

# Historical and Archaeological Society

## The Museum of Antigua and Barbuda

“Knowledge to be of any Value must be Communicated”



HAS Newsletter No. 130

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## LEAH'S HOUSE

*By Walter Berridge*

Congratulations to the executive and members of the Antigua & Barbuda Ex-Servicemen's Association who opened their brand new headquarters (located just off Factory Road east of the Sagcor Building) on Sunday 10 May 2015. His Excellency Sir Dr. Rodney Williams cut the ribbon. Dean Rudolph Smitten of the Cathedral Parish blessed the building.



The building was dedicated in memory of Leah (Bascus) Nanton who served during World War II. Her son, Jim Nanton, spoke about his mother's military service.



## **The Antigua Field School**

### **Over Twenty Years of Research and Growth**

*By Dr. Reginald A. Murphy*

Every summer, since 1994, teams of young archaeologists and research professors descend on Antigua for the annual archaeology field school program, and to gain essential experience and skills. Field schools from universities in the United States have occasionally visited and worked on Antigua since the 1960s and made major contributions, but the Antigua Field School was an Antiguan and Canadian academic initiative committed to multidisciplinary research and student field training. It was developed by then graduate students at Trent University, Reg Murphy and Christy deMille under the encouragement, guidance and supervision of Professor Paul Healy.

On the Antiguan end, all of the archaeological research is organized, hosted and managed by the Historical and Archaeological Societies/Museum of Antigua and the National Parks Heritage Department. All of the artifacts and materials excavated remain on Antigua and only a few special samples requiring conservation, or chemical analysis that cannot be done on Antigua, are sent overseas. The samples for analysis are usually organic (for example small fragments bone, or charcoal and at time soil) and are usually destroyed in the process of analysis, but provide essential information such as radiocarbon dates or isotopic data.

The Antigua Field Schools shifted to the University of Calgary in 1996 and with Dr. Murphy's return to Antigua in 2000, the academic component was continued by his colleagues Dr. Tamara Varney, Dr. Christy deMille, and Beau Cripps. It has since shifted to Chico Campus of California State University under the professorship of Dr. Georgia Fox. Dr. Murphy remains involved and oversees the field operations and his wife Nicola continues as chef, logistics manager. It is often said that most students take the field school for the gastronomic experience of chef Nicki and surveys have proven that it is indeed a major influence. Her policy is to expose the archaeology students; future world travelers to the delights of international cuisine and the evening meals are eagerly anticipated.

This year is the 21<sup>st</sup> year for the Antigua Field School, (although two field sessions were run back to back a few times) and a commemorative publication is being organized. It will be a compilation of field reports, conference presentations, and photographs; reflections on the archaeology of Antigua.

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## **The Antigua Field School**

*(Continued from page 2)*

On our sister island Barbuda, an archaeological unit has been established by Dr. Sophia Perdikaris of Brooklyn College, City University New York. It is an active multidisciplinary, non-profit organization that is dedicated to education and research, and is particularly strong in its community outreach efforts and environmental studies. Teams of researchers use the field station throughout the year and it continues to grow and make a significant contribution towards training youth in archaeology, aquaponics, environmental monitoring, research and much more.

The thousands of artifacts have been uncovered over the years and are housed in the collections of the Dockyard Museum field station. Numerous publications and papers have been presented annually, the results of the field work and analysis.

In addition, a large number of graduate students have based their theses and dissertations on aspects of their field research on Antigua and Barbuda and new professors join the program every few years, adding to the multidisciplinary teams' scope and quality of research. But the works are by no means complete. The projects shifted annually to focus on the sites most threatened by development or coastal erosion/climate change, and although field reports and in some cases, preliminary papers were produced, analysis of the large quantities of excavated materials, the study, photography and final reports from most of the sites excavated, have not yet been completed. This provides materials for future students and studies of sites that are now lost to development.

However, most Antiguanians are not exposed to the scientific journals, scholarly reports, and papers presented at conferences, albeit copies of the most important of these works are available at the library of the Museum of Antigua. This issue is being addressed as the local and international media have begun to document and report on some of the higher profile results of the excavations.

