The Case for Historic Preservation and Global Learning in Westmoreland Parish, Jamaica

A report prepared for the Association of Clubs by students in GBL 102: Journeys—Jamaica
Agnes Scott College

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INTRODUCTION

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

—Marcus Garvey

The Association of Clubs (AOC) serves the local community and the global community in myriad ways. Headquartered in Petersfield, Jamaica, the AOC is dedicated to the empowerment of its members through initiatives to improve schools, develop greenspace, and address socio-economic challenges in this rural part of Westmoreland parish. But the AOC also serves a global community of travelers, by hosting international students who visit Petersfield to learn about Jamaica’s history, culture and economy. And quite often, the local and the global come together under the auspices of the AOC, as these international students engage in service learning projects that are designed to give back to the host community. In March 2016, 24 students from Agnes Scott College participated in such a project, traveling to Petersfield with the AOC partner organization Amizade to conduct research for the development of a Heritage Trail in Westmoreland parish.

The goal of the Heritage Trail is to document and memorialize sites of significant local history in the sugar-growing regions of Westmoreland. Mr. Mathias Brown, the head of the AOC and chief visionary behind the Trail, believes that the project will benefit the local community in at least two important ways: first, it has the potential to provide economic stimulus by attracting visitors to the area who are eager to learn about the history of sugar production and workers’ experiences in the industry. Secondly—and just as importantly—the creation of a Heritage Trail will allow local residents to know and to value their own history. As Marcus Garvey, honored as Jamaica’s first National Hero, reminds us, an appreciation of one’s history is necessary for a people to feel rooted.

The history of Westmoreland is incredibly rich, but it is not very thoroughly documented. The parish forms the center of the Jamaican sugar economy, and its culture and heritage have been shaped by generations of people engaged in the work of planting, cutting and processing the sweet cane. The largest sugar factory in the Caribbean is located in Frome, Westmoreland, and Frome was also the site of the most important labor uprising in Jamaican history. Centuries before the 1938 Workers’ Rebellion,
the region witnessed numerous slave revolts, as well as the formation of Maroon communities. The area is also the final resting place of Col. John Guthrie, the British officer who waged battle against runaway slaves during the First Maroon War, then negotiated a settlement with resistance leader Kojo in 1739, which guaranteed autonomy to the Maroons in exchange for peace.

Yet despite the resonance of Westmoreland’s history, little effort has been afforded to preserve it. Historical markers dot the Maroon village of Accompong, and a monument at Workers’ Park in Frome pays tribute to those who lost their lives in the 1938 Rebellion. Beyond these sites, however, there is little public representation of the past, and local public memory appears rather faint. Mr. Brown and his supporters aim to reverse these circumstances by developing and promoting a Heritage Trail, and the students of Agnes Scott have been eager to assist.

The twenty-four students who participated in preliminary research for the Heritage Trail were well-suited to the task. As members of Agnes Scott’s Class of 2019, these students have been pursuing an innovative campus curriculum that emphasizes global learning and leadership development. Known as SUMMIT, the curriculum features interdisciplinary coursework related to global and leadership themes. One pillar of the curriculum is a course that all Agnes Scott students take in their first year, GBL 102: Journeys, a course that combines classroom learning about global issues with a one-week trip to a global destination to study course concepts in context. The Agnes Scott students who visited Petersfield in March were enrolled in a GBL 102 course dedicated to the examination of race, slavery, imperialism, identity, globalization and ethical travel, using Jamaica as a case study. By assisting Mr. Brown and the AOC with work on the Heritage Trail, these students were able to see their course themes at work first-hand, while hopefully providing a service to the Petersfield community.

After eight weeks of classroom study, the Agnes Scott students spent six full days on the ground in Jamaica. Four of these days (Monday, March 7 to Thursday, March 10) were devoted to the exploration of Westmoreland history through field trips to the Frome compound, the sugar cane fields, parish capital Savanna-la-Mar, Roaring River Park and Caves, Accompong Village, and Darliston. These four work days were bracketed by a day on either end dedicated to a different kind of learning: on Sunday, March 6, we visited a local beach that is popular with Jamaicans; and on Friday, March 11 we had the contrast of traveling to Negril to observe the constructed Jamaica that most foreign tourists experience.

In the pages that follow, the Agnes Scott students comment on their travels, document their learning and suggest some groundwork for the development of a Heritage Trail. We have organized this material into four chapters—one chapter devoted to each of the days we spent working on Westmoreland history. Each chapter was composed by a different group of students, and each one reflects the individual voices, styles and impressions of its authors. In addition to these chapters, students compiled a bibliography, a documentary video and a photo album. The bibliography and links to the video and album are provided as well.

