

GIHR News

2017 Christmas Edition

Founded as an online publication in 2016 in Guyana, GIHR News is a multimedia company with a global reach.



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Online Registration for all levels of history has begun.

Registration is not completed until fees are paid.

Purchase your home study package. You can also contact the Institute. Call (592)664-8477/2204759

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The next issue of Online GIHR News is the Mashramani edition.



Quotes of the President of Guyana

"What Guyana is doing is not only for us but for the rest of the world. Green is what we are, green is what we do. Our national development policy depends on keeping Guyana green. Every year we will get hurricanes and the warmer the water gets, the more frequent and fierce those hurricanes will be. These events are catastrophic and that damage is being caused by global warming. It is being caused by climate change. We are seeing frequent and fiercer storms largely because of global warming and our brothers and sisters in the Caribbean are in jeopardy. These difficulties will go on unless we change the way we treat the environment," the Head of State said.

"Guyana rejects, totally, the use of force to settle controversies between states. Guyana abhors the crime of international terrorism whenever and wherever it occurs. Guyana reassures the world of its commitment to making the Caribbean a zone of peace. Guyana remembers the victims of the Cubana terrorist attack. We assemble annually before this monument to memorialise the human cost of terrorism and warfare," the Head of State told those gathered at the Cubana Air Disaster Monument at the University of Guyana, Turkeyen Campus, where the ceremony was held.

"Awards celebrate the contribution of citizens to the common good; epitomise the esteem in which the recipients are held by a grateful nation; embody the exemplary service and high values of citizens' success and encourage others, especially the young, to emulate their elders' achievements," he said.

We are the heirs and successors of the unsung and uncelebrated 'heroes of yore.' We pay homage to our founders who established this proud, principled Party. We honour those who, today, inspired by our founders' vision, continue to contribute to our country's development.

The Caribbean, today, is fighting a war against financial ‘privateers’ to preserve the integrity of its institutions and to counter money-laundering and the financing of terrorism.

Guyana is fit to fight. It embarked on the path of passing robust regulations and legislation to protect its financial system from financing unlawful activities seventeen years ago. It passed:

- The Money-Laundering (Prevention) Act 2000;
 - The Anti-Money Laundering and the Countering of the Financing of Terrorism Act 2009;
 - The Anti-Money Laundering and the Countering the Financing of Terrorism (Amendment) Act 2010;
 - The Anti-Money Laundering and the Countering the Financing of Terrorism (Amendment) Act 2015;
- and
- The Anti-Money Laundering and the Countering the Financing of Terrorism (Amendment) (No. 2) Act 2015.

This legislation, progressively, has corrected deficiencies in the AML-CFT regime and allowed for the improvement of compliance with the Task Force’s standards.

PNCR end year- long celebration of the 60th anniversary with Gala Dinner and Dance.



Beacon Football Club walks to raise funds for GIHR 2018 Conference



The Beacon football club’s junior team, led by Coach Gordon Braithwaite, participated in the GIHR Walk-a-thon, to raise funds for the 2018 Research Conference. Participants included Timothy Thomas, Joshua Nichols, Patrick Joseph, Steffon Yearwood and, Odingo Sam.

Congratulations



Mr. Tota Mangar, Chairman of the Board of the Guyana Institute of Historical Research, was awarded the Arrow of Achievement, at the 2017 National Awards ceremony, held on 7 October, in the National Cultural Centre.

The search for oil in Guyana: Past and present



By Nigel Westmaas

But for the name “British Guiana” the title in the image above could have been written in 2016. Yet, this eerily contemporary statement actually came from a Daily Chronicle editorial published on November 18, 1930, some 86 years ago. The editorial called on British Guianese to be “oil minded” as “the first stepping stone to progress along the lines of oil development...” adding that “there is a fair prospect of the colony developing a lucrative oil industry...”

It urged “every man, woman and child” to “think oil, dream oil, and co-operate in virile campaigns with the object of inducing our masters at Downing Street to lift the pernicious ban.” The ban or restriction in question was a likely reference to the British (Mineral Oil) Regulations of 1912. This restriction was aimed at foreign companies and citizens other than “British subjects” and applied to the “transfer of mineral-oil rights and property to aliens.” No one can say for sure what prevented the exploration and development of oil in British Guiana at that time. Perhaps British geo-political caution was one factor. Then the First World War stepped in and new directions and geopolitical distractions turned Britain and other potential prospectors away from British Guiana to the Middle East. It appears from press reports that by 1930 Britain relaxed the restriction on the search for petroleum in the colony by foreigners.

A Guyanese engineer, JP Croal, who worked for Gulf Oil in Venezuela, was quoted by the Daily Chronicle as exhorting the colony to drill for oil in British Guiana. Croal complained about British Guiana’s lost opportunities and invited “public men, political agitators and political parasites, doctors, lawyers, merchants, managers, clerks, schoolmasters (who are particularly tasked to drive the idea in the heads of the pupils), washerwomen, fishmongers, and all and sundry...” to ask him questions about oil’s potential in the colony. Meanwhile Venezuela, at the time Croal was writing, was already producing oil under its dictator Juan Vicente Gomez. In fact, Venezuela had moved from producing 1.4 million

barrels of oil in 1921 to 13.7 million barrels by 1929, a gigantic production leap echoed by Saudi Arabia in 1930 where British negotiators persuaded the then King Saud to open up oil concessions. At first the cautious King Saud was reportedly only intent on pursuing water wells but was eventually convinced about the efficacy and impact of oil on the Kingdom. The rest is history.

The question can be asked, based on our present-day knowledge of tenuous Guyana/Venezuela border relations, why a Guyanese working in the oilfields of Venezuela would be calling for a search for oil in British Guiana at that time. The reason is simple. The Venezuela-Guyana border controversy was not yet re-opened. The boundary between the two countries was considered a "full, perfect and final settlement" by an international Court of Arbitration in 1899 but became an issue of contention about 1949, following the publication of a posthumous memorandum (written in 1944) of dissent with the original settlement by an American lawyer Severo Mallett-Prevost. Mallet-Prevost was the lawyer representing the interest of Venezuela during the 1899 arbitration.

The debate in the British Guiana press in 1930 presaged some of the contemporary discussions on the advantages of oil discovery for Guyana. In 1919 the Colonial Office (British) granted to Elliot Alves, the chairman of the Venezuelan Oil concession, the rights to found an oil industry in Guyana. Michael Swan, in *British Guiana: The Land of Six Peoples*, referenced the early conjecture in Guyana that oil might be found in the North West district. In 1940-41 a company called Trinidad Leaseholds Ltd made a survey for oil in the area between Demerara and Corentyne but with no success. Swan concluded that it was "unlikely that oil will be found in the colony because the greater portion of British Guiana is composed of rock which was formed by extremely high temperatures so that any original organic materials held in these rocks would have been destroyed."

But the search did not end there. In the 1950s there was a flurry of requests to search for and drill for oil, mostly in coastal Guyana. The British White Paper of 1953 suggested that Gulf Oil Corporation "withdrew their application for an exploration licence" while Panhandle Oil Canada Limited had abandoned "further exploration pending the clarification of the political situation." The political situation of course was a reference to the election of the PPP government in the same year and the resulting political upheaval over the suspension of the Constitution by the British government. The McBride Oil & Gas (Texas Company) sought and received a concession to explore for oil along the coast and offshore in 1954.