This year, research will continue on the slave village at Betty's Hope Estate under the supervision of Dr. Georgia Fox, and excavations at the distillery area by graduate student Charlie Gouge from Bristol University. In addition, Dr. Matthew Brown and Dr. Tamara Varney will continue work on the Royal Naval skeletal material. It is not yet clear if work at Indian Creek will resume this year, as the senior research team is committed to salvage archaeology and survey research at Great George Fort on Monk's Hill. This will take place the last week in July and the first week in August. While most Antiguanians will be jamming and wining in St. John's, the archaeologists will be waist deep in dirt, our annual tradition. Fieldwork will also include soil analysis and perhaps deep core testing in the mangroves and wetlands to continue research into the climate history of the island and region. In addition, shovel testing at Coconut Hall will be done in a few areas to access the integrity of the prehistoric site, soon to be lost to development. In sum, summer 2015 archaeology field season promises to be a year of diversity and intense research and hard work. Volunteers are always welcome. The only qualifications are: you must be physical fit, able to work long hours in the hot sun, have their own transportation, and be committed to learning and listening to bad jokes as the day progresses. Field work begins mid June until mid July, then resuming the last week of July and closing at the end of the first week in August. The July gap marks the biannual congress for the International Association of Caribbean Archaeology, to be held this year in St. Martin.

## **Antigua's Carnival History**

<http://antiguahistory.net/Museum/cultural.htm>

In June of 1953, to celebrate the Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II, a carnival was organised. There was a parade of floats, troupes and groups, and a children's Carnival. It was not until 1957 that Antigua would celebrate its first Carnival that has continued to this day.

*(Continued on page 4)*

### **Carnival History** *(Continued from page 3)*

August Monday was a public holiday granted for celebrating emancipation of slavery. This was celebrated at Glanvilles pasture where brass bands played. Later in St John's, traditional characters such as the John Bull, the Moko Jumbie and iron bands would parade through the streets.



The Carnival Committee, headed by Mr. Ferdie Shoul, approached the Government for support in declaring the Tuesday after August Monday a holiday so that Carnival could be celebrated over a two day period. But sugar cane was the main crop on the island and the Antigua Sugar Factory management felt that production in the cane field would be seriously affected by the two day holiday period. Finally it was suggested that if the sugar cane production could be speeded up to finish before August Monday, Carnival celebrations on both days could serve a threefold purpose.

- \* To celebrate the after crop season
- \* To observe the emancipation of the slaves
- \* To attract visitors to Antigua in an off-season period.

1957 Carnival - A Queen contest and a calypso contest at the Deluxe Cinema were the only shows held. Groups and troupes together with floats sponsored by the business community took part in the parade. The U.S. Navy and Air Force entered an annual float in the celebrations.

Over a period of time a Carnival city was established at the Recreation Grounds. Colourful masterpieces were designed and built as stage settings. All the major shows and parade of troupes were held at the Carnival City.



*Carnival 1964 (Photo by Joseph Seaton)*

The early years of Carnival saw the assemblage of lots of cloth, shiny materials and cardboard fashioned into headpieces and body suits worn by the masqueraders. In the sixties, the historical band "Pageant of Sienna" featured Roman helmets, herald crowns, herald trumpets, and Roman breastplates made from copper and brass by Frank Agard, a metal craftsman living at the Point.

The seventies ushered in the wire bending skills of craftsmen, as wire was bent and formed into a design and covered with shiny materials and beads. Styrofoam, sponge, and glitter added to the array of materials.

*(Continued on page 5)*



### **Carnival History** *(Continued from page 4)*

The eighties introduced manufactured items as aluminum and fiberglass rods. Bigger costumes were being made; poles were attached to the frames to which materials were added resulting in a fan-like shape.

The Transition of Costuming Cost - In 1957, Gloria White was crowned Carnival Queen. Her costume entitled "Traffic Cop" was designed and made at a cost of EC\$150 by E.T. Henry.

In 1991 Jacinta Osborne was crowned Carnival Queen wearing the costume "The Jewel of the Peacock" designed and made at a cost of nearly EC\$5,000 by Allister Thomas.

Live on Carnival!



### **Dying to Better Themselves**

Olive Senior (UWI Press 2014)

*A book review by Janice Augustin*

The title of this book is indeed a conundrum. How can people die in order to better themselves? The title draws the reader's attention to the book which presents 416 pages of excellent information and evidence of sound historical research. Olive Senior has given us a Caribbean master piece.

