

# Historical and Archaeological Society The Museum of Antigua and Barbuda

“Knowledge to be of any Value must be Communicated”

HAS Newsletter No. 164

January, February, March 2024



## In This Issue...

**President's Message**  
Page 1,2

**The Barbuda Estate  
Manager's Wife:  
Elizabeth Wingfield  
Part 1**  
Page 3,4,5

**Point Wharf Activities**  
Extracted from *'The  
People's Point an Anti-  
guan Waterfront Com-  
munity with reference to  
Villa'*  
By Joy Lawrence  
Page 6,7,8,9

**History of Calypso**  
Page 10,11

**Muse News**  
Page 11, 12, 13, 14, 15,  
16

**Stay Connected**  
Page 17

## President's Message

By Dr. Reginald Murphy



Over the past year, since emerging from the COVID pandemic, our museum continues to present new challenges for our staff, volunteers and friends of the Historical and Archaeological Society. The Old Court House, once an elegant State House is today our most fragile artifact that consumes far too much of our time, but also our scarce revenues as we attempt to keep it open and functioning. It also stimulates the debate on the repurposing and use of old buildings as modern museums as opposed to new purpose built structures. On a recent visit to St. Martin Princess Juliana airport, I observed a sign that read, “Coming Soon, Museum”. This is probably the third or fourth museum I’ve encountered, set up inside an airport. Great concept, as these creatively entertain and educate in-transit visitors and local travellers, who often have time to explore the departure lounge between flights. The idea of a small exhibition, gift shop type “museum” was briefly considered by the Board of HAS as an option for expansion, if space could be found and granted at the newly developing port in St. John’s. Taking the museum to the public could perhaps give us additional revenue and exposure but will require a different format. This message is not promoting a move to commercial space in a purely tourism environment, but it is good to look beyond and outside of the box and help us to clarify our objectives at the museum.

On the horizon for 2024 will be the launch of the UNESCO project to document the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Antigua and Barbuda. This will begin in April and HAS, and the Museum will play a major role. Training will be provided by UNESCO for the process of data collection and management as well as the computer and software to manage the database.

*(Continued on page 2)*

## President's Message

*(Continued from page 1)*

The museum is no stranger to this activity as we have been operating on a digital platform since the museum was established in 1985, but this will take us to a new level on an international stage as we build capacity with new technologies and information management systems, and become a repository for the data on the ICH of Antigua and Barbuda. This will also open new training and funding opportunities.

As a research facility, we continue to function and thanks to a small research grant, I will be visiting the Antigua collection at Yale University in April to gather information on the Late Ceramic Age. We've also been busy reviewing, writing up, and compiling long overdue field reports on excavations carried out over the past 20 years. We no longer manage the large field schools of the pre-COVID era, but more focused field projects and site monitoring at endangered coastal sites. Also in progress, albeit slowly, is the cleaning, re-bagging, documenting and securing the large collections of excavated materials in storage off site. This collection is being organized for another planned activity to review and upgrade our cataloguing system, storage containers, and eventual digitization of the collections.

In sum, while we continue to battle the elements in our aging museum, we can become distracted and demoralized as we see our efforts set-back as the building floods. But we must carry on and remain focused on the bigger picture. This difficult time shall pass and we will be stronger in the end. I now offer a special thank you to our staff for their endurance and commitment, our donors who continue to support of efforts, particularly the People's Republic of China, and the Mill Reef Club. To the members of the Board a special thank you, particularly for Unlocking the Museum!

*A people without the knowledge  
of their past history, origin and  
culture is like a tree without roots.*

*Marcus Garvey*

### Board of Directors

Walter Berridge  
*Chairman*

Reg Murphy  
*President*

Natalya Lawrence  
Avril Hector  
Susan Lowes  
Janice O'Keiffe  
Desley Gardner  
Chris Waters  
Richard John

*Members*  
Dame Louise Lake-Tack  
*Honourable Member*

### Museum Staff

Michele Henry  
*Curator*

Debbie Joseph  
*Gift Shop/ Museum Attendant*

Lisa Francis  
*Gift Shop/Museum Attendant*

Myra Piper  
*Library Researcher*  
*Data Entry Clerk*

Rebecca Gomes  
*Assistant Library Research*  
*Attendant*

Lisa Charles  
*Assistant Library Researcher*

Mary Johnson  
*Heritage Education Educator*

Suzanne Henry  
Isabel Carbon  
Leuwana .Maynard  
*Custodians*

Mark Philip

Alex Stewart

*Digital Collection*

*Management Technicians*

## The Barbuda Estate Manager's Wife: Elizabeth Wingfield - Part 1

This article is based on an extract from Sue Appleby's forthcoming book *Wives - Mothers - Daughters - Widows: Cornish Women in the Caribbean*, to be published by Troubador under their Matador imprint later on.

Elizabeth Wingfield was born in 1771 to parents of 'the Middling Sort' - her father, George Wingfield, was a lawyer, a middle-class profession, and her mother, Mary Barkas, was the daughter of one George Sparrow Esquire. But when Elizabeth's aunt - also named Elizabeth - married Sir John St Aubyn, 4th Baronet of Clowance, the Wingfield family's social standing improved. Aunt Elizabeth, now Lady Elizabeth St Aubyn, became responsible for the day-to-day running of her husband's properties: Clowance Manor in Crowan, and St Michael's Mount, a small island off the coast of the town of Marazion, both in the County of Cornwall in the southwest of England. As the younger Elizabeth lost both her parents at an early age, Lady St Aubyn took a great interest in her niece's upbringing and, over the years, as she grew up among the aristocracy, it is likely that Elizabeth Wingfield came to consider herself a 'Lady of Quality'.