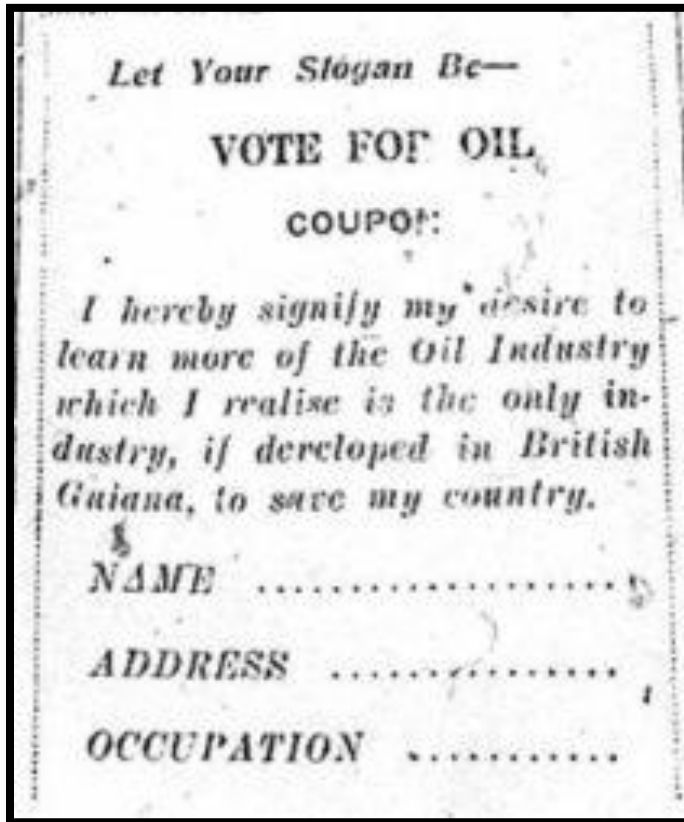
In 1958 Standard Oil signed an agreement with Governor Sir Patrick Renison to permit offshore and coastal exploration of the colony. Soviet special representatives came to British Guiana in 1962 amidst political turmoil and a raging global Cold War and reportedly found a "promising oil bearing area of about 40,000 square kilometres" of the country that was likely productive. But all the foregoing efforts to locate oil were either unsuccessful or stalled.

In 1972 Guyana closed down the Georgetown to Rosignol railway because oil was plentiful and cheap globally. Approximately a year later came the 1973 oil embargo and the cost of oil shot upward causing a global crisis; now the decision to terminate the railway appeared imprudent. Subsequent woes in Guyana and other countries proved the correctness of actively distrusting even stable commodities such as oil on the world market.

The search for oil, or the concern that oil was needed apparently returned, as in 1981 the then PNC government announced plans to establish a national petroleum corporation to supervise oil exploration and development. The minister in charge Hubert Jack told the Guyana National Assembly that "prospects for finding oil in commercial quantities were good." But Guyana's economy at the time would have been relatively free of the obsession with the search for oil as there were other "commanding heights of the economy" available. For centuries, beginning from the period of slavery, sugar stood out as the standard bearer for the Guyanese economy. Bauxite came later.

Alan Adamson, in *Sugar without Slaves*, reflects on the rise of British Guiana's (Demerara's) export of staple products between 1789 and 1802. According to him, sugar exports rose by 433 per cent,

coffee by 233 per cent and cotton by a whopping 862 per cent in that period. It was deemed the “planter’s golden age”. After cotton and coffee had withered away sugar became number one, lasting seemingly for an eternity with the moniker “Bookers Guiana” in tow. Bauxite became a significant boon to Guyana’s economy for a while but this too waned by the 1980s. Sugar has declined from its central role in the Guyanese economy over the last few decades and has for all intents and purposes collapsed. Oil has now become the new refrain of economic rescue, success and glory.



Daily Chronicle, November 20, 1930

The dream realized?

One of the first acts of the new APNU+AFC administration in May 2015 was the invitation to President David Granger, Minister of State Joseph Harmon, and AFC Executive Member Raphael Trotman (Trotman was not yet Minister of Natural Resources) to be flown to see the Exxon Mobil rig and its active work on the newly discovered area for exploration, 100 plus miles off the Guyana coast. The image of the Guyanese leaders on the deck of the oil rig was symbolic of new energy and a potentially new lease on life for the Cooperative Republic with the prospect of dazzling oil revenues. The expectations were initially placed in the context of immediacy. But with subsequent releases from Exxon Mobil and the government of Guyana some aspects of the enthusiasm were backpedaled. The reality of oil companies and their technical and economic power and leverage over small states looms over any negotiation and agreement. For its part the Guyana government subsequently announced its own priorities. The timing for the benefits accrued from oil drilling was pushed back to 2021. Reality, it appeared, had set in.

Exxon-Mobil—a tributary company of the first and once powerful global oil giant, Standard Oil—is now the de facto multinational that can facilitate incredible wealth which can either turn country’s fortunes around, or lead to ruin when the host society is unable to manage its petroleum revenues.

The ABC countries have already stated that Guyana will be “in complete control of its destiny” and that the Guyana government will be negotiating with a private company, in this case the conglomerate Exxon-Mobil. Of course, statements are one thing, reality is another. The history of the major Western capitalist economies is that they have multiple options and hidden and open ways to place pressure on governments in the developing world. Guyana for its part announced a new regulatory mechanism in the form of an oversight body to monitor the expected 700 to 1.4 billion barrels of oil at the Liza sites. The thirst for black gold is now as much in the air as it was back in 1930 when a Daily Chronicle editorial enthused:

“Black gold has made the wealth of America, it is creating wealth for the neighbouring republic of Venezuela, it has enabled Trinidad to withstand the shocks of sugar and cocoa adversity, and if the results of recent prospections in British Guiana are fulfilled it should provide more real prosperity for this poor benighted country than was ever dreamed of...”

Whatever the result of the Exxon-Mobil oil exploration for Guyana it is absolutely necessary that Guyanese from all walks of life and positions in and out of the state weigh carefully one point in the Vote for Oil coupon from the Chronicle of 1930: “learn more about the oil industry” before oil flows and money is transferred in 2021.

Is Guyana prepared for oil after a relatively long search?

Whatever the outcome for petroleum revenues in the next few years, Guyana cannot be complacent in ongoing negotiations with Exxon-Mobil and with the use of oil wealth in the society at large. As noted in other historical experiences, even very wealthy oil societies like Trinidad, Nigeria and Venezuela have succumbed to the vagaries of the international market as well as to corruption, mismanagement and misuse of oil revenues. Can oil provide the epic needs and changes that Guyana requires? Or will it, as in the case of our neighbours Venezuela and Trinidad, provide mixed or even fatal results? Will the expected oil wealth be equitably utilized or squandered in the hands of a corrupt few or mismanaged by another modern state that possesses no clue how to be transparent and fair with economic riches? What are the potential environmental hazards of oil mining? Restating what the Chronicle printed in 1930, we must become “oil minded” in both senses, that of expectation and that of caution in relation to the advent of a new lease on economic life for Guyana in the form of oil money.



GIHR 2017 Family



Mr. Roger Harper, former National and, Regional cricketer, and Head coach of the Amazon warriors, and his charming wife, Sheran are the 2017 GIHR family. Currently, Mrs. Sheran Harper is a Trustee and the Worldwide Parenting Trainer for Mothers' Union. Prior to this, she has held several other offices in Mothers' Union including Vice President of the Province of the West Indies and Diocesan President of Guyana. They are the parents of two adult sons.

PRESS RELEASE

**RASTAFARI COMMUNITY OF ALL GUYANA COMMENDS
PRESIDENT ON THE APPOINTMENT OF GECOM CHAIRMAN**

This letter affords an opportunity to the Rastafari Community of all Guyana to publicly and formally commend His Excellency President David Granger on the appointment of a Chairman for the Guyana Elections Commission GECOM in accordance with Article 161 (2) of the Constitution of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana.

We wish to remind the public of the names of the four previous Chairmen of GECOM since the implementation of the Carter Formula for the selection of the GECOM Chairman.

The first Chairman was Ambassador Rudy Collins who functioned as Chairman for the 1992 General and Regional Elections.

The second Chairman was Former Attorney-General Doodnauth Singh who functioned as Chairman for the 1997 General and Regional Elections.

The third Chairman was Major-General (Ret'd) Joseph Singh who functioned as Chairman for the 2001 General and Regional Elections.

The fourth Chairman was Dr. Steve Surijbally who functioned as Chairman for the 2006, 2011 and 2015 General and Regional Elections.

Thus, of the six General and Regional Elections since the implementation of the Carter Formula, five have been chaired by a Guyanese of East Indian descent and one by a Guyanese of African Descent. For our sacred space and consciousness as a multi-racial society, we urge all Guyanese to embrace the appointment of Justice James Patterson, a Guyanese of African descent. This bodes well for ethnic relations within Guyana. We are in the United Nations Decade for People of African Descent.

It is also indisputable that Justice Patterson has extensive experience nationally and regionally and will provide exemplary leadership at GECOM.

Signed:

Bro. Reuben 1st

Ras Leon Saul

Joel Anderson aka Ras Levi

S. Smith

L. Smith

Rudolph B. Williams

Jah Lion aka Randolph Joseph

C. S. Semple

I Roots

Ras Dalgettie I

Carla Correia

W. David

**The Chairman of the Board of Directors and Volunteers of the
Guyana Institute of Historical Research wish you a merry Christmas**



And a prosperous 2018

Historical records now more accessible to public

Historical records are being made more accessible to students and members of the public as the process of digitisation of valuable primary source documents continues.