Teachers in secondary schools will remember Senior's collection of short stories (*Summer Lightning*) for the CXC English B syllabus, but this

book shows the writer in a new light. She chronicles the experiences of Caribbean people going to work on the construction of the Panama Canal, particularly in the American phase 1904-1914.

The cover illustration of three West Indian men operating a compressed drill, draws the would-be reader in, and having flipped through the Contents and Preface, the book cannot be cannot be put down. The story of the unbelievable suffering of West Indians from the British islands is a sad one, and another illustration of man's inhumanity to man. The quotation from West Indian Prince George Green, referring to his days as a construction worker ("silver") on the Panama Canal (page v) sums it up:

*"The construction worker gave everything he possessed to the U.S. Government; in regards of work, we worked in rain, sun, fire, gun powder, explosions from dynamite; in house and outside, we had to be hiding for our lives , Yellow Fever, bad water, long hours, in some jobs, no overtime, ten cents an hour, but our interest was to see the canal finish cause we came here to build it. You see most of us come here with the same Spirit as a Soldier going to war."*

The statistics for 1908 on page 246 shows 634 Antiguan in the Zone, with 533 actually working for the Isthmian Canal Commission (ICC) and the Panama Rail Road (PRR). By 1912, the figure for Antiguan on the Canal Zone was 879 (706 men and 173 women). Who were these persons, and could any information be available? One hundred and three years have passed.

But sure enough, with the usual Antiguan kindness, names were recalled. Though this list is short, it is a beginning. Perhaps readers of this review will be able to help the Museum to actually open a register of persons who went to build the Panama Canal.

**James Leonard Carrott and Alice Carrott** nee Jeremiah had three sons born in Panama –Michael Robert b1910; James b 1912; Bradley b 1913.

*(Continued on page 6)*

**Carnival History** *(Continued from page 5)*

**Joseph Kentish and Frances Frederica Sophia Kentish nee Joseph** had several children born in Panama

**Samuel Nicholas** of Old Road (made two trips to Panama)

**Benjamin Roberts** known as Bennie of Old Road

**Mary Sealy** of Johnson's Point; went to the US later. Died 26 December 1962 in the US

Mr. Dennis Nicholas, son of Samuel Nicholas, remembers several stories which his father told him about working on the Panama Canal. First of all, the owners of the sugar factory here in Antigua were not happy that so many young men were leaving for Panama, so the workers had made up a song –

*White man need not fret,  
Down to Panama we bound.*

In other words, nobody could stop those who wanted to leave for Panama.

On arrival in Panama, Samuel was alert to observe someone trying to steal Bennie's bags, and shouted a warning. Eventually they had to join a long line to be allotted jobs. When Sammy eventually got up to the table where the officials were processing the new arrivals, the white man looked at Sammy's tools and said: "*New saw, new plain, new square, and a new man!*"

Sammy was told to have a seat, and later was given a letter to take to a recruiter. Of course Sammy opened the letter before he reached the recruiter and it read, "Take this guy on to work, and if he doesn't give you satisfaction, fire him like hell."

Little did the writer of the note know that Sammy Nicholas was a first class builder from Old Road. The rafters in the Moravian church in Old Road still have the posts placed there by Sammy Nicholas. Dennis Nicholas also explained that Bennie remained in Panama much longer than his father. In

fact when Bennie returned he met Dennis as a young boy. Bennie had picked up the habit in Panama of greeting friends with the phrase, "Hi Mike!" And so, even today, older folks in Old Road use that greeting, "Hi Mike."

Olive Senior's book has certainly provided an opportunity for us to revive certain aspects of the history of Antigua and Barbuda, and for that we are grateful. If anyone would like to send information no matter how small about Antiguans and Barbudans in Panama, please take your notes to the Museum on Long Street, or you can send them by email. The address is on the back page of this newsletter.

Thanks to the following persons who provided information on Antiguans in Panama, and those who helped to trace families: Mrs. Carrott and Ms. Brenda Carrott, Mr. Ken Kentish, Mrs. Lila Simon, Mrs. Val Henry, Dr. Ermina Osoba, Mr. Dennis Nicholas and Mrs. Josephine Harrigan, Mrs. Irma Mathurin, Mrs. Phyllis Edwards, Mrs. Carmen Benjamin.