Although she may have hoped to marry into the aristocracy like her aunt, in 1797, at the age of twenty-six, Elizabeth married local Cornishman John James (1772–1826) who came from a well established and respected but not aristocratic family. Perhaps as a result of her connection with the St Aubyn family she was, by this time, a woman of some financial means, and had invested capital in some financial projects which provided her with dividends.<sup>1</sup>

Aware of the precarious position of a married woman living under the common law principle of coverture, which decreed that wives could not control their own property unless specific provisions were made before marriage, she was determined to keep her financial independence, and wisely had an agreement drawn up between herself and her husband-to-be - '*a retain indenture*' - whereby after marriage she kept her capital, and continued to benefit from her dividends.<sup>1</sup>

Soon after her marriage, Elizabeth gave birth to a daughter, Elizabeth Prideaux, who was born in 1798. A son, John Wingfield, was born in 1800, and a second daughter, Mary, followed in 1801. The family lived comfortably in a large house in Marazion, and Elizabeth and her husband seemed destined to live out their lives as respected members of the local community, enjoying the lively society of the nearby town of Penzance until, in 1803, Elizabeth's husband was offered the post of manager of an agricultural estate on the island of Barbuda by the estate's absentee owner, Sir Christopher Bethel Codrington.

After mulling over Sir Christopher's offer of an annual salary of £200 plus a 5 per cent commission on profit from the sale of Barbuda's products, John decided to accept the post and, leaving his family behind in Marazion, in 1804 he sailed for Antigua and on to Barbuda. Although he had no previous experience of managing a large estate in the Caribbean, he did possess one skill that would have stood him in good stead on Barbuda; a significant source of the estate's income was the salvaging of the vessels that frequently ran aground on the reefs that surround the low-lying island and, as a Cornishman from the often-treacherous coast of Cornwall, where the

*(Continued on page 4)*

## The Barbuda Estate Manager's Wife: Elizabeth Wingfield

(Continued from page 3)

rocky coastline and strong onshore winds caused many vessels to founder, John James had the expertise to successfully salvage any ship that ran ashore on Barbuda's coast.

Sir Christopher was initially pleased with the efforts of his new employee to improve his property and gave him additional financial responsibilities and power of attorney to act for the Barbuda estate<sup>2</sup>, but by 1809 Sir Christopher's enthusiasm had faded, and he complained that his Barbuda investments were not bringing an adequate return. Many absentee planters tended to blame the local manager for any shortfall in profit, and Sir Christopher was no exception, failing to consider the ongoing challenges of Barbuda's poor soil, the frequent shortage of water, and the difficulty of maintaining regular communication between Barbuda and the Codrington country estate in Gloucestershire.

<sup>1</sup>From correspondence with Maxine Symons and Kyle Scott, February 2022.

<sup>2</sup>*The Letters of John James Esq: A Collection of Letters Written by the Estate Manager of Barbuda and Clare Hall, Antigua 1804–1826.* Accessed 7 March 2022, <http://johnjamesesq.blogspot.com/2013/10/02-august-1805.html>

In 1815 John travelled to England on plantation business and to visit his family. Elizabeth had been left to manage the family's affairs in Cornwall during the eleven years her husband had been employed on Barbuda, but she now wanted to join her husband, and on John's return to the island, he asked Sir Christopher's permission to bring his wife and two daughters out to Barbuda.<sup>3</sup> Sir Christopher agreed to the arrangement, and Elizabeth and her daughters sailed for Barbuda. It is uncertain exactly when they left Marazion, but it must have been after Elizabeth had advertised their house as a rental

property in the *Royal Cornwall Gazette* for Saturday 17 May 1817:

*To be LET, WITH IMMEDIATE Possession, A READY-FURNISHED HOUSE, Delightfully situated in the Centre of MARAZION. The house consists of Two Parlours, a Drawing-Room, Six Bed-Rooms, a Kitchen, Wash Kitchen, Dairy, Coach-House, Stables, and a good Pump, etc. etc. with walled Garden. Apply to Mrs. James at Marazion. Dated 13 May, 1817.*<sup>4</sup>

Elizabeth's son, John Wingfield, did not accompany them. He was a student at Blundell's School in Tiverton, Devon, from 1814 to 1815<sup>5</sup> and, as he was the only male heir, his father no doubt thought it important that he continue his schooling in England. He did sail to Barbuda some years later, joining his family in 1823, by which time he was an adult of about twenty-three years old.<sup>6</sup>

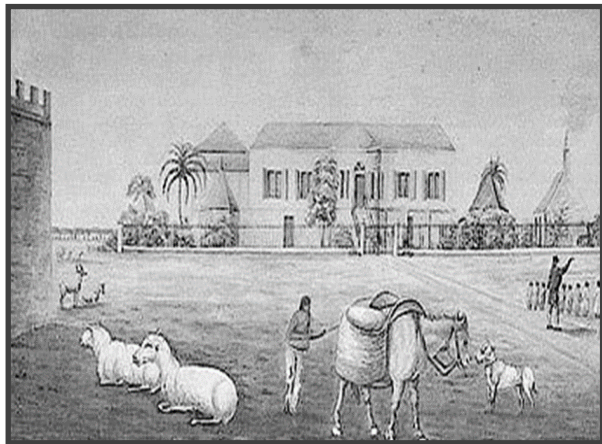
The usual residence for Barbuda's estate manager was Codrington Castle, which had been built in 1680 to defend the island against attacks from opposing European colonists and marauding pirates. It was a substantial building but, by the time John James arrived on Barbuda, the castle's living quarters were said to be damp, and by 1813 the castle was described as run down and dilapidated.<sup>7</sup> In preparation for the arrival of Elizabeth and her two daughters, John wisely moved from the castle to a 'large barn-like looking house'<sup>8</sup> which had been built nearby and provided more comfortable accommodation. What John's family thought of the house is not recorded, but it surely did not compare favourably to the house they left behind in Marazion. Isolated on Barbuda, they had no opportunity for socialising with managers and families of neighbouring estates unless they travelled to Antigua, and most likely found Barbuda a lonely place to live.