Archivist at the National Archives of Guyana, Department of Culture, Ministry of Social Cohesion, Nadia Gamel-Carter, provided this update at the opening of the Archives Week Exhibition.

The week-long exhibition, dedicated to the commemoration of the Centenary Anniversary for the Abolition of Indentureship, targets secondary and tertiary students, and aims to raise awareness about the genealogical research and other services that the agency provides.

Gamel-Carter explained that the digitisation process is being done in two phases.

In 2013 the first phase, which was done in collaboration with United Nations Educational and Scientific Organisation (UNESCO) and funded by the Government of Guyana, entailed the purchasing of microfilm and other relevant equipment from ICAM Archive Services, which had installed the equipment and provided conducted training.

The second phase has begun and sees the agency digitising delicate documents, which allows it to be published on its website to increase access to the public.



One of the displays at the National Archives Exhibition

“Over the last couple of years, the National Archives have made a lot of strides not just to have paper but to have the [records] in digital form. So we do have a website ... on [which] we have genealogical research, as well as a large special newspaper collection that persons can access,” she said.

Meanwhile, Ms. Gamel-Carter expressed the hope that the members of the public, particularly students, will visit the agency during this special memorial exhibition.

“We put [on] an exhibition, which focuses on documents, records, artefacts, pictures, music, which marks the life of the [indentured servant]. Now this is important, because most persons would like to know who they are and where they are from, and you can do that in the form of genealogical research. So what we’re doing this week, we’re inviting the public to come, look through our records, and we’ll assist you in finding your family. So we have records of persons who came from India, and we also have other records available that persons could look for their African [ancestors] through their baptism records, through regular birth records and other information that we have in the National Archives,” she said.

She invited the public to visit the archives' sister agencies such as the Museum of African Heritage, the National Trust, and the National Museum, to access genealogy and other records.



Members of the public, special invitees, performers and representatives from partner agencies on Monday at the opening ceremony of the archives exhibition week



Senior Archivist, Nadia Gamel-Carter, addressing the attendees

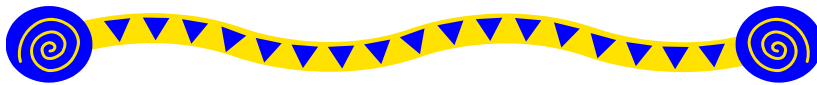
In addition, Counsellor at the High Commission of India in Guyana, Rajender K. Perindia, lauded organisers of the exhibition and noted that in addition to commemorating the abolition of Indentureship, it is important for persons to know their genealogy.

“Remembering history is a must and remembering your ancestors is of paramount importance... In this regard, what is being done by the National Archives is part of that exercise. Your ancestors from India not only brought their expertise and skills, but also a treasure of cultural traditions and art forms, religious practices, festivities and societal values.

Events such as this one will rekindle the memories of today’s generation, particularly the youth and will help to preserve and carry forward the cultural traditions of the past for the generations to come,” he said.

Director of Culture (Ag), Ms. Tamika Boatswain, Representative of the Indian Action Committee, Mr. Evan Persaud, representatives from the Indian Cultural Centre and secondary school students also attended the event. The theme for this year’s exhibition is “Documentary Heritage of Indian Indentured Labourers, History and Genealogical Research using National Archives of Guyana”.

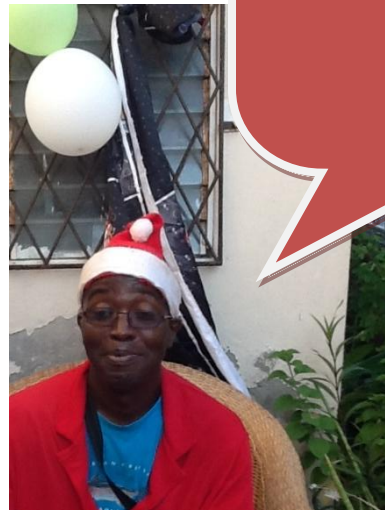
[Kaieteur News 1 November 2017]



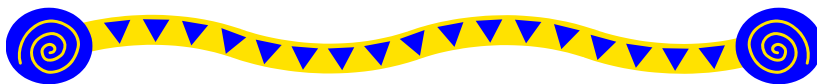
Need a gift for the children, who have returned to live in Guyana? Search no more.



Purchase KIDS History of Guyana online, from the GIHR Bookstore.



Give a GIHR KIDS History book this Christmas



Help prepare the next generation of historians



K H V S

Email address: hazelwoolford@gmail.com

From: Mrs. Hazel Woolford

GIHR Registrar

To:

YOU

Date: Subject: Donation to the annual Guyana Institute of Historical Research KIDS History School

The Guyana Institute of Historical Research holds the annual one week KIDS History Vacation School each year. This year, the Kids History Vacation School will be held from July

20-07-2018

The Institute is therefore soliciting your assistance. We are inviting you/your organization, to invest in the future of the children, and, ultimately in the promotion of the discipline of history. I am your contact person and, my email address is hazelwoolford@gmail.com

You are invited to make a donation in cash or kind to this effort. Please tick the box that you/your organization can make a donation to the vacation school:

☐

\$5,000.00

☐

\$10,000.00

☐

\$15,000.00

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\$20,000.0

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\$25,000.00

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\$30,000.00

Thank you for partnering with us in our country's most valuable asset.

Promote Guyanese History



REGISTRATION FORM.

Eleventh Conference of the Guyana Institute of Historical Research at the
Conference room of the National Library, Saturday, 30 June 2018

Theme: Up from Enslavement

☒] Mr. [] Mrs. [] Ms. [] Prof. []

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone Number: _____ (Home)

_____ (Office)

_____ (Cell)

E-mail: _____

Organisation: _____

Educator [] Post graduate student [] Researcher [] Other _____

Please submit a hard copy of your conference paper in the week of the conference for the conference secretariat to make multiple copies for distribution to registered participants. If unable to do so, please bring additional copies and, the Conference secretariat will print the extra copies for distribution.

Will you need a DVD / Video? Yes [] No []

Early Registration fee: \$ 3,000

Late Registration fee: \$ 5,000

Cost of DVD: \$5,000.

Please fill out this form or a photocopy completely and send it with your registration fee to : Guyana Institute of Historical Research, 106 Atlantic Gardens, Montrose, East Coast Demerara, Guyana.

Contact person: Mrs. Hazel Woolford.

Registration form for exhibitors.

Eleventh Annual Conference of the Guyana Institute of Historical Research in the Conference room of the National Library, Saturday 30 June 2018

✓ [Dr.] Mr. [] Mrs. [] Ms. [].

2. Publishing House.

3. Organization.

4. Name:

5. Address:

6. E-mail address:

7. Telephone numbers: (Home)

..... (Office)

..... (Cell)

8. Requirements.

- Please bring your tablecloth.
- Please bring your banner.
- Please have someone sit alongside your table.
- Please report to the Exhibition coordinator.

9. Will you need a DVD / Video of the conference proceedings? Yes [] No [].

10. Registration fee: \$3,000.00

Cost of the DVD: \$5,000.00

Please fill out this form or a photocopy completely and, deliver in person with your registration fee to the Guyana Institute of Historical Research at 106, Atlantic Gardens, Montrose, East Coast Demerara, Guyana, or on the day of the conference to the Head of the Conference Secretariat.

- Registration fee entitles participants to tea, lunch and afternoon snacks.
- DVD provides complete recording of the conference.

Participants are asked to leave the environment in the same way in which you found it.

Headlines

Government has withdrawn the 14% vat on private education, and reduced rates for parking meters.



Attorney General Basil Williams, S.C., M.P. assumes Chair of CFAFT



CFATF'S Leadership: AG's Rhondalee Knowles Turks & Caicos; Faris Al Wari TT; Adriel Braithwaite B'dos and Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs Hon Basil Williams Guyana, and working groups:ICRG and WGFI at the Marriott Hotel Guyana, on 13 November 2017. Guyana has committed to intensifying

training in matters related to tackling money laundering and terrorist financing as Attorney General Basil Williams has assumed the Chairmanship of the Caribbean Financial Action Task Force (CFATF).



