 1944. In the first elections held under the new Constitution in 1944, contested by political parties for the first time, the JLP won 25 out of the 32 seats in the House of Representatives. In these elections, Isaac Barrant was elected as member of the House of Representatives for Eastern St Thomas by the third largest majority in the island, a seat which he held until his death in 1956. [56]

For those who knew Barrant, this remarkable victory at the polls was no surprise. He was a humble man from humble beginnings who understood only too well the challenges of daily life for the ordinary St Thomas residents. Born in Bath on September 21, 1907, he was unable to finish school at Bath Elementary, as his father's death meant that young Barrant went to work as a labourer on the parochial roads in St Thomas.

A variety of low-paying jobs followed, including working as a sideman on a truck, cutting canes and later, he worked as a "banana dealer" for United Fruit Company. He also did a little farming for himself. From very early, Alexander Bustamante recognised the grassroots appeal which this labouring man from Bath had among the people, because he lived among them, he worked like them, he faced the same problems they did and best of all, he spoke just like they did. Elite and middle class society would later ridicule Barrant for his seeming inability to "speak properly", but his genuine care for the people, as well as the way he spoke to them, won him their unending support.

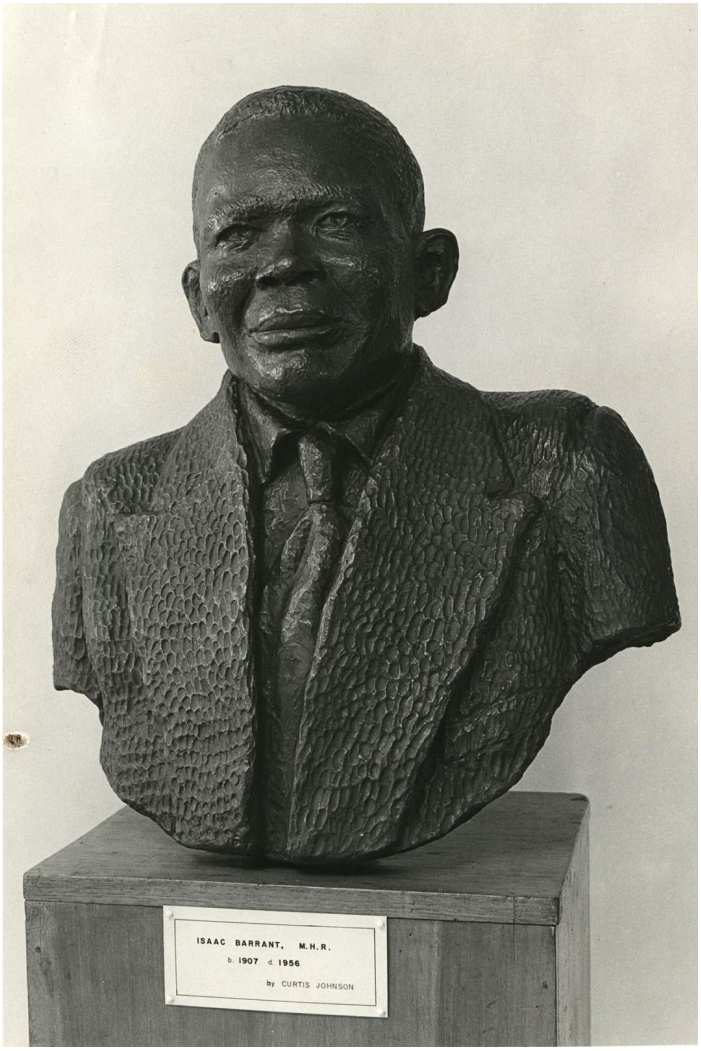
It was not surprising that Bustamante appointed him as the first secretary (based in St Thomas) of the newly formed BITU in 1938. Barrant's popularity among the ordinary people also convinced Bustamante that he should be selected to represent Eastern St Thomas in the 1944 elections, after which there was no doubt that this was the man of the people and for the people. As member for Eastern St Thomas, Barrant was one of the most popular and highly respected members of the House of Representatives and this extended across party lines.

In recognition of Barrant's hard work, Bustamante appointed him Minister of Agriculture and Lands in 1950. As Minister, he was guided by a strong desire to do whatever could be done to provide opportunities for persons, not only in Eastern St Thomas but all across Jamaica, to improve their lives. For example, he saw to the expansion of the Overseas Labour Programme between Jamaica and the United States and was instrumental in encouraging the development of soya beans and rice cultivation in an effort to make Jamaica more self-reliant in food supply.