(Continued on page 5)

## The Barbuda Estate Manager's Wife: Elizabeth Wingfield

(Continued from page 4)

There is only one known pictorial representation of Codrington from the time of the James family's residence on Barbuda: a watercolour entitled *A View of the Island of Barbuda in the West Indies*. Completed in 1818, it includes one wall of the castle to the left of the painting, and, in the centre, what is probably the 'barn-like house'<sup>9</sup> where the James family were living. The name of the painter is written on the back as 'N. James' but could this be 'M. James' – for Mary James?<sup>10</sup> Mary was living on Barbuda when the painting was made, and there is no evidence that any member of the James family with a first name beginning with an N ever resided on Barbuda.<sup>11</sup> Was Mary, then aged seventeen, a budding artist? Did she begin to draw and paint to pass the time while she was living in the village of Codrington? If it is her painting, it is the only known artwork she produced.



A View of the Island of Barbuda in the West Indies, by N. James, 1818. Courtesy of the Ruth and Elmer Wellin Museum of Art, Hamilton College, Clinton, New York, USA.

<sup>3</sup>Tweedy, Margaret T. 'A History of Barbuda Under the Codringtons 1738–1833.' PhD diss., University of Birmingham, 1981, p.58. Accessed 11 February 2022, <https://etheses.bham.ac.uk/id/eprint/5356/>

<sup>4</sup>'To be Let... ..' *Royal Cornwall Gazette*, p.1. (Saturday 7 May 1817)

<sup>5</sup>*The Register of Blundell's School Part 1: The Register 1770–1882*. Exeter: J.G. Commin, 1904, p.87. Accessed 7 March 2022, [https://forgottenbooks.com/it/download/TheRegisterofBlundellsSchool\\_10913062.pdf](https://forgottenbooks.com/it/download/TheRegisterofBlundellsSchool_10913062.pdf)

<sup>6</sup>Estate records list John Wingfield as an employee on the property for at least three months in 1823. From correspondence with Maxine Symon and Kyle Scott, February 2022.

<sup>7</sup>Tweedy, Margaret T. 'A History of Barbuda Under the Codringtons 1738–1833.' PhD diss., University of Birmingham, 1981, p.170. Accessed 11 February 2022, <https://etheses.bham.ac.uk/id/eprint/5356/>.

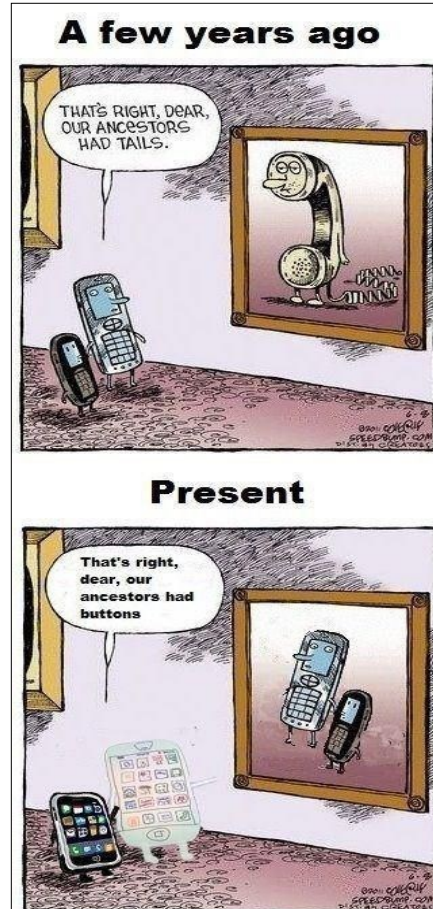
<sup>8</sup>*Ibid.*, p.170.

<sup>9</sup>This is the house now known as the Warden's House.

<sup>10</sup>Information supplied by Elizabeth Shannon, Hamilton College, in email message of 21 February 2022.

To be continued in next newsletter

## Museum Humor



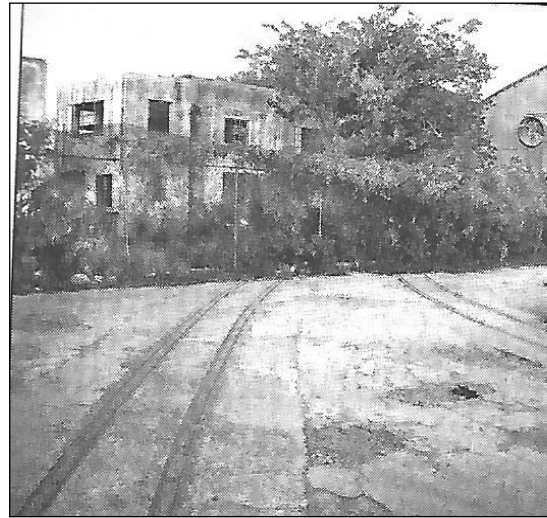
## Point Wharf Activities

Extracted from *'The People's Point an Antiguan Waterfront Community with reference to Villa'* By Joy Lawrence

In the days of sugarcane, Point Wharf bustled with activity. Before airports, exports mainly exited via Point Wharf. Sugar and molasses, railed in from the Antigua Sugar Factory at Gunthorpes topped the list. A locomotive line ran from the factory, curved northwest into Pigotts, passed through Clare Hall behind Percival Gas Station, ran down through Villa, curved its way through what is now Eustace Henry Roundabout, and finally arrived at Point Wharf where the tracks can still be seen at the wharf.