Guyana Institute of Historical Research 11th Annual Conference

Call for papers and abstracts

Theme: Up from Enslavement

Date: Saturday 30 June, 2018

Venue: The National Library

Main & Church streets

Georgetown.

Registration fee: GY\$3,000.00/US\$20.00

Abstract must be submitted on or before 8 June, 2018, to be included in the BOOK OF ABSTRACTS.

Professor Emeritus Dr. Ian Roberson of the University of the West Indies (St. Augustine Campus), is the Keynote Speaker

You are invited to form a panel or/ as an individual present a paper on one of the topics listed below:

1. Language, Folklore and, Film.
2. African- Guyanese and Sports.
3. Entrepreneurship and African descendants in Latin America.
4. African-Guyanese in Private Education.
5. Power sharing and African-Guyanese politicians.
6. Race and racism in Latin America.
7. Manumission and maronage in Brazil.

*There will be two major exhibitions, in addition to the GIHR Exhibition.

Contact person: Mrs. Hazel Woolford

Email: hazelwoolford@gmail.com

Phone (592) 220- 4759

Note: Successful papers will be published in peer reviewed journal.

Jan New Year's Day

5 May Arrival Day

21 Nov Prophet's Birthday

23 Feb Mashramani (Republic Day)

26 May Independence Day

25 Dec Christmas Day

30 Mar Good Friday

2 Jul CARICOM Day

26 Dec Boxing Day

2 Apr Easter Monday

1 Aug Emancipation Day

1 May Labor Day / May Day

22 Aug Eid-al-Adha

GIHR 2018

January 2018						
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Caribbean Indentured Immigrants in Guyana

By

Allyson Stoll

Caribbean Indentured Immigrants in Guyana

On arrival in Guyana, immigrants were dispersed to plantations or hired out as unattached labor with a percentage of their earnings accruing to their importer. Costs associated with recruitment were deducted from wages. According to the 1838 Return, W. O. Donoghoe was responsible for 29 domestics—27 from St. Eustatius and 2 from St. Thomas—contracted to him variously for three, five, or seven years. R. Semple and Company contracted 38 Kittitians—field-hands, coopers, carpenters, porters, domestics, a mason and a sailor—for two, four, five and seven year stints. Semple's unattached apprentices resided "in Town", likely New Amsterdam, the urban hub of Berbice.

British Caribbean Immigrants

Immigrants from other British colonies comprised the majority of indentured Caribbean plantation workers in Guyana between 1834 and 1838, outnumbering non-British migrants by almost 2:1. The earliest arrivals were Bahamians whose contracts began on June 16, 1835, ten months after the start of Apprenticeship. Kittitians followed in February 1836, Montserratians in May, and Nevisians by June of that year. British Caribbean workers were concentrated on estates along the Demerara River, the Atlantic sea coast, and the Essequibo River islands. A small group worked in Berbice.

Anguilla

The largest contingent of 34 Anguillans was stationed at *Schoonord* on the West Bank Demerara. Twenty-nine were at *Friendship* and an equal number at *Vigilance*, both East Coast Demerara

estates. Twenty-six were indentured at *St Ridge* (Wakenaam Island) and another large group was at *Union*, Essequibo Coast.

Antigua

Antiguans included in the 1838 Return were free persons consenting to Indentureship in Guyana. While a majority were field-hands, Archibald Rowland was both sugar-boiler and mason at *Great Diamond*, East Bank Demerara. Antiguans dominated Caribbean arrivals employed in transport and forestry trades with eight sailors and boatmen, seven carpenters and four coopers among the contingent. The adult male to female ratio was approximately 6: 1 and, significantly, there were no indentured Antiguans on estates in Berbice.

The Bahamas

Bahamian Indentureship in Guyana dates from June 16, 1835, the earliest on record from any British or non-British Caribbean colonies. Bahamians—totaling 375— comprised the largest arrivals for the period, inclusive of persons from Watling's Island and New Providence, as well as Liberated Africans trans-shipped to Guyana.¹ Fifty-two Africa-Bahamians on *Greenfield* estate had survived seven years of hardscrabble existence in the Bahamas after removal from an intercepted slave ship.² Generally, the adult male to female ratio among all Bahamian immigrants was more than 2:1 but nearly equal among Watling's islanders, specifically. Africa-Bahamians were concentrated at three contiguous estates on the east bank of the Demerara, *Eccles*, *Little Diamond* and *Great Diamond*. The majority of Bahamians at *Little Diamond* were from Africa and, four months after their October 1837 arrival, 32 had relocated to *Cane Grove* on the Mahaica River (East Coast Demerara) for higher wages.³ Bahamians were also at *Maria's Lodge* and *Aberdeen* (Essequibo Coast) and *Caledonia* and *Moorfarm* on Wakenaam. The Watling's islanders were divided between two West Coast Demerara *Waller's Delight* (35) and neighboring *Bute* (4), the group comprising 21 males and 18 females.

¹ The names suggest that at least three Bahamians listed as male actually might have been female.

² Correspondence relative to the Condition of the Hill Coolies, p. 13.

³ Papers relative to the West Indies. 1841. British Guiana, p. 92.

Montserrat

Two indentured Montserratians, Richard Luther and Marcial, were at *Lima* on the Essequibo Coast by May 16, 1836. *Leonora* and *Tuschen de Vrienden* (West Coast Demerara) had 41 and 36 field-hands, respectively, but only two Montserratians were stationed in Berbice. The ratio of adult males to females was more than 7:1, among the highest on the Return.

Dominica

The first of Dominica's 14 indentured immigrants had arrived in Guyana by July 12, 1836. *Belfield's* seven males were all field-hands. Four Dominicans, three males and a female indentured from December 15, 1836 at Tinabo Woodcutting Establishment had left their employer by July 1837 after serving one year of a four-year bond. A lone woman—Malvina Richardson—was among the 14, contributing to the highest male to female ratio among Caribbean indentured immigrants for the period.

Nevis

The first of 53 indentured Nevisians had arrived by June 1836 and were dispersed throughout the colony. The largest group (21) was stationed at *Leonora* while the remainder were divided among *Mon Bijou* (West Bank Demerara), *Vigilance* (East Coast Demerara) and *Spring Garden* on the Essequibo Coast. The male to female ratio stood at 1.6: 1.

St. Kitts

Seventy-two Kittitians indentured immigrants appear on the Return with first arrivals dating to February 1836. Many were unattached, skilled forestry workers and the ratio of adult males to females was approximately 3.5: 1.

St Lucia

St. Lucians comprise the smallest contingent of indentured Caribbean people in Guyana between 1834 and 1838. The first of an all-male group of four carpenters and three field-hands was contracted on August 12, 1837.

British Virgin Islands

Tortolan indentured immigration dates to September 1836 and 106 apprentices had arrived by 1838. Most were skilled tradesmen including several carpenter-woodcutters, masons and coopers. Sizeable groups worked at *Zeelandia* and *Sans Souci* (Wakenaam) and, notably, three of seven Tortolan children listed for *Sans Souci* had been born at *Zeelandia* to parents from Tortola. Eleven indentured apprentices from Virgin Gorda—seven males and four females—migrated to Guyana with the first contract beginning September 1836. The male to female ratio was nearly equal.

Dutch Caribbean

Arrivals from the Dutch-ruled Curacao, St. Eustatius, St Martin, Saba and Nickerie (Suriname) were newly-manumitted apprentices and refugees from slavery totaling 377, comprising 241 males and 136 females. The earliest contract of indenture dates to December 13, 1836. John Jacob Gilgeous' *Windsor Castle* (Essequibo Coast) had many field-hands from Curacao including 43 manumitted persons brought to Guyana as indentured servants. Gilgeous' (also 'Gilgeons) labor recruitment ventures merit closer scrutiny. In 1836, he traveled to Curacao, personally financed the manumission of 58 enslaved persons bringing them as apprentices for his plantation after signing a manumission document in Curacao on February 9, 1837 for 27 minors and 31 adults. Later, he returned to the island and recruited 29 free people accruing a total of 87 apprentices. The 1838 Return accounts for 68 Curaçaoans at *Windsor Castle* serving five-year bonds dating from December 1836. Although the 27 minors are accounted for, several *adult apprentices* carry similar or identical names to *minors* listed on the manumission document signed by Gilgeous in Curacao. Gilgeous may have been trying to reduce labor costs by hiring minors from Curacao whom he worked as adults on his estate in Guyana.⁴

⁴ Accounts and Papers. (14). Slavery. Vol. 49, 1837-38, pp. 171-180. Compare Nos. 142, 143, 144, 146 (Smyth and Glenelg with Enclosures), with Correspondence relative to the Condition of the Hill Coolies, pp. 11-73.