Ever conscious of the poor and landless, Barrant also promoted access to land through the Land Lease programme, a goal which had been so important to Dorrell Reid and the Tax and Rate Payers' Association of St. Thomas. He also promoted incentives to help the dairy industry and the tobacco industry expand. Barrant's success story of having overcome hardship, racism and social snobbery to rise to the position of government minister, having had little to recommend him in terms of formal education or money, inspired many in St Thomas and elsewhere to try to improve their own circumstances.

For his dedication to the ordinary people, Isaac Barrant's name became well known and well-loved throughout St Thomas. After his death in 1956, the former Hordley Hospital was renamed

the Isaac Barrant Memorial Hospital, and today, a bust of the Honourable Isaac Barrant, former Minister of Agriculture and Lands, 1950-1956, stands in tribute to him in the Special Collections floor of the National Library of Jamaica. [57]



Bust of the Honourable Isaac Barrant. Reprinted courtesy of the National Library of Jamaica

THE CULTURAL AND NATURAL HERITAGE OF ST THOMAS

KUMINA

African derived cultural legacies, especially in the areas of dance, music and religion, are important features of Jamaica's cultural heritage. The parish of St Thomas has played a significant role in the development and nurturing of the Kumina religion, music and dance, which are proud representations of the cultural heritage of Jamaica.

Traditional Dances. Reprinted courtesy of the National library of Jamaica

The deep roots of Kumina in the parish are explained by the arrival in the post-slavery period of a significant number of Africans who came as contract workers (indentured labourers),

especially from the Congo areas of Central Africa where the beliefs associated with Kumina were dominant.

Compared to Sierra Leone, Central Africa provided the vast majority of immigrant African workers who came to the parish in the post-slavery period, with 1,045 from Central Africa being landed at Morant Bay and Port Morant, compared to only 135 from Sierra Leone in the 1850s. No other parish received such a high concentration of Central African immigrants as St Thomas. [58] As soon as these immigrant workers could, they left the estates and established settlements, principally in Seaforth Town and also in Port Morant, Acadia and Trinityville.

These Central African immigrants brought with them their Kongo religious beliefs and retained elements of the Kikongo language. They gave these beliefs a Kikongo name that has come down to us as Kumina, which is practised by Revival groups across the parish (as well as the wider Jamaica), and involves a ritual of dancing, drumming and singing, ending in possession by the shades or the spirits of the ancestors. Spirit possession (Myal) was a common feature of many African religious beliefs and would have been present among the African- enslaved population from earlier, but Myal was also integral to Kumina, which really developed post-slavery.

Vernacular Style Home in Seaforth Town. Photo courtesy of Stuart Reeves

Followers of the Kumina religion never completely left these communities that had been established by their forebears and over the years, Seaforth Town especially, has been able to preserve elements of this Kongo identity.

Mounth Oliveth Church of the living God at Seaforth Town. Photo courtesy of Stuart Reeves

Guarding ritual secrets and preserving and passing on the traditions are the responsibility of the leader (A Queen or a King of Kumina).

Perhaps two of the most famous Kumina Queens from St Thomas have been Mrs Imogene Kennedy and Mrs Elizabeth (Pearline) Spence. In an interview with Monica Schuler (May 24, 1971), Mrs Kennedy revealed that she learnt some Kongo words from her maternal grandparents, who were Africans living in Dalvey and that the rest of her knowledge of Kumina, its songs and its powers, came to her from a spiritual visitation which she had under a silk cotton tree. Also interviewed by Schuler (June 6, 1971) Queen of Kumina, Elizabeth Spence, indicated that her enlightenment in Kumina occurred when, as a young girl, she took part in a ceremony at Cottage Pen near Morant Bay. She was possessed by the spirits who taught her a lot which she had to keep secret.[59]

More recently, several Kumina groups from the parish, including the Seaforth Town and the Port Morant groups, have been credited with bringing this aspect of St Thomas' cultural heritage to

the national stage during festival celebrations.

Queen of Kumina: Imogene Kennedy. Reprinted courtesy of the National Library of Jamaica

THE BLUE AND JOHN CROW MOUNTAINS NATIONAL PARK

Although St Thomas shares the extensive 193,292 acre national park with the parishes of St Andrew, Portland and a small section of St Mary, the fact that a portion of the park comprises the mountains which run through St Thomas gives the parish the shared distinction of being home to the Blue and John Crow Mountains National Park.