Four large storage houses at the wharf held bulk sugar awaiting export and the molasses was contained in iron tanks atop solid concrete bases. Men and women each had specific duties in moving the sugar. Men offloaded bags from the loco carts into warehouses as they arrived. Some buildings allowed the loco cars to run through without the drivers having to turn them around. They maneuvered backward and forward. For final export overseas, workers transferred the bags into handbarrows with iron wheels. In the 1930s through 50s, strong, healthy women pushed the two-wheeled handcart to Brysons boats, women like Maryann Farrell who lived to age 103 and Lily Price. Men loaded this sugar onto lighters and sailed to steamers anchored 3-4 miles out at sea. Women also assisted when the Smith Coal boats arrived. They carried the coal, block by block, to Antigua Sugar Factory trucks where the men did the final loading. The coal supplemented bagasse, the sugarcane by-product left after squeezing, to fuel sugar processing.

Bryson's used lighters, sail powered flat-bottomed barges, and schooners, with two masts, jib, staysail, foresail, and a mainsail, to dispatch cargo to the steamers.



Loco line at wharf and storage houses, 2013



Sugar storage house at the wharf, 2018

The company had more than a dozen small boats conveying freight out to the ships at sea. Three of the schooners had the charming names: *Charlotte, Daisy and Resolute*. The *Renown, Shamrock, Mariner, Grace, Bride, Report, Rover, Rapid and Restless* were sloops, sailboats with one mast, fore-and-aft mainsails and a jib. Competitor Mendes had some lighters named *Roma, Unward, Forward and Ozille*.

With wind the only source of power, it took strong, skilled men to manoeuvre the boats. In addition to sugar, they hauled local sea island cotton to the ships and returned with imports of victuals and other supplies for local consumption.

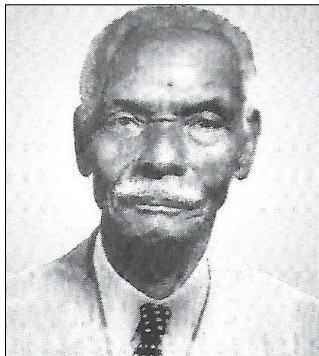
*(Continued on page 7)*

## Point Wharf Activities

(Continued from page 6)

The largest of these vessels, the *Renown*, had capacity to haul 500 bags of sugar, the *Shamrock*, 300 bags; *Mariner*, 290; *Grace*, 200 and the *Restless*, 100 . In the mid-1900s skilled Brysons captains included Frank Emanuel, skipper of the largest boat, *Renown*; Arthur Thomas (Colla), the *Shamrock*; Weasel, the *Restless*; Thomas Simon, *Rapid*; and Lauchland Williams captained the *Mariner*. John Parker, John Boysie, Reginal Parker, Weston, and Waffers all worked on board.

Bob Tonge worked for Brysons overseeing the repair and maintenance of boats with crewmembers Monty Simon, Reginald Mussington, and Luke. Other workers were: Barbudan Alan Tankerbill, Alfred Watkins, and Manny Bunside served as lighter boat assistants. The women Kessie Joe and Biggy worked at the sugarhouse packing and moving cargo.



Johnny Aska,  
former stevedore

In the early years, lighter men used a sling made of rope to hoist shipments on and off boats. The switch to cranes brought better efficiency. They also managed the cargo moving from the steamers to Kings Warehouse. Lighter men did not enter the steamer hatches. That job belonged to the stevedores who worked directly inside the steamers removing loose cargo from the bowels of the ship for transfer to Kings Warehouse and securing incoming freight in the hull. The nature

of this work demanded stevedores to be big, strong, tall, skilled males. Strength and skill dictated their job and their pay: quarter-men, half-men, three-quarter men, whole men, mate and captain .



Drawing of Kings Warehouse by David Fields

At one time, Keithley Heath had a contract to carry stevedores out to the steamers using his boat the *Nalda*. We've had plenty of well-known stevedores over the years: Johnny Aska, Dennis, Wigan, Proctor, Hairy, Massa Harris, Withy, Lovely, Pattie, James Manning, Harold Manning, Harold Martin, Manjay, Mr. Shevington, Mr. Cole, the Lashley brothers, Japs, Clarence Browne. Colla, Elick Bathroom, Biggy Knight, Frank Emanuel, Hezekiah, Slush, Rupert Teela Parker.

Lighter men and stevedores mostly came from Point or Barbuda; but Five Islands contributed many serious workers. City workers came to envy dockworkers whose pay in those days amounted to big dollars and, at certain times of the year, free goods.

The arrival of a sugar boat was a time of rejoicing for Point people. Dock workers had ways to acquire goods and make extra money.