French Territories

Two hundred and eight indentured immigrants came from Martinique and the French-controlled section of St. Martin. The Return lists 192 Martinicans, with the adult male to female ratio at more than 17:1, the highest for all Caribbean people indentured in Guyana. One child—a boy—was among the group. Martinicans were employed mainly in the forestry sector as carpenters and woodcutters and dominated timber concessions and the saw mills such as the Jackson & Company Saw Mill on the upper Demerara, and William Fry & Company on the Berbice River. Those from St Martin were mostly field-hands concentrated at *Sans Souci*, Wakenaam.

Swedish Territory

St. Barthélemy's 16 migrants—thirteen males and three females—were assigned to plantations along the Demerara and Essequibo coasts. No children were included and the majority were field-hands.

Danish Territories

A total of 39 indentured immigrants from two of Denmark's three Caribbean colonies—one from St Croix and 38 from St. Thomas—are recorded. These immigrants might have arrived via one of the many merchant ships bringing plantation supplies from the United States to Guyana, transiting St. Thomas. The male to female ratio was 2:1. At least 15 of the Thomians were skilled tradesmen; masons, carpenters, and coopers. Simon Mussenden, the lone ostler listed, was an itinerant apprentice. Thomas Fowers, a tailor and the only indentured Crucian, was stationed at *Great Diamond*.

Contracts of Indenture

According to the 1838 Return, indentured Caribbean immigrants were bonded for periods of service lasting between three months and seven years. Early arrivals worked under general

rules governing Apprenticeship in British colonies (The Abolition Act) until the Ordinance of 22 June, 1836 established specific rules governing Indentureship in Guyana and stipulated seven-year bonds. A Royal Order in Council of July 30, 1836 voided all contracts exceeding one year entered into outside the colony ostensibly ending lengthy, oppressive service.⁵ A subsequent Order in Council of March 1, 1837 reduced the maximum length of future contracts from seven to three years for emancipated tradespeople considered not in need of lengthy apprenticeships, and set three years as the maximum term of service for all others, presumably manumitted slaves, runaways, and immigrants from non-British territories.⁶ Notwithstanding the new regulations, contracts made prior to June 1836 for up to seven years remained valid and immigrants wanting to leave earlier had to reimburse employers for the unexpired portion of their contracts.⁷ Further, despite a ruling that employers inform indentured apprentices of their contract details, many remained unaware of the date of expiration of their bonds as was the case with a group from Curacao at *Zuidwijk* (Berbice River) in 1841.⁸ Several immigrants listed on the 1838 Return were employed apparently without written contracts. *Mt. Pleasant* (Demerara River) employed six free Kittitian woodcutters; an Antiguan and a Montserratian were there also without contracts.

Wages and Non-wage Compensation

Wages and non-wage compensation varied according to plantation, occupation, skill-level, and age and gender of each indentured apprentice. Payment relied on a variety of currencies and coinage for which relative value was determined only after complex calculations. Dutch currency in denominations of the *guilder* (or *florin*), *stiver*, and *penning* was standard for public

⁵ See Copies of all Orders, British Guiana and Mauritius in **Accounts and Papers, 1837-38**, pp. 21-22, and *passim*.

⁶ *Ibid.*, and p. 21.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ W.B. Wolseley, Circuit Stipendiary Magistrate, p. 16.

accounts in Guyana up to 1839.⁹ Paper money was in limited circulation and issue varied in Demerara-Essequibo and Berbice. Due to a scarcity of small coin employers adopted an IOU system issuing signed “tickets” for extra work that were redeemable for currency when the debt aggregated to a specified monetary value.¹⁰

Immigrant Apprentices receiving the lowest emoluments—manumitted field hands from the Dutch colonies—were purportedly offsetting the “heavy expenses” of their purchase and transportation to Guyana which cost, reportedly, between \$150 and \$200 per person. *Windsor Castle’s* manumitted field-hands earned \$3.00 monthly but its free apprentices were paid at the rate of \$5.00, or alternatively, \$3.24 (13s. 6d). *Zuidwyck’s* 32 field-hands from Curacao, also manumitted, were earning \$2.00 per month whereas their free co-workers earned \$5.00 or \$6.00 dollars monthly. The estate’s lowest wage of \$1.00 was paid to Cecilia, from Curacao, who also received clothing as wages-in-kind and may have been either a young girl or elderly. A majority of those earning \$6.00 were bonded for six years while those earning less were serving longer stints. *Skeldon* employed 22 immigrants from St. Eustatius; all had been manumitted for Indentureship and contracted for seven years. Despite having three carpenters among the group, monthly remuneration for each man was only \$3.00 while six women received \$2.00 dollars. *Moorfarm’s* Africa-Bahamians were all paid \$4.00 and given two suits of clothing annually, double the compensation given to other apprentices of similar standing in the colony. As a groom, Watling’s’ islander Adam Mark earned \$4.00 dollars a month, his compatriots Margaret, 17 years old, was a house servant and Richard Farquharson an 11 year-old domestic.

Employers sometimes promised incremental increases as inducement to retain their indentured workers.¹¹ Nine Antiguans on two and three-year contracts at *Sand Hill* were scheduled to receive, variously, between \$3.00 and \$8.00 each for their first year of work and \$1

⁹ Innes, 108-09. British guineas, sovereigns, pounds sterling and related coins, Spanish, Mexican, and Colombian gold doubloons and silver dollars, the Demerara *bit* and Portuguese *joe* were all legal tender in the colony. Ordinance 1 of 1839 established the dollar, divisible into 100 cents, as standard legal tender ending usage of Dutch currency for the colony’s public accounts. (*Laws of British Guiana*, I, 78-80).

¹⁰ Innes, pp. 112-13.

¹¹ According to the Lists, the highest monthly wages went to European engineers, ploughmen, overseers and sugar-boilers.

more for their second and third years. Fourteen male Antiguan hired for *Malgre Tout's* coffee and plantain fields were each contracted for three years and offered \$4.00 (12 guilders) per month for the first year of their contracts, \$5.00 (15 guilders) for their second year and \$6.00 (18 guilders) in the third year. Thirty-two Martiniquan woodcutters at *Christiansburgh* (Upper Demerara River) were serving 6-month contracts and earning between \$13.00 and \$20.00. Their contracts had started on November 22, 1837 but they had been warned that their high rate of wages would be discontinued, likely lowered, after September 21, 1838. Wages at *Mon Bijou* were between \$4.00 and \$5.00 per month for contracts of one to four years. Thirty-two Africa-Bahamians relocated from *Little Diamond* (East Bank Demerara) to *Cane Grove* (Mahaica River East Coast Demerara) where their monthly wages rose to between \$8.00 and \$10.00.¹² *Moorfarm's* Africa-Bahamians were all paid \$4.00 and given two suits of clothing annually, double the compensation given to other apprentices of similar standing in the colony. The Watling's islanders on *Waller's Delight* and *Bute* (West Coast Demerara) were, by and large, 'well behaved' and in 'good' health and provided with the required food and clothing. Of the 16 Antiguan attached to *Great Diamond* on three-year contracts, eight were paid \$3 monthly while the remainder earned \$4.00. A male field hand on *Vigilance* earning only \$1.00 was 50 years old. A group of 52 Africa-born male field workers on *Greenfield* received between \$2.00 and \$3.00 per month. The women earned only \$2.00 while the lone blacksmith among the group earned \$4.00. Their three-year contracts had begun on May 6, 1837. In contrast and on the same plantation, apprentices from Anguilla—men and women who had been apprentices at home— averaged \$4.00 per month, received an extra pound of salt fish rations, and were serving one-year contracts. Twenty-two of 29 Anguillans at *Friendship* earned only \$2.00 while the others received either \$3.00 or \$4.00 each. C. Faloon's *Smithson's Place* offered very little compensation to its 57 Caribbean immigrants; nearly all manumitted people from the Dutch colonies on seven-year contracts. They earned only \$2.00 per month regardless of skill or occupation. Significantly, the estate's stock-keeper, jobber and mason received the same wages and allowances as its field-hands. Two Anguillans field-hands there earned \$5.00 each, the highest

¹² *Papers relative to British Guiana*, 1841, 92.

monthly wage paid on the estate. No clothing was issued to any of its apprentices on *Smithson's Place* and three women and two men had died there.