## REGIONAL NEWS

Opening of the world's largest slavery memorial in Guadeloupe, FWI.



France's President François Hollande inaugurated the largest slavery memorial in the world on the French Caribbean island of Guadeloupe on May, 10th.

*(Continued on page 7)*

## Regional News *(Continued from page 6)*

US black rights activist Angela Davis was to be awarded the freedom of the former slave port of Nantes during France's day to commemorate the slave trade and its abolition.

The Caribbean Center for the Expression and Memory of the Slave Trade and Slavery, known as the Memorial Act, was inaugurated in the city of Pointe-a-Pitre in the presence of Caribbean officials and the heads of state of Senegal, Mali and Benin — all former French African colonies.

The 77,000 square-foot (7,153 square-meters) complex is worth 83 million Euros (\$93 million) and has a symbolic black facade, representing the millions of victims of slavery. The permanent exhibition, which is due to open to the public in July, illustrates the history of slavery through hundreds of documents and objects.



Local authorities expect some 150,000 visitors per year to the memorial, which is meant to “contribute toward healing wounds of the past” according to the president of the Regional Council of Guadeloupe, Victorin Lurel.

<http://www.memorial-acte.fr/home-page.html>

## Conservation and Preservation Workshop

*By Myra Dyer*

The National Archives of Antigua and Barbuda organized a conservation and preservation workshop in which museum staff of the research department attended for a number of weeks. This training course was to educate in the conservation and preservation of books, newspapers, and fragile documents stored in a museum/archives, and the do's and don'ts of how they are to be stored as well. Staff was also given a tour of the archives where they kept different documents and photographs were kept in separate rooms. Documents such as baptismal records, birth papers, lists of slaves, church records, newspapers ect. were well organized and kept in a cold room. These documents are old and fragile so therefore they have to be kept in a cool environment. Warm temperature tends to help deteriorate documents faster over a long period of time. Documents and books are also held with gloves, if handled without protection the acid from hands will burn the paper resulting in paper stains over a period of time.

During this training course, staff exercised repairing books and maps from our own research department collection. We were also educated on how to save any document and books which got completely wet, so in case of a flood/water leakage of some sort documents can be restored rather than being completely destroyed then discarded. Some of the materials in the restoration of documents and books can be purchased locally whereas some materials are purchased online. Some of the materials bought online can be substituted with other materials sold here, as long as it's suitable, for example simple Manila paper can be used in making book covers for soft covered books instead of buying book cover paper online.

An old 1788 Killian Map of St. John's (one of which is part of our old map collection) was whitened with Calcium Hydroxide (lime water) which removed acid stains, strengthened and ironed out in which now

*(Continued on page 8)*



### Conservation *(Cont. from page 7)*

researchers can have a better view of it. A few other maps that were torn were also fitted back using archival tape then ironed out. The method of stitching pages in booklet and pamphlet form was quite simple however the section binding method was a bit tricky but eventually the staff got the hand of it, thanks to Mr. Butters & Mr. Francis staff of the National Archives, who worked along with us.



**These books were sewed back together and manila paper was used to make the cover. The name of the side binding material used is called Buckram.**



**1788 Killian map of St John's cleaned with Calcium Hydroxide and Strengthened**

We the staff of the Museum of Antigua and Barbuda who attended this workshop would like to give special thanks to Mr. Joseph Prosper who organized this workshop, Mr. Butters and Mr. Francis who trained us every step of the way. Certainly this training is beneficial and we will put it to practice in our museum research area.



**These are other hard and soft cover books that have been restored.**



## Muse News

By Michele Henry

### Heritage And Its Value In Focus

*The Organisation of American States (OAS) has put cultural heritage in the region on the front burner in a big way. This article is extracted from the Barbados Advocate.*

Mrs. Michele Henry of the Museum of Antigua and Barbuda attended the workshop in Barbados in May.

During the opening session of the Interim Advisory Council Meeting of the Caribbean Heritage Institute and Network and subsequent two workshops, all under the theme 'Expanding the Socioeconomic Potential of Cultural Heritage in the Caribbean', the focus was placed squarely on enhancing the worth of cultural heritage.