On July 3, 2015, this mixed site (both cultural and natural) was inscribed on UNESCO's World Heritage List as having outstanding value to the world's natural and cultural heritage. The park is a cultural heritage site, being home to the St Thomas Maroons who had much earlier joined with the Portland Maroons to form the Windward Maroons under their fearless African warrior-leader, Nanny, National Heroine of Jamaica. A rich cultural heritage of religious ceremonies, Maroon language, traditional medicine and dances justifies this as a world heritage site of outstanding cultural value to mankind. But in sharing the park, St Thomas can also take great pride in the natural legacy of this site.

The park is home to a large variety of amphibian, bird and mammal species, some of which are considered even more significant because they are endangered species, and the Blue and John Crow Mountains National Park provides the ultimate source of protection for these species. They include the Arntully Robber Frog, the Jamaican Peak Frog, the Jamaican Blackbird, the Yellow-billed Parrot, the Black-billed Parrot, the Hutia and the Giant Swallowtail Butterfly. Not only do the majestic mountains which grace St Thomas bring great beauty to the parish and the

wider Jamaica, but they have now brought great distinction in the acknowledgement of their outstanding natural and cultural value to humanity. [60]

FROM ST THOMAS TO THE WORLD: THE JAMINTEL EARTH STATION

The district of Prospect Pen in St Thomas was the location for a giant step forward in communications technology with the construction of the Earth Station for Jamaica International Communications Ltd. (JAMINTEL) in 1971. This facility established links to the Intelsat satellite and through it, enabled satellite communications between Jamaica and the rest of the world. The JAMINTEL Earth Station provided international links for telephone, fax, telex and television and was officially opened by then Prime Minister of Jamaica, the Right Hon. Hugh Lawson Shearer, on February 17, 1972, almost 10 years after Jamaica's independence. A special commemorative stamp was issued to mark this ground-breaking event.

The 1972 Commemorative Stamp Showing the JAMINTEL Earth Station in St Thomas. Photo courtesy of Jenny Jemmott

The JAMINTEL Earth Station marked the third major milestone in Jamaica's international communications links, the others being the establishment of a marine radio station in Montego Bay, providing efficient communications with international shipping and the laying of the underwater cable from Jamaica to the Caymans, which significantly expanded voice channels, both in 1971. It was significant that St Thomas should have provided the launching pad for the third step in this communications revolution of the 1970s, bringing Jamaica to the world and placing its international communications on par with the rest of the world. [61]

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS:

The full story of the rich and diverse history and heritage of St Thomas, from early Taino settlement through to the late twentieth century would entail a much more extensive work than is possible here. However, it is clear that the story of this parish emphasises a legacy of outstanding historical, natural and cultural value for the people of St Thomas and the wider Jamaica to proudly claim as their own, and by so doing, to share this with the world.

As with the human experience everywhere, the people of St Thomas have faced over these centuries, many adversities, some natural, some man-made, but what stands out is the will and determination to overcome. Just recently, Jamaica was reminded of this history of overcoming adversity in the heavy rains that lashed the parish in late May/early June 2016, resulting in the Plantain Garden River overflowing its banks and bringing watery devastation to farmers' livelihoods in the River Valley.

This history of St Thomas shows that the parish, in several important ways, has contributed to the wider economic development of Jamaica, shaping the culture of sugar, bananas, coffee and coconuts, among other crops, which became significant to the story of the parish and indeed of all Jamaica. Perhaps the greatest legacy of all rests in the people, named and un-named, who

made this parish what it was and continues to be.

Broom-Seller on the Brigin Bridge. Photo courtesy Stuart Reeves

In particular, the stand taken against economic oppression and social injustice in 1865 by "the Martyrs of Morant Bay" and in the 1930s, by the labour protesters, not only shaped the political history of the island, but enshrined in Jamaica's collective memory, the true meaning of freedom and the importance of safeguarding the rights that are ours by virtue of being a free and sovereign people.

Vernacular-styled House Just Outside of Seaforth Town. Photo courtesy of Stuart Reeves

GUIDE TO PLACES OF HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE IN ST THOMAS

HISTORICAL

SITE……..PAGE

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