Occupations

As clarified by Higman (1995) problems of job definition during enslavement exist even while acknowledging the capacity of masters to know the occupations of the enslaved.¹³ Undoubtedly, employers were aware of the jobs for which immigrants were hired but it is unclear to what extent the definitions included in the 1838 Return were provided by employers, the apprentices themselves, or represent the assumptions of the Special Justices of the Peace. Notwithstanding the caveats, it is unlikely that workers deviated widely from their assigned tasks especially with compensation on an established though sliding scale. Problems of seasonality might have affected non-specific occupations such as “any/all but field labourer”, “jobber” or “general labourer”, more than carpenters, masons, blacksmiths, or coopers, for example. Further, holding two jobs may have been an indicator of seasonal employment: a “trencher-field labourer” might have dug canals during the planting season and executed other field-related work later. The ‘field labourer-painter’ or ‘domestic-jobber’ was likely more specialized than the ‘field and jobber’ or ‘general labourer’. Distinctions between seemingly identical occupations may reflect the writing style of individual justices. ‘Groom’ or ‘ostler’ was likely a semantic preference. The duties of the ‘domestic-hospital nurse’ may not have varied much from those of the ‘nurse’. Transport workers attracted a varied designation, from ‘sailors’ to ‘boatbuilder’. ‘Boatman’ was likely synonymous with ‘sailor’ and a ‘boatboy’ earned less than his adult colleagues for similar duties. A ‘sailor-puntman’ may have worked on a large river or ocean-going vessel, such as a schooner, and also on a plantation’s canal punts (barges) bringing loads of cane from the fields to the crushing mill. ‘Employed about the buildings’ and ‘doing light work’ described the duties of young children and adolescent apprentices employed in the factory buildings. Domestics, male or female, were a smaller majority.

Male occupations

¹³ Higman, op. cit., p. 24.

While the majority of male immigrants were engaged as field-laborers or agricultural workers, a number of skilled forestry and transport workers were among the indentured arrivals.¹⁴ Altogether, there were 88 carpenters, 64 woodcutters and 36 immigrants who doubled as carpenters-woodcutters. St. Lucians Belvi Martinano, Jeremy, and Jean Le Blass were carpenters paid \$20.00 per month. Their compatriot Mark Moulons earned only \$10.00 monthly but all had two-year contracts at *Campbell's Cottage*. Plantation *Zeelandia's* cooper, Joseph Johnson from St. Thomas, earned \$7.33 (22 guilders) per month. Of this estate's three carpenters, two earned \$5.00 (15 guilders) monthly, the same as its field hands. A third earned \$7.33, the same sum as its mason. Six Montserratian carpenters earned between \$6.00 and \$10.00 monthly, two coopers earned \$14.60 and \$11.00 (44 and 33 guilders) respectively. An all-male group of Martiniquan wood-cutters employed by Fry & Company at their Berbice sawmill earned \$1.00 per day, each, for squaring timber and 83 cents (2 ½ guilders) daily when they hauled wood. Fry's trenchers and field-hands, also from Martinique, could earn \$1.00 for a day's task lasting nine hours. Food was part of their compensation package but they had to find their own clothing. An Antiguan sugar boiler-mason was at *Great Diamond*, and *Glasgow* employed a Montserratian blacksmith and carpenter, in addition to an Antiguan cooper and mason. Hensley, another Antiguan, was a carpenter at *Sand Hill*. Nine ex-slaves from Suriname were contracted to *Mary's Hope* on the Corentyne Coast for a year as carpenters and woodcutters with monthly wages of \$7.33 (22 guilders) each. At *Skeldon* (Corentyne Coast), two coopers from St. Thomas on five-year contracts each earned \$18.00 per month while their countryman, a carpenter, received \$10.00. In contrast, the estate's other carpenters—manumitted ex-slaves from St. Eustatius—earned \$3.00 each and were serving seven years contracts. No tradesman on *Skeldon* was allowed any clothing.

Transport Workers: sailors, punt men, boatmen and boat-builders

¹⁴ While headmen or "sirdars" are identifiable among indentured groups from India, this distinction is not apparent for Caribbean workers.

Unsurprisingly, several islanders were employed as indentured transport workers, an important sector in pre-railroad Guyana of the 1830s. *Lima* estate employed three boatmen comprising an Antiguan and two Montserratians. *Windsor Castle* counted three Antiguan boatmen on five-year contracts. John Alexander was a 38-year old sailor at *Great Diamond* and Peter Benders an 11-year old Kittitian boat-builder apprenticed for seven years. Two Antiguan on *Leonora*—Richard Collins and John Neptune—were sailors earning \$7.00 per month. A lone groom was among the group as was an ostler, in addition to David Millet from St. Eustatius, was a 16 year-old domestic at *Skeldon* estate.

Women's Work and Wages

Indentured women's work mirrored occupations established during enslavement and earned a fraction of the wages paid to men. Two female workers at *Leonora* estate earned \$3.00 each, a dollar less than their male counterparts. Four of *Zeelandia's* five females earned \$3.00 (9 Guilders) per month but a fifth, Catherine Whitcomb, received only \$1.00 (3 Guilders). *Leonora* also employed two females from Montserrat: Isabella Williams, a washerwoman, and Frances James, a domestic servant each earning \$5.00 monthly. Margaret Wells, 50 years, another Anguillan domestic at *Great Diamond* earned \$3.00 per month. Mary Lake at *Henrietta* was "idle" but in good health and receiving \$2.88 (12 shillings) in wages, a possible indicator that she had been pregnant. While the majority were field-hands, many Caribbean women were domestics, washerwomen, and nurses and a few fulfilled two positions. Sophy, a 40-year old Montserratian was both domestic and hospital nurse at *Spring Garden* as was Caroline, 45, from Anguilla. Of the females from St. Thomas, Celia Nibbs was a 35 year-old whose position was "Anything except Field" earned \$4.00 but her compatriots Margaret and Henrietta received the same low wages as manumitted women from Curacao. Antiguan Mary Carr was a washer at *Sand Hill*; *Met-en-Meerzorg* employed six females from Curacao and eight from Montserrat were nearby at *Tuschen de Vrienden*. Significantly, two women worked as wood-cutters on T.M. Pollard's woodcutting establishment. Kittitian Felicia Fyfer earned \$7.26 (22 guilders) per

month and Juba Philla from Montserrat earned \$4.95(15 guilders). Juba was serving a two-year contract that began in December 1837 but Felicia was unindentured.

Children, Elderly and Infirm Immigrants

The term ‘elderly’ usually applied to immigrants older than 45 years though many listed as being younger were, in fact, older than the ages stated on the 1838 Return. Age or infirmity may have forced a 50-year old male Nevisian to remain on *Vigilance* after the departure of many indentured islanders from the estate in 1838.

The 1838 Return records several very young indentured immigrant children on Guyana estates. A two-year-old Anguillan child began a 19-year contract on November 1836 and was already employed “about the Buildings” on *William (De Willem)*, two years later. Six Anguillan children worked unpaid on *William*: Peggy Proctor, 14, and Elizabeth Proctor, aged 10, were employed “in the buildings” with William Proctor, eight, Esther, five, and Christopher, a two-year old, all of whom held similar posts but received no wages. Nancy Christmas, a 14-year old from Montserrat, also worked unpaid about the buildings. Plantation *Schoonord* had four 12-year old Anguillans, similarly employed. Jenny, an “Invalid Girl” at *Orangefield* received the same food and clothing compensation as other apprentices but no wages. Noteworthy exceptions were Cecilia Farquharson, a 12-year old Watling’s islander receiving \$1.50 monthly as a domestic on *Waller’s Delight* and Webster Lake, another 12 year-old, apprenticed at *Henrietta* (Essequibo Coast) was bonded for three years from September 19, 1837 as a field-hand. While Webster earned but a third of the wages paid to the adult men, his food and clothing compensation was the same as given to adults on the estate.