COHERIT Association LLC. (USA) Representative and Technical Coordinator working with the OAS Department of Economic Development, Tourism and Culture Section, Neil Silberman, stated, "This is one of the most important Cultural Heritage projects that the OAS has attempted, and it is aimed specifically to address problems of the Caribbean region, where tourism has been, let's say, a mixed blessing; and we hope not only to encourage the protection and promotion of cultural heritage throughout the region, but also to offer the residents of the region a greater chance to participate in the identification of their own heritage and identity." Silberman further said, "The point of this two year Project is, it is the OAS' attempt to enhance every kind of value that heritage has, not just as tourist attractions, but as a real resource for the people of the region..."

"The idea of this Project is really to expand the usefulness and value of cultural heritage for all the countries of the region, and we are working on five project components, to expand everything from networking, to laws and legislation, to digital

national registers, to community heritage tourism, and to heritage education." Therefore, when the meeting of the first Advisory Council got underway, simultaneously a workshop focusing on Heritage Education was conducted.

Analysing a study of the regional courses, programmes and faculty to find all the skills that are needed in the "21st Century Heritage", in this second workshop, the point was to not only find the gaps in Cultural Heritage education programmes within the region, but also "to attempt to demonstrate how they can be filled with online courses conducted by the University of the West Indies, Open Campus, where the Caribbean Heritage Institute is to be established in Barbados.

### The Jumbies' Playing Ground

*Old World Influences on Afro-Creole Masquerades in the Eastern Caribbean.*

By Robert Wyndham Nicholls  
Foreword by John Nunley

During the masquerades common during carnival time, jumbies (ghosts or ancestral spirits) are set free to roam the streets of Caribbean nations, turning the world topsy-turvy. Modern carnivals, which evolved from earlier ritual celebrations featuring disguised performers, are important cultural and economic events throughout the Caribbean, a direct link to a multilayered history.

This work explores the evolutionary connections in function, garb, and behavior between Afro-Creole masquerades and precursors from West Africa, the British Isles, and Western Europe. Robert Wyndham Nicholls utilizes a concept of play derived from Africa to describe a range of lighthearted and ritualistic activities. Along with Old World seeds, he studies the evolution of Afro-Creole prototypes that emerged in the Eastern Caribbean bush masquerades, stilt dancers, animal disguises, she-males, female masquerades, and carnival clowns.

*(Continued on page 10)*

### Jumbies Playing Ground

(Cont. from page 9)

Masquerades enact social, political, and spiritual roles within recurring festivals, initiations, wakes, skimming tons, and weddings.

The author explores performance in terms of abstraction in costume-disguise and the aesthetics of music, songs, drum-rhythms, dance, and licentiousness. He reveals masquerades as transformative agent, ancestral endorser, behavior manager, informal educator, and luck conferrer.

Robert Wymdham Nicholls of St. Thomas, Virgin Islands, is a professor in the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences of the University of the Virgin Islands. He is the author of numerous articles in such journals as *African Arts*, the *Black Perspective in Music, Dance, Folklore, Folklore Forum*, and *International Journal of African Dance*.



**Historic Bridgetown  
A World Heritage Site At Night**

\*\*\*\*\*

**Mrs. Michele Henry with The Delegate From  
St. Lucia.**



### New Members

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

**Ms. Florence Bell of Canada**

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.antiguamuseum.org](http://www.antiguamuseum.org)

## *Historical and Archaeology Society*

July, August, September 2015 HAS NEWSLETTER, No. 130

### UPCOMING EVENTS

**AUGUST** August 8<sup>th</sup> 6:00pm in the upstairs gallery: Dr. Elaine Henry Oladale: Poet, presenting new works, and tributes to E.T. Henry and D.V. Nicholson.  
Free admission, light refreshments served.

**SEPTEMBER** September 12th in the upstairs gallery: **RAT ISLAND FORT**. Lunatics, Lepers and Rum: Multimedia presentation by Dr. Susan Lowes, Dr. Reginald Murphy and Agnes Meeker. Refreshments at 7:00pm and Presentation at 7:30pm.  
Donation \$25.00.

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

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

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