(Continued on page 8)

## Point Wharf Activities

*(Continued from page 7)*

From goods coming into or going out of the country, they pilfered everything they could carry home unseen. Three tiered lunch carriers placed inside a very large saucepan could hide many an item from detection. One gentleman, now in his nineties, remembers when he was young, a lot of rice, sardines, flour and other pilfered goods packed under their beds. His father had worked on a schooner. Some people set up shops in their homes to sell the pilfered goods at reduced prices. Customers, mostly from other villages and communities, travelled the distance to save money on purchases.

Good pay and pilfered goods afforded dockworkers a glitzier lifestyle than most other Antiguans. This was a step up for them since they had been regarded as indigents, not having enough money to live on. So when they came into money they splurged. They dressed and ate well. They did not envision the need to save money from one day to the next. No stale money allowed; each day's earnings were to be spent before new money arrived. They frequented the rum shops, gambled, bought plenty of cigarettes and, of course, spent money on women. To engage in these activities some of the men left home on Friday evenings, returning on Monday mornings with their shirt and shoes slung over their shoulders in reckless abandon, after a weekend fling.

Stevedores took their stealing to another level. When their boat reached the smuggling dock off Sweeny Alley, they threw bags of flour overboard. Come nightfall, they returned, dived down and retrieved the loot. They had learned that only an inch of the flour would harden on the outer perimeter so protect the bulk of the flour inside the sack.

Flour retrieved, stevedores mounted their bicycles and left for a fast, easy getaway. They promptly sold some to bakers in Point. The remainder was hidden in places other than their homes.

Barges pulled by small diesel-powered tugs replaced the lighters. It made the work exporting molasses much easier. Workers such as Edward Henry pumped molasses from the tanks on shore through large pipes into metal compartments in the barge. Tugs pulled them to the steamers anchored parallel to Pillar Rock at the mouth of the harbour. There, the steamers suctioned the molasses into their own tanks.

People remember tugs with the names *Lord Nelson, Lady Hamilton, Utica, Lethem* and *Joe Young*. Barges had names *Annie, Betty* and *Clare*. After WWII, it became common to transport sugar loose in open boats that could be sucked into the steamer.

Pilfering continued even after the opening of the new Deep Water Harbour in 1968. Stevedores wrapped wads of cloth around their waist to secure portions of stolen salt fish. Others used ankle-deep inner pockets in which to hide goods: rice, sardines, mackerel, salt fish, clothing, shoes-sometimes mismatched shoes, a pair of rights or lefts-anything that could be easily hidden.

Activities at St. John's Harbour did not start with sugar from Gunthorpes factory. Except for periods during the war years when traffic became almost non-existent, the harbour had always been busy since the time of slavery when it handled most of the island shipping business. In 1786, John Luffman wrote to a friend, "*This harbour undoubtedly ranks amongst the first in the West Indies, but it is choking very fast, and, unless effectual measures are soon taken for deepening it, vessels of three hundred tons burden, must,*

*(Continued on page 9)*



## Point Wharf Activities

*(Continued from page 8)*

*in a few years, discharge and take in their cargoes at the distance of between two and three miles from the wharfs. At this port nine-tenths of the whole shipping business of the island is done."*<sup>92</sup> Mrs. Lanaghan, English Author of the 1844 historical document *Antigua and the Antiguans*, on approaching St. John's Harbour when first she landed during slavery times remarked, *"What a busy scene now presented itself to my view; the various ships from England, Scotland, Ireland and America distinguished by their several flags; the boats and droughers hurrying backwards and forwards with their loads..."*

Brysons served as an agent for many shipping companies like Royal Netherlands Steamship Co., Federal Government Shipping Service, Cunard Steamship Co. Ltd., Moore McCormack Lines Ltd and airline ticket agent for BOAC, KLM, LIAT, .. ,

Owners, captains or mates of local boats also conducted business from the harbour. Captain Soar, with a 3-masted schooner named *Roma*, delivered people to work in the sugarcane fields of the Dominican Republic in the early 1900s. Thomas Simon travelled as a mate on the *MV Monica* and *MV Caribbee* that sailed around the Leeward Islands, Dominica and Trinidad and, during the war years, to Puerto Rico where they collected fruits, vegetables and gasoline. Uriah Harmon sailed to Trinidad to collect 50-gallon drums of gasoline. Magilvery sailed to most Caribbean islands but WW II made it risky to sail as German submarines sometimes torpedoed freighters. Life had to go on, so seamen took great risk to transport cargo in and out of St. John's. Samuel Destin used his cargo sloop, appropriately named *War Risk*, to sail to and from Trinidad. *Monty Won*, a sloop owned by Hubert Edwards in partnership with ship-

wrights Vincent and Charles Simon, operated from Lower North Street. The owners named their boat after British war hero General Montgomery. Enock Elvin's *Sun Flower*, a two-mast schooner, owned the seas collecting gasoline, kerosene and road oil from Trinidad. In recent times, Conrad Reynolds transported passengers and goods, including lumber and timber, from Trinidad and Guyana.

Several businesses operated wharfs in the harbour: Market Wharf, Mendes, Brown and Company, Pigotts Wharf, Kings Warehouse, Brysons, Cotton Factory, Dews, Carty's Macaulay wharf. Still spoken of today with a sense of pride and longing, Macaulay Bath had facilities for swimming and sports like boxing. Governor Fiennes patronized the Macaulay's Bath gifted to Antigua by his friend Sir Thomas Macaulay. Workers drove concrete piles deep into the ground and surrounded them with reinforced mesh wire so no large fish could enter. The enclosure measured about 25 feet square. Steps allowed patrons to safely reach the paved bottom, a little beach provided crystal clear water for bathing and the convenience of fresh-water pipes to rinse away the salt before leaving. Anyone wishing to use the changing rooms, the bath huts, would give the gatekeeper a penny. Those not wishing to enter the water would sit on strategically placed benches and enjoy the scenery.