Daniel and Nicholas Newton—Kittitian children— were at the timber grant *Mount Pleasant* with George Newton who was likely their father and Felicia Fyfer, also from St. Kitts, who may have been their mother or a female relative. Apparently in lieu of money wages, 11 year-old Kittitian boat-building apprentice, Peter Benders, boarded with his employer James Gordon at *Gordon’s Retreat*. Six young immigrants below the age of 15 were at *Skeldon* as field-hands. Five were

Statians between the ages of 11 and 14 contracted to “to learn a Trade” in lieu of wages while receiving equivalent clothing and rations as their adult counterparts.

Health and Conduct

The behavior of the immigrants was a line item on the Return and so was their health although the method of assessment is unclear and might have been based on mere observation during the brief, occasional visits of the special justices. Generally, however, medical attention on the plantations was negligible and sporadic though legally guaranteed to each apprentice under the Abolition Act. Assessments range from “very healthy” to “very sickly” and included imprecise terms such as “Delicate”, “Middling”, “Debilitated” and “Indifferent”. Entire immigrant groups on several estates was classed broadly as “Very good” and “Good” (*Friendship, Orangefield, Mon Bijou, Vrede en Vriendschap*) and “In General not good” (*New Forrest and Greenfield*, for example). Occasionally, specific causes of ill-health are noted such as “Bad in consequence of Miscarriage”, “Sores”, and dysentery. “Intermittent fever”(probably malaria), dropsy (edema), chigoes (skin parasites), sores and yaws (a contagious tropical bacterial skin infection producing painful abscesses that destroyed tissue, bone and joints), dysentery, and hepatic ailments resulting from alcoholism are all recorded, the latter likely related to the daily rum allowance given as “an indulgence” on Guyana plantations up to 1844. Similarly, the state of health of the indentured immigrants from Curacao at *Windsor Castle* was reportedly “Good, and would continue so was it not for their great Propensity for strong Liquors”. These immigrants received the usual food allowances but had to find their own clothing. Not surprisingly, all were deemed “Very Lazy and Insolent”. Though unconfirmed, *Schoonord* and *Malgre Tout* estates provided “medicine and medical attendance” to its indentured immigrants. Nevertheless and shockingly, of an estimated 69 white apprentices brought over from St. Barts in 1837, approximately 50 had died by 1838 on *Malgre Tout* including 20 adults and 30 children. The survivors were repatriated.¹⁵ Despite being in “good” health, four of the estate’s 14 indentured Antiguans had also died. The health of the 34 Anguillans at *Schoonord* was “Not

¹⁵ pp. 32-33.

good” and their behavior, predictably, was “unsatisfactory”.¹⁶ An “Invalid girl”, Jenny, was assigned to *Orangefield* but received no wages. Anguillans at *Greenfield*, who had been apprentices at home, were declared “industrious and well-behaved, cheerful and contented” despite the fact that their wages were lower than those paid to other field workers there and no clothing was provided. In contrast, the behavior of their fellow islanders on *Friendship* was “very bad” and 31 Bahamians at *Maria’s Lodge* also showed “unsatisfactory” behaviour. “Good Behaviour” by nine Antiguan at *Sand Hill* was exemplary enough to earn each a raise in wages averaging \$2.00 per month. Despite higher wages Martiniquans at Jackson and Company’s Saw Mill, with few exceptions, were “lazy, idle Characters”. Their compatriots at *Lafraternity* received pork and mackerel rations each week, in addition to their regular food allowances, and all were “Healthy” with “good” conduct. Martiniquans at *Browshurt* [sic] got unspecified amounts of “Plantains, Fish and Rice” and showed “Very bad” behavior. Five had died since their arrival in May 1838 and another was “Sickly”. Apprentices from Curacao at *Met-en-Meerzorg* received unfavorable reviews. The majority of Watling’s islanders at *Waller’s Delight* were well behaved and in good health and provided with food and clothing.

Non-wage Compensation: Food, Clothing and Medical Attention

Even on a single plantation discrepancies in compensation were common and rationed quantities fluctuated greatly among the groups. J. Gardiner-Austin of *Friendship* allowed half of his Anguillan workers three pounds of salt fish each while the remainder got only two pounds each. All received three bunches of plantains weekly but no clothing. Their \$2.00, \$3.00 or \$4.00 weekly wages are among the lowest on record for arrivals from the British Caribbean. Male field laborers from Dominica at *Belfield* were allowed 14 pints of rice in lieu of plantains and three pounds of fish. Antiguan at *Great Diamond* were given similar quantities of food or, alternately, two bunches of plantains each week in place of rice. *Spring Garden* gave only 12 pints of rice but supplemented the mandatory salt-fish rations with two pounds of pork

¹⁶ pp. 24-25.

weekly.¹⁷ Martiniquans carpenters and woodcutters at Jackson Saw Mill earned as much as \$25.00 per month, each receiving an additional \$1.00 or 50 cents per day in lieu of food but had to find their own clothing. At *Prospect*, with 18 field workers from Curacao, two received twice the standard clothing allowance, three others received the legal minimum, while four other got only a single pair of trousers, a hat, a jacket, shirt, and blanket annually.

Absenteeism

Thomas John, an Antiguan formerly attached to *Sand Hill* (Demerara River) is recorded as absent since July 28, 1837 and had been gone for more than a year by that time. *Vigilance*, which reported bad behavior from its indentured workers, had been deserted by 17 stock-keepers—nine males and eight females—by August 1838. The mixed group from Anguilla, Nevis, Tortola and Spanish Town, comprising approximately one-third of the plantation's total immigrant cohort, likely departed immediately after Apprenticeship ended. Comparatively low wages must have factored into their decision to leave as they had been earning a paltry \$2.00 per month at *Vigilance*.

Deaths and Repatriation

Confirmed deaths of Caribbean immigrants indentured in Guyana between 1834 and 1838 amount to 107 comprising 79 males and 28 females. The 1838 Return also reports five additional deaths comprising two unnamed male Martiniquans and three other immigrants, named but uncounted, from unspecified islands. Approximately 50 immigrants from St. Barts, including 30 children, who died at *Malgre Tout* between 1837 and 1838 are mentioned but excluded from original Summary totals. The Return confirms the repatriation of 19 survivors.

Post-1838 developments

¹⁷ Comparatively, each indentured Madeirans typically received three pounds of salt fish, and one pound of salt beef or salt pork, with ten pints of rice or corn meal weekly. German and English workers enjoyed fresh beef twice weekly, in addition to equal amounts of the foodstuffs given to Caribbean immigrants. English and Scottish laborers mostly boarded with plantation managers or owners and ate at their tables. Their food costs were probably included in the contracts.

The termination of Apprenticeship of August 1, 1838 marked the end of Caribbean indentured immigration to Guyana. Thereafter, even though islanders continued to migrate to the colony for work, they set their own rules and conditions. Potential workers came to Guyana only if their travel expenses (“passage”) were covered, if they were able to work without contracts (un-indentured), and only if they were permitted to choose their employers.¹⁸ Migration from the Caribbean atrophied also as sugar prices fell and employers lowered daily wages while demanding more of their workers.¹⁹ Employers also discontinued medical care, free housing, and restricted provision-grounds allotment on their estates lessening the attractiveness of work conditions in Guyana.²⁰

Post-1838 reports occasionally reveal the post-Apprenticeship progress of immigrant Caribbean people indentured in Guyana between 1834 and 1838. Fourteen of 27 workers from Curacao were still at *Zuidwyck* in June 1841; the others had left “to seek their fortune elsewhere.”²¹ Only nine of 30 Statians, and eight of 12 Sabans remained on *Mara* by January, 1840.²² Stipendiary Magistrate W. B. Wolseley’s journal of his November 1839 tour of Essequibo notes some indentured islanders receiving the same wages and clothing as other workers, others had opted to retain the apparently preferential terms of their original contracts of indenture despite offers of equalization. Some islanders had intermarried with their coworkers.²³ Wages on some estates had improved: Richard Warner, an Antiguan at *Great Diamond* was averaging \$12 per month and several others were earning between \$6 and \$12 monthly.²⁴ A few at *Diamond* were sick with foot and leg sores but sustaining themselves by self-employment. Their work day typically lasted between five and six hours leaving the

¹⁸ No. 7. Copy of a Despatch from Governor Light to the Marquis of Normanby, 2 August 1839. (Papers relative to the Affairs of British Guiana, 1840, pp. 14-15).

¹⁹ Levy notes that wages were still higher in Guyana but work conditions were not as attractive as before August 1841.

²⁰ Rodney, “Barbadian Immigration into British Guiana 1863-1924,” 1, and Levy, 81-83.