As the instructors of this Agnes Scott GBL 102 course, we are exceptionally grateful to the many individuals and organizations that made this trip possible. Mr. Brown and the members of the AOC were outstanding hosts, and we offer special thanks to the host parents who welcomed us into their homes: Ms. Clarke, Ms. Hayes, Ms. Munro, and Ms. Spence. We also appreciate the residents of Westmoreland
who shared their time, knowledge and stories with us, including Mr. Justin Bakerman, Mr. Alan Kelly, Mr. Pete Manbode and Councillor Paul Wilson. Stateside, the folks at Amizade worked assiduously to coordinate a service learning experience that allowed us to pursue historical themes and they facilitated our travel in essential ways. And the support we received from our home institution was incomparable. The energy, enthusiasm and sheer competence of Associate Vice President Elaine Meyer-Lee and Faculty-led Programs Coordinator Julie Champlin helped our students to reach their learning goals and to make this trip, like all of Agnes Scott’s SUMMIT trips, a resounding success. Thank you to everyone for allowing our students—and us!—to forge these remarkable memories.

Kristian Blaich
Mary Cain

GBL 102 students from Agnes Scott College with Mr. Mathias Brown at the Association of Clubs in Petersfield Jamaica
Agnes Scott College Journeys
Petersfield, Jamaica
March 5-11, 2016

Participants
Mackenzie Adair
Kylene Alexander
Summer Bosley
Mahal Bugay
Maisha Era
Mizan Gebregziabher
Nicole Gilkeson
Kelsea Hunter
Karrie Jackson
Ajirioghene Joseph
Elizabeth Kell
Talia Lockridge
Sierra Moody
Samantha Mooney
Devin Morrison
Nathalie Paul
Brittney Pugh
Aysha Rahman
Shunty Ringfield
Laura Sato
Reagin Turner
Kayla Trumbull
Sarah Waites
Nicole Williams

Kristian Blaich, leader
Mary Cain, co-leader
## Travel and Research Itinerary

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
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| Saturday, March 5  | • Arrival in Petersfield Jamaica  
                     • Twilight Welcome Dinner at the Association of Clubs (AOC)  
                     • Meeting host families                                                |
| Sunday, March 6    | • Church Service  
                     • Afternoon at Bluefields Beach—a local beach that is less commonly frequented by tourists |
| Monday, March 7    | • History tour of Westmoreland, including:  
                     - visit to Banbury/Beckford Town/toll gate area  
                     - the unreserved grave of Col. John Guthrie  
                     - discussion with former sugar worker Mr. Alan Kelly  
                     - Frome Estate (Frome House, cotton trees, workers’ quarters, staff club, workers’ club, former golf course, grade school, sugar mill)  
                     - the grounds surrounding the Frome Sugar Factory. |
| Tuesday, March 8   | • Visit to sugar cane fields; conversation with sugar cane workers; practice cutting sugar cane  
                     • History tour of Westmoreland continued, including:  
                     - visit to Workers’ Park, site of 1938 Rebellion  
                     - discussion with former sugar worker Justin Bakerman  
                     - Cabaritta River  
                     • Visit to parish capital Savanna-la-Mar, including  
                     - Manning’s High School  
                     - Old Fort and Landing  
                     - City Market  
                     • Tour of Roaring River Park and Cave  
                     • Reggae Night at the AOC |
| Wednesday, March 9 | • History Tour of Maroon Village Accompong, including  
                     - Accompong museum  
                     - Walking tour of village  
                     - Discussion of Maroon history, justice system, community governance, national heroes  
                     - Demonstration of song and dance, using traditional instruments  
                     • Games Night at the AOC |
| Thursday, March 10 | • Visit to Darliston  
                     - Tour of Man B Museum and Culture Bus  
                     - Demonstration of mento music and dance  
                     - Demonstration of sugar cane press  
                     - Tasting sugar cane juice and local confections  
                     • Petersfield Sports and Community Club Meeting at the AOC |
| Friday, March 11   | • Visit to Negril to observe the tourist economy:  
                     - Margaritaville  
                     - Rick’s Café  
                     - Souvenir shops  
                     • Farewell party |
| Saturday, March 12 | • Departure |
Our first day exploring the history of Westmoreland was a busy one. Mr. Mathias Brown led us on a driving tour through the area of George’s Plain between Petersfield and Frome. Along the way, we made several stops, taking care to pay as much attention to the history that we didn’t see as to that we did; indeed, the theme of the day was the regrettable lack of historical markers or preservation of significant sites. We encountered a primary example of this neglect at the grave of Col. John Guthrie. Guthrie was a British military leader in the First Maroon War and is famous for negotiating the 1738 peace deal that secured independence for Jamaica’s Maroon community. His grave, however, lies unremembered and untended beneath a broken tombstone in the side yard of a private residence, where it will never be seen by the public.