Community people used the wharf and harbour for activities other than commercial. In the 1950's and 60's model boat sailing was a cherished event that brought out two rival communities Grays Farm and Point. Young men skilled in model boat building would engage in building replicas of the boats they saw in the harbour all year round, months before the Easter weekend extravaganza. So fierce was the contest some competitors would sail alongside their boats as the current carried them from Point Wharf to Grays Farm on the other side of the harbour. Whenever the opportunity arose, some competitors would confiscate their opponent's boats. No prizes were offered or awarded the winners. Communities came together in this activity solely for bragging rights.

## History of Calypso

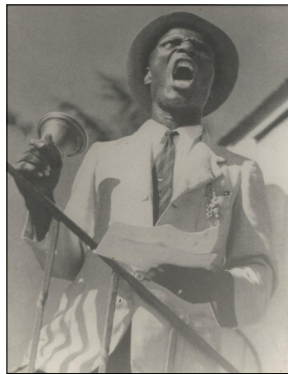
In the 18th century, in the French colonial islands, slaves were barred from taking part in Carnival celebrations. They celebrated secretly in their backyards. African drumming, dance and song depicting their African Culture vibrated from their backyards. "*Le vrai*"- (singing the truth) was the slaves' hilarious way of mocking their masters in song.

### From Benna 1834 to Calypso 1985

Benna derives from a West African word for song-dance that the slaves brought to the West Indies. It was a lively melody set to simple repetitive lyrics that dealt with a specific topic. Introduced during post slavery life, which was little different from that which existed before, emancipated slaves had to find an outlet, other than through religious song, to express themselves and to forget about the social ills that existed. Music that was simple and free, entertaining yet functional, was an obvious vehicle.

Benna dealt with the bawdy, the scandalous, the cruel and occasionally the humorous. Benna provided slaves with a common voice. In the 1900's, benna evolved to becoming the newspaper of the people and provided an often illiterate population with rapid transmission of information. The earliest traceable record of Benna song states - "*Emancipation day is past, massa done cut naygra ass.*"

In the 1940's and 1950's, a fearless character, John Thomas called "Quarkoo", sang Benna. He composed and sang on the spot. His songs gave details of events ranging from the gruesome murders and courthouse trials to scandalous husband/wife infidelities of the upper and middle classes in the society. Some of the lyrics to his songs landed him in prison.



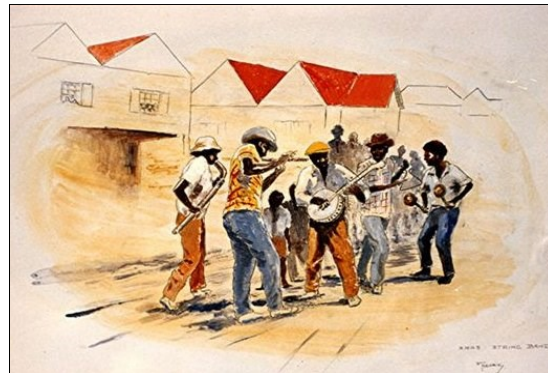
John Thomas 'Quarkoo'

Today, calypsos are used as a basis for critique and open commentary, mainly political and social. The use of double language, metaphors and folklore has protected the performer from censorship. In the 1960's, tourism and the influx of North American visitors to our shores recognised the need for organised entertainment in the new hotels.

The first calypsonians performing in hotels were Dadian, Black Shirt, and Skeetch. Accompanied by a string band consisting of two guitars and a bass made from an empty oil drum with a string attached, they sang about "Slapin han"- a song about a woman being slapped by an unseen hand. Many persons thought that this was a sign of obeah.



The Rio String Band Buel Paige, James Dyett, Harold Williams, Donald Frederick, and Daniel Frederick



String Band, Drawing done by ET Henry

In 1957 was the first Carnival in Antigua, and Styler won the first annual Calypso King competition.

The mid-fifties heralded the emerging national consciousness expressed in calypso.

*(Continued on page 11)*

# History of Calypso

*(Continued from page 10)*

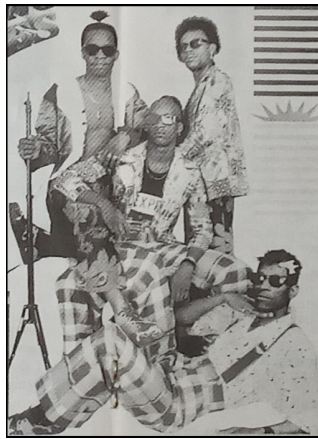


Styler, Former Calypso King of the first Antigua Carnival in 1957

A series of political and union victories against the colonial administration and sugar syndicate were expressed in calypso as patriotism, love of beauty of country. The 1967 Calypso competition reflected this with "Beautiful lovely Antigua" by Swallow, "Prosperity" by Lord Lee and "Antigua where land and sea make beauty".



British West Indian Airways (BWIA) Presentation to Calypsonian King Short Shirt in 1964



1980's Burning Flames

In 1957 -1965, Lord Canary and Zemaki performed the best music of this period, whose rivalry laid the foundation for the Swallow/ Short Shirt confrontations fifteen years later.