²¹ W. B. Wolseley, “Circuit Stipendiary Magistrate’s Journal, 22 June to 1 July, 1841”, 16.

²² *Papers relative to the Affairs of British Guiana*, 92.

²³ Copy of the Circuit Magistrate’s Journal, on an Official Tour in the County of Essequibo, 30-32.

²⁴ Continuation of the Circuit Magistrate’s Journal, commencing with his Return from the Essequibo Coast, on Monday Evening, 18th November, 33-34.

immigrants only a few hours to cultivate their provision-grounds or to take up paid work, if they chose.²⁵

From the Bahamas to BG: the indentured Farquharsons of *Watling's Island* and *Waller's Delight*²⁶

A noteworthy case of the migration of an extended family of enslaved people surnamed Farquharson from a single Bahamas plantation is extrapolated from the 1838 Return. Comparing the Return with Bahamas Slave Returns between 1822 and 1834, at least 27 immigrants bonded to *Waller's Delight* (West Coast Demerara) in May 1838 are traceable to *Prospect Hill* plantation (better known as "*Farquharson's*") on *Watling's Island*. Up to 1834, they were among a group of 56 enslaved persons living at *Prospect Hill*, located on the eastern side of the island.²⁷ At first glance, their indentureship in Guyana in May, 1838 seems anomalous, given the approaching end of Apprenticeship, but there were mitigating circumstances on *Prospect Hill*.²⁸

Discussion and further research

From our own small Islands the People have been so promiscuously collected, that an Opinion formed upon their Conduct would be no Criterion of the Adaptation of the Island's Labourers generally to the Climate and Kind of Work in [Guyana].²⁹

Despite Assistant Government Secretary (former Stipendiary Magistrate) Wolseley's disparaging remarks, the 1838 Immigration Return offers instructive insight into the

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ I am grateful to John D. Burton, Professor in the American Studies Program at DePaul University, Chicago, for sharing the records and his research on the Farquharson plantation and its enslaved people.

²⁷ Of the 39 total indentured *Watling's* islanders at *Waller's Delight* and neighboring *Bute* 28, are traceable to *Prospect Hill*. Seven others, surnamed Williams, likely came from a neighboring plantation also on *Watling's Island*.

²⁸ This case is covered in detail in a separate article.

²⁹ Correspondence relative to the Condition of the Hill Coolies and of other Labourers ..., 11.

circumstances of Caribbean Indentureship in Guyana.³⁰ From the Bahamas in the far north to the islands at the southern end of the archipelago and closer to Guyana, thousands of apprenticed laborers comprising free, ex-slaves, newly-manumitted men, women and children, and runaways from colonies where slavery persisted, were on the move between 1834 and 1838. With promises of freedom before them and environmental and socio-economic pressures at their backs, many islanders departed their homelands for the vast mainland colony where labor deficiencies marked it as an emerging frontier of guaranteed work, and notionally higher wages and greater personal liberty. Migration must have seemed a boon, especially for ex-slaves and the enslaved whose existence, at best, had been tenuous and fraught with hardship. Launching themselves into uncertain climate of the immediate post-Abolition period, Caribbean people ventured boldly into the unknown with the first arrivals landing on Guyana's shores by June 1835.

Arrivals that preceded the Order in Council of March 1, 1837 that regulated indentured immigration were stifled by longer contracts with lower wage and non-wage compensation than those who came later. Generally, workers coming from colonies where slavery persisted—the Dutch territories, and the Danish and Swedish-ruled islands—were purchased and manumitted exclusively for the purposes of apprenticeship in Guyana. Customarily, these immigrants received the lowest compensation packages—money wages as low as \$1.00 monthly and little or no clothing, with the minimum of food as wages-in-kind. The Return shows this subset were assigned the longest bonds of seven years. Health care provision, supposedly a guarantee of Apprenticeship in the Caribbean, was undeniably sporadic with only a few plantation owners ensuring medicine or medical assistance for their indentured employees. Generally, apprentices earning at least \$6.00 per month were expected to find their own clothing and received food rations only occasionally. Woodworkers comprised the highest compensated group of indentured Caribbean immigrants in Guyana between 1834 and 1838. Significantly, Martiniquan woodworkers earned as much as \$22.00 per month or, alternatively,

³⁰ Wolseley later held the office of Circuit Stipendiary Magistrate in Guyana as issued detailed and informative accounts of his indentured charges.

\$1.00 daily and seem to have been prized for their specialized skills as carpenters and coopers. Contracts for Martiniquans were as brief as three months.

Generally, low wages and minimal non-wage compensation conditioned the reported conduct and health status of the immigrants as, invariably, ill-health and indiscipline accompanied reports of low remuneration. At least 84 children, 15 years and younger, are accounted for in the flow of Caribbean indentured immigrants in Guyana between 1834 and 1838. When clothing or food was supplied to children, they were already child-laborers, as young as two years of age. As with the elderly and infirm, children received very low wages, generally between \$1.00 and \$2.00 per month. Many of the youngest worked unpaid.

Despite an apparent lack of bargaining power a few immigrants coopted Indentureship to their advantage. The Anguillans at *Vigilance* arrived in September 1836 and, after satisfactorily serving a year's bond, asked their employer to sponsor relatives left behind on their island home. After being reunited, a third of the cohort deserted the plantation before the expiration of their contracts. The sponsor reportedly lost approximately £1000 expended in the initial purchase of their services.³¹ In addition, indentured immigrants seem to have skillfully negotiated incentives persuading employers to provide incremental wage increases if they remained in service and were willing to re-indenture.

Information on housing provisions for immigrants—a guarantee to apprentices under the Abolition Act—remains a conspicuous omission. Further, details on food and clothing compensation are minimal and insufficient for assessing quality of rations or frequency of issue. “Medical attendance”, another guarantee of Abolition, received scant attention in the 1838 Return. However, it is evident that disease was widespread on Guyana plantations between 1834 and 1838. *Malgre Tout* was a particularly unhealthy location with 54 indentured immigrant deaths within a two-year span. Generally, an ample food supply and good health appear to correlate. Indentured immigrants receiving legally mandated quantities of good quality food were judged as healthier than counterparts receiving less food. Employees at timber grants,

³¹ Ibid., 16-17.

among the highest paid and usually receiving extra fish or meat rations, were “well behaved” and usually “healthy”. Generally, where food was scarce, reported conduct was correspondingly and overwhelmingly unsatisfactory. The exception concerns African-Bahamians (Liberated Africans) at *Greenfield* estate who were singled out for praiseworthy conduct *en masse*. Despite receiving low wages and in-kind compensation, the health status of the group was uniformly “[g]ood” and their conduct “happy, cheerful, and contented”. Moreover, they were “well-behaved, civil, and industrious”.

Race emerges as a surreptitious undercurrent of the 1838 Return. While a majority of the indentured Caribbean arrivals between 1834 and 1838 are assumed to be black, or bi-racial (black/white), 69 “white workers” brought from St. Barts to cultivate coffee and plantains on *Malgre Tout* comprise the largest contingent so identified on the Return.

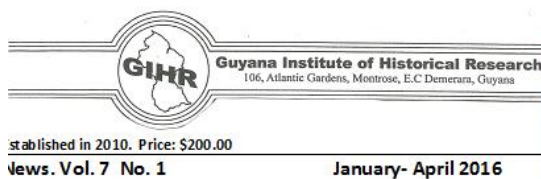
Whether the immigrants came to escape environmental pressures or chattel slavery, or both, or whether they came as free people coerced with promises of economic improvement and unfettered liberty, indentured immigrant arrivals from the Caribbean substantially enlarged the laboring population in Guyana between 1834 and 1838. Evidently, the immigrants faced almost overwhelming hardships—notably near-starvation, chronic illness and harsh punishments—in the colony whose geographical vastness and labor scarcity had tempted them as a new frontier of opportunity for greater liberty than the small islands they left behind. Whether they transplanted as groups or as individuals, as ex-slave or newly-freed apprentice, the hardy immigrants dared to cast themselves abroad on their inland sea arriving at a new yet familiar setting—the plantation—where they confronted old challenges, negotiated new lives and found new freedoms for themselves and their families in an emergent frontier.

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Linden's age-old ferry system by Dimitri Allicock. Reprinted from Sunday Times Magazine 6 December, 2015]

he town of Linden is split down the middle by the Demerara River. (Please turn to page 7)



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