In addition to the imperative to preserve heritage sites, students were impressed by the need to record the oral histories of local residents. As years pass, the time will come when Westmorelanders will lose access to the living memories of people who lived through a critical period of Jamaican history and bear immense personal knowledge of the last decades of British imperial control. The students writing this chapter were clearly moved by their meeting with 103-year-old retired sugar worker Alan Kelly.

Though first-hand experiences with slavery have long passed from living memory, much of that knowledge has been handed down across the generations, and slavery’s legacy remains everywhere in Jamaica. The authors of this chapter thought it was important to start their narrative with a discussion of slavery and the ways that slavery has shaped the history and culture of Jamaica, as well as the development of the sugar industry. They go on to document our visit to the Frome compound and suggest that the history of sugar is vital to any understanding of Westmoreland and Jamaica.

* * * * *

**Introduction to the idea of a Heritage Trail**

Travel to Jamaica has been an enlightening experience for all the students on this trip. We landed on Jamaican soil with the ideas and concepts explored in our GBL-102 class at Agnes Scott College. After more than eight weeks of classroom discussions, we believed that we were familiar with the culture and history of Jamaica. Yet we had surprises waiting from the very beginning. Our first historical exploration took place on Monday, March 7, and in this single day, we had the opportunity to acquaint ourselves with the sugar trade, the current economic picture in Jamaica, its devastating history of slavery, the education system and, finally, the realization of how important a Heritage Trail would be.
One of the leading purposes of this trip has been to discover the fine line between being a tourist and being a mindful traveler. The challenges for us as student travelers have been to discover this line and to navigate it responsibly. We attempted to immerse ourselves into the culture and history of Jamaica rather than to merely scratch the surface with visits to places like Negril and dining on delicacies imported from the United States.

Jamaica’s history and culture are rich, and on several occasions we were fortunate enough to submerge ourselves. The locals welcomed us wholeheartedly, even though we intruded on their locality. We especially learned a lot from people we met, and oral history was a prominent part of our learning. On our first day exploring Frome and sugar production, we learned history from Mr. Alan Kelly as he shared his experiences first-hand. Though born in Cuba, Mr. Kelly has lived in Jamaica for a century. He spent more than twenty-five years of his life as a worker in the Frome sugar factory and has struggled through the legacy of slavery, low wages and the difficulty of making ends meet in spite of endless working hours. Learning from him is one of the main reasons we strongly feel that developing a Heritage Trail is so necessary to document and preserve the history of Jamaica. We enjoyed his wise words and familiarities with so many aspects of his community. We wish the same experience for local Jamaicans and visitors to Westmoreland. Mr. Kelly’s age is a clear indication of his little time left, and at some point he will no longer have the opportunity to convey his stories and knowledge through conversation. We must make an effort to preserve his stories—and the stories of others—as they embody the history we have encountered on our journey. These stories and these memories of struggle enhance the information we learn from textbooks.

**Slavery and its Legacies**

All throughout our first day in Frome, as we traveled to interview different people and visited the Frome Compound, one topic was a constant no matter where we went: slavery. It was even present in the language we heard. When slaves were brought over by the British, they were forced to speak English so that the master could communicate with them. However, this imposition of a new language caused many issues among the slaves. They could not understand each other because they all spoke different languages, and over the generations, slaves ended up losing their native tongues because those born into slavery in Jamaica were forced to speak English from birth. This led to the development of Jamaican Patwa. Patwa was the language that slaves spoke with each other. It was derived from English, but was distinctive enough that the slaves could use it among themselves without the masters understanding. First developed among house slaves but then spoken by all black Jamaicans, Patwa was a way to rebel not only against slave masters but also against British colonialism. In the aftermath of slavery, when some Jamaicans were demanding reparations for all the British had put them through, the British responded by claiming that, in fact, Jamaicans owed Great Britain for the gift of the English language. However, by speaking Patwa, Jamaicans had their own language—the language of the colonized, not the
colonizer. Mr. Mathias Brown of the Association of Clubs explained to us that this was the reason why he was proud to speak Patwa.

Slaves were not only forced to speak English but they also had to eat leftover scraps from the masters’ table or other food that the English didn’t want. Saltfish was a cheap protein that masters fed to slaves, and the ackee fruit (with a poisonous exterior surrounding an edible core) was brought over from Africa in the 18th century, probably on a slave ship. These were foods the masters did not want, but they worked in favor of the slaves because they kept them strong, and slaves often outlived their masters due to receiving food that turned out to be healthy and nourishing. Ackee and saltfish went on to become the national dishes of Jamaica, and during our visit we ate it on many occasions.

We learned of the legacy of another issue that pressed slaves: they were forced to reproduce, sometimes with the masters. This resulted in a population of bi-racial or “mulatto” children, who were often favored by the English because of their light skin tone. Mulatto children were even sent back to England by the masters so that they could be educated and then used as bookkeepers on plantations. Masters often felt that lighter-skinned slaves were “too good” to be field slaves. The favored treatment of these bi-racial children and the aesthetic legacy of the preference for lighter skin has led to current day colorism in Jamaica. Some people bleach their skin, and we heard stories of intermarriage among lighter-skinned families. We learned of one community that built a school for deaf children to serve the large population of children with birth defects because of people intermarrying with their cousins in order to keep the light skin tone in the family.

The history of slavery in Jamaica is also a narrative of freedom struggles. When the slaves were fighting for liberation, they used artful tactics against the English. They relied on various forms of guerilla warfare and since they did not have access to traditional weapons, they made creative use of the resources at their disposal. One such resource was the seed pods of the Poinciana tree— or as Mr. Brown called it, the “shakey-shakey.” When shaken, the seed pods sound like rattlesnakes. Jamaican slaves would use these when traveling at night to scare away the British, because the British thought rattlesnakes were in the forests where the Jamaicans hid and they did not want to get bitten. When slaves were escaping, they would use the shakey-shakeys especially when they did not have any weapons. Maroons also used the seed pods. Maroons were escaped slaves (and their descendants) who founded their own remote villages in the mountains after securing freedom from the Spanish. When England took over as the colonial power in Jamaica, the Maroons fought back using guerilla warfare and supported themselves by becoming farmers and starting their own businesses. (For more on the Maroon community of Accompong, see Chapter Three.)

Full emancipation came to Jamaica in 1838. However, the English continued to find ways to exploit the Jamaican people and keep them economically dependent. One thing the English did was to install toll gates on roads leading into town from the remote regions where freed slaves settled. The former slaves had to pay a hefty tax when they came into town to sell their products at the market. The toll gates no longer stand today, but some local knowledge remains about their location and significance and this knowledge must be preserved for future generations.

Frome Estate

A part of understanding Jamaica’s past is in the history of its built environment. For instance, the Frome Estate is the centerpiece of the discrimination of the locals by colonizing powers. Built in the 19th
In the 18th century, the Frome Estate was known by the locals as the “White People’s Quarters.” Mr. Brown, our guide for the entirety of our trip, gave us insight into the social hierarchies that were in place during his childhood. He grew up near the estate and recalls that he and his friends would often take a shortcut through the property to get to school more quickly. However, the white people who lived on the estate would chase the Jamaican schoolchildren because of their dark complexions. Instead of fighting back in defense, the children would flee and have to take the longer trip all the way around the compound to avoid confrontation.

Another example is the Frome House on the Frome Estate. We were not given an exact date as to when the house was built but the guide told us it was sometime in the 1940s. The Frome House served as the residence of the general manager of the Frome Sugar Factory. The general manager was usually a person from abroad and of a higher social status than the local Jamaicans. The building’s architecture itself is very European-inspired and its construction is finer quality than other quarters in the area of the Frome Sugar Factory. The Frome House and its property was even often referred to as “Europe.” The staff who worked for the general manager’s family at the Frome House were often times considered privileged for their positions at the house. All of the Frome Estate was a part of the Fontabelle compound.

Adjoining this compound were six to eight cottages on a hill. These cottages were relatively tiny and had poor ventilation. The area was known as “Asia” and housed the foreman of a variety of departments; however, they were originally for the English construction workers who built the factory. “Africa” was located near the main road and the Frome Sugar Factory. “Africa” was given its name because of it being characterized as being squat and less spacious compared to “Europe” and even “Asia.” “Africa” was where the assistant mechanics and other junior staff resided.
These nicknames for the living quarters of both the locals and foreign workers offer insight into both local and global hierarchies. “Europe” had, by far, the most space and highest quality of the three “regions” at Frome. “Europe” was where the elite who supervised and profited from the sugar cane industry lived. “Asia” was not as elite as “Europe,” but was considered higher status than “Africa.” “Africa” was the only place where the local people lived. Connections can be drawn from these subtle hierarchies to colonization. Europe was the great colonial power. Africa, on the other hand, was one of the most exploited continents in the colonial era. There is no coincidence that the former colonizers of Jamaica were the same ones at the top of the social hierarchy in the post-slavery environment. The inequity among the living spaces was just one of the new forms of oppression the Jamaicans faced in response to slavery being abolished.

After the English came the Chinese. The “Chinese Takeover” happened when the sugar cane factories were leased to the Chinese. Mr. Brown recalls the takeover and the little regard the new Chinese operators had for the land. The Chinese did not take proper care of the land they leased because, like the English, they knew their residency was temporary. They also knew that they had economic clout and therefore power over the Jamaicans.

The trip to the Frome Estate was enlightening because it showed how much Jamaica’s deep roots in its dark slave history did not simply go away when slavery was abolished on the island. Based on what Agnes Scott students know about America’s history, this should not have surprised us; however, it still disgusted us because foreigners have historically been higher on the social hierarchy than those who actually were born and raised and who toiled in Jamaica. The lessons we learned at the Frome Estate disrupted our American way of thinking and challenged how we view the post-colonial landscape. In the U.S. we are taught about the insidious imbalance in our own racial structures, which are the result of the U.S.’s racial history and the fact that white people remain a majority of the population. By contrast, in Jamaica, black people are a majority, but the local people still rank on lower levels of the social hierarchy, while foreigners from places like Britain and China rank higher.

**Frome Factory**

Near the end of our tour on Monday, we found ourselves outside the Frome Sugar Factory. The factory itself looms in the middle of a grassy plain and a chain link fences wraps around its perimeter. Although the factory looks rather aged, it is still fully and critically operational. Here, Mr. Brown, who used to live on the Frome Estate as a youth, informed us that this was the biggest sugar factory in the English speaking Caribbean. Currently, a Chinese company, known as the Pan-Caribbean Sugar Company Limited, owns and operates the factory.
The Frome Factory was originally owned by the West Indies Sugar Company, which was a subsidiary of Tate & Lyle, a British corporation. Tate & Lyle had bought property and already owned land in this area for their sugar estates. Frome was determined to be the location for the central factory, replacing seven smaller factories that had become obsolete. With the report of this new factory being constructed, workers migrated to the parish of Westmoreland for jobs and a shanty town developed around this area. In 1939, the Frome factory was built.

Until our visit to the factory, many of us had not thought too much about the economics of sugar. As mentioned earlier, even though the sugar industry is so vital to Jamaica, it has been privatized by the government for foreign use and profit. The current Chinese managers, much like the English before them, seem to value product over people. They have disbanded the workers’ club and community area where the workers used to congregate and relax. Although Jamaica may no longer be a dependent colony, Jamaican workers are still shackled to the economic bidding of other nations.

The factory at Frome today, now operated by the Chinese-owned Pan-Caribbean Sugar Company. (Photo by Kristian Blaich.)

The sugar industry of Jamaica, especially that of the Frome factory, is a vital part of the history of the nation, which has an agrarian-based economy. One of the most violent and prolonged riots on the island
occurred at Frome when Jamaican workers who were undervalued and grossly underpaid confronted the deductions of their pay. In response to the riot, the police fired at the crowd, resulting in the deaths of four workers and the injuring of nine others. From these riots at Frome and other locations around the nation, labor unions were organized to protect the interests of the workers. To say that sugar is not an important aspect to Jamaica history would be like saying that cotton is not an important aspect to American history. (For more on the workers’ rebellion, see Chapter Two.)

As a result, the Frome factory is a valuable asset to the historical trail. The factory’s roots are deep within Jamaican history, starting from the days of colonial rule when the factory was built. As noted earlier, the factory has changed hands from its original English management to Chinese management, and it is important for people to realize that profits from a large part of the sugar trade do not even go to Jamaicans themselves, but instead to foreigners. If a Heritage Trail is developed and includes the factory, visitors will be able to attach a physical presence to what would otherwise be left as abstract; after all, when one thinks of a consumer product—like sugar—one does not usually consider the labor that went into producing it. By visiting the estate and the factory, travelers will be able to understand what, why and how important sugar is to Jamaica. The factory is not subtle; it stands tall and large in the middle of a field, attracting the attention of any passerby who may not be from the area. Its very presence invites tribute to the labor unions that formed from the unjust conditions of the work, representing the past and present conditions of the Jamaican worker.

*Mr. Brown describing how slaves would have operated a traditional sugar press at the Frome Estate. (Photo by Mary Cain.)*
Chapter Two

The Sugar Economy
Sugar Fields, Workers’ Park, Savanna-la-Mar, Roaring River

by Kylene Alexander, Kelsea Hunter, Brittney Pugh, Laura Sato and Kayla Trumbull

Sugar is essential to the economy and identity of Jamaica—and to the parish of Westmoreland in particular. The parish is home to Frome, the largest sugar factory in the Caribbean, and it was the site of the momentous Workers’ Rebellion of 1938. That revolt changed the course of Jamaican history, igniting a wave of protests throughout the country and leading to improved working conditions, universal adult suffrage and eventually, independence from Great Britain.

As this chapter attests, perhaps the most memorable learning experience we had during our stay in Jamaica was the opportunity to visit the sugar cane fields and to spend time with cane cutters at work. By special arrangement with the cutters, students also had the chance to pick up machetes and try their own hands at this intensive labor. They found the experience to be eye-opening. As one student remarked after our experience in the field, the work is hard, but travelers like us could put down our machetes when we started to get tired or when the sun got hot. Cane cutters who do this for a living don’t have that luxury.

After our visit to the sugar fields, we had a full day, returning to Frome to visit the Workers’ Park where we met Councillor Paul Wilson and 83-year-old retired sugar worker Justin Bakerman. Then we headed to Savanna-la-Mar, the parish capital and the port city from which sugar has historically been exported. We ended the day with a visit to Roaring River Park, where students enjoyed lush landscapes above ground and explored a network of underground caves that once served as hideouts for runaway slaves. The students who crafted this chapter report on all of these activities, linking them together through the lens of labor and workers’ rights. They also include their own personal reflections about the day’s learning.

* * * * *

Sugar Cane Fields and Jamaican Culture

The sugar cane industry in Jamaica is the longest-standing and third most valuable industry of the island nation. It is also Jamaica’s largest employer, with more than 50,000 people working in the sugar trade. This robust industry is a direct result of the slave trade and the colonization of Jamaica by Spain and then England.
Before the time of colonization, the native people of Jamaica were not interested in cultivating and trading sugar. Since colonization, however, sugar has become pervasive throughout the economy, history and culture of Jamaica. The population of Jamaica has also been shaped by the sugar trade: over 90 percent of Jamaicans are of African descent, a direct result of slavery. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, in order to keep up with the demand for sugar, Spain and England kidnapped more and more people from African countries to enslave them for the sole purpose of working on the sugar cane fields. They even cleared more land in Jamaica in order to widen the sugar cane fields so they could support the influx of slaves and create additional profit for the colonizers.

Presently, the main Caribbean countries that still export sugar are Jamaica and Cuba and many sugar cane cutters work in order to fulfill the demand. The day for a sugar cane cutter begins early in the morning, before the sun rises. Since Jamaica is a hot and tropical country, sugar cane cutters will attempt to get started on their work before the midday sun comes and the temperatures reach their highest for the day.

When in the fields, the cutters use machetes to cut tall stalks of sugar cane after the soil has been set on fire and put out the previous night. They burn sugar cane to make it easier to cut and to eliminate the unusable parts of the plant. The machetes that the sugar cane cutters use are sharp, but the cutters must use force in order to slash through the thick sugar cane stalks. To prevent injuring themselves, they cut away from themselves with one foot in front of the other. They have to cut as close to the root of the stalk as possible to get as much of the sugar cane as they can. After the stalk has been cut, the sugar cane cutter will gather multiple stalks in their hand and cut off the foliage that is at the top of the stalk. They then put the cane in rows: one row of sugar cane; another row of separated foliage. From here, the sugar cane cutter will finish the row and wait for the stalks to be picked up and transported to the processing factory.

The sugar cane field is separated into blocks of four rows. The cutters work one block at a time. Once they are done with the block, they move onto the next block. Each sugar cane cutter is assigned a different block every day, sometimes in different