King Short Shirt and Swallow battled for the Calypso King of Antigua honour in 1964-1988 . King Short Shirt had won the crown fourteen times including three hat tricks.

# Muse News

On February 6th, there was a tour and lecture on The Archaeology of Antigua by Dr. Reginald Murphy to The International Women's Club.



*(Continued on page 12)*

# Muse News

*(Continued from page 11)*

On February 27th, Mr. Brian Lockett of England, son of Margaret Lockett who is the author of the book 'Antigua Then', visited the museum. Board members Dr. Reginald Murphy, Mrs. Susan Lowes and Mr. Walter Berridge welcomed Mr. Lockett and his group, and were pleased to give them a tour.

Also in February, British students enjoyed their visit to the museum with the help of our Heritage Educator Ms. Mary Johnson.



*(Continued on page 13)*

# Muse News

*(Continued from page 12)*

Museum staff visited the memorial March 8th exhibition at the Dockyard Museum.

The March 8th Project is focused on highlighting the African labourers (enslaved and free) and soldiers who contributed to the development of the Antigua Naval Dockyard.

Staff also got the opportunity to look at the new Horatio Nelson Exhibit and detailed model of Falmouth and English Harbour.

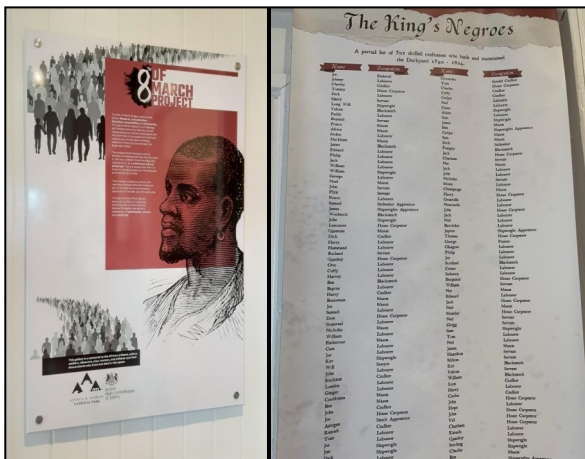


(Top) Ms. Desley Gardner of the Dockyard Museum explains the new Horatio Nelson Exhibit.

(Bottom) Horatio Nelson death mask.



Dr. Chris Waters of the Dockyard Museum introducing to the staff the new model of Falmouth and English Harbour



*(Continued on page 14)*

# Muse News

(Continued from page 13)

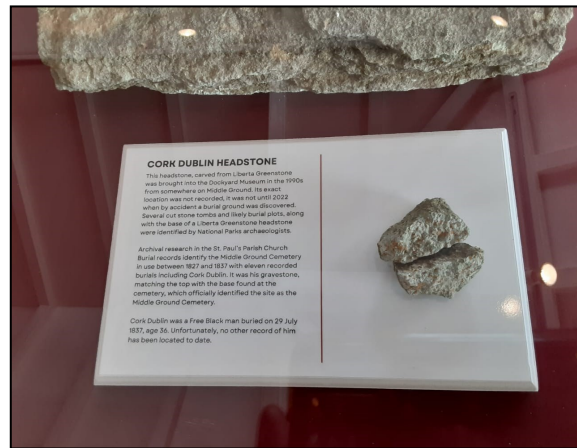
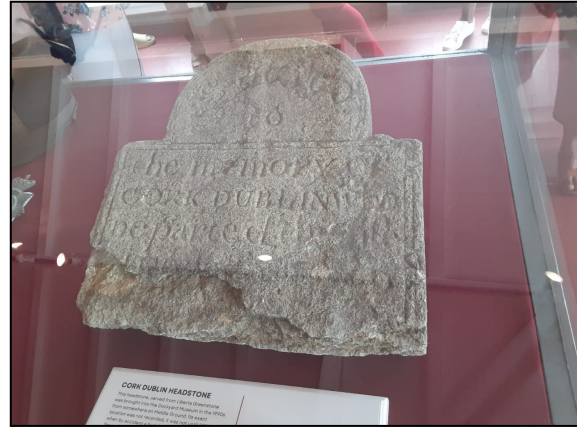


Part of the model of English and Falmouth Harbour on display

Dr. Chris Waters giving a tour as well.



## Other exhibitions at the Dockyard museum



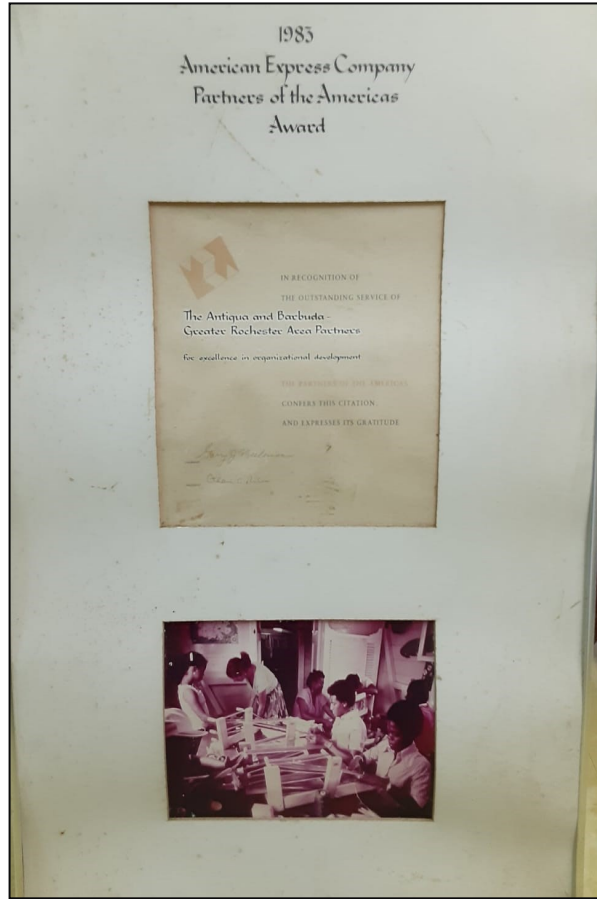
# Acquisitions

Special thanks to Mr. Cliff Winwood of England, UK for donating to the Museum an old letter from Rev William Warrener from 1790. Rev William Warrener was a minister of the Methodist Church in St. John's Antigua at the time. Thanks to Mr. Winwood for his visit on January 27th, and contributing to our cultural heritage. We will add this to our Archives in our Research Department. His contribution is greatly appreciated.



Member of Staff Debbie Joseph who accepted the letter from Mr. Cliff Winwood during his visit to the Museum

Thanks also to Faye Edwards who donated to the Museum 1983, 1985 and 1987 framed citations by the American Express Company Partners of the Americas. This contribution is deeply appreciated.



This 1983 American Express Company Partners of the Americas Award reads: *'In Recognition of the Outstanding Service of The Antigua and Barbuda Greater Rochester Area Partners; for excellence in organizational development, The Partners of the Americas confers this Citation and expresses it's gratitude.'*



Mr. Cliff Winwood (left) and family and staff member Debbie Joseph

*(Continued on page 16)*

# Acquisitions

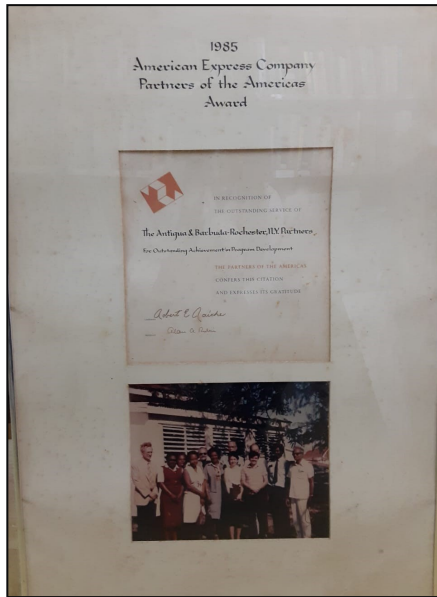
*(Continued from page 15)*



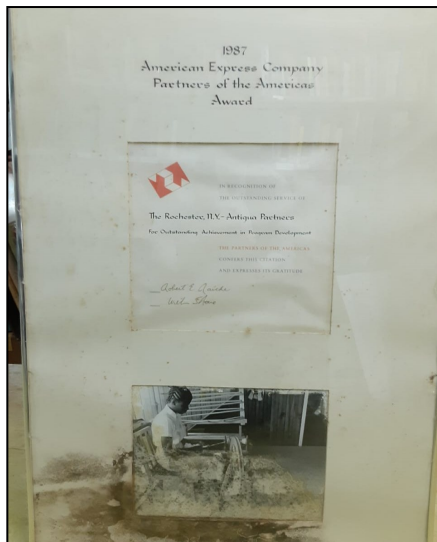
## New Members

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

- Margot Anderson of Antigua
- Helen Anne Brayley of Antigua
- Ann Cullen and Alan Fairbair of Antigua
- Timothy Larrier of Antigua
- Betsy Way of Antigua



This 1985 American Express Company Partners of the Americas Award reads: *'In Recognition of the Outstanding Service of The Antigua and Barbuda Greater Rochester, N.Y. Partners; for Outstanding Achievement in Program Development; The Partners of the Americas confers this Citation and expresses it's gratitude.'*



This 1987 American Express Company Partners of the Americas Award reads: *'In Recognition of the Outstanding Service of The Rochester, N.Y.- Antigua Partners; for Outstanding Achievement in Program Development; The Partners of the Americas confers this Citation and expresses it's gratitude.'*

History does not belong to us; we belong to it.

Hans-Georg Gadamer



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

Tel/Fax: 268-462-1469, 462-4930 E-mail: [museum@candw.ag](mailto:museum@candw.ag) Website: [www.antiguamuseums.net](http://www.antiguamuseums.net)

# Historical and Archaeological Society

JANUARY, FEBRUARY, MARCH 2024 No. 164

## UPCOMING EVENTS



Imagine St, John's in the year 1897. Your own vintage tour of then and now. Walk the streets as you compare the buildings of then and now, where was Gutter Lane and Crow Lane? Did you know that the Public Market was situated at the bottom of Long Street? There are so many secrets to reveal. Coming soon in 2024, QR friendly codes. Staff are presently researching street names and building for the exhibit. Stay connected for further information by visiting our Facebook page, *The Museum of Antigua and Barbuda*. Also visit our website [www.antiguamuseums.net](http://www.antiguamuseums.net)

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

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

NAME:.....

ADDRESS:.....

TELEPHONE: (H)..... (W).....

E-MAIL:.....

SIGNATURE:.....

DATE:.....

CIRCLE MEMBERSHIP CATEGORY	
Individual	\$ 50 EC/\$ 25US (Mailing included)
Student	\$ 15 EC
Family	\$ 100 EC/\$ 45US (mailing included)
Life	\$ 500 EC/\$ 200US
Business Patron	\$ 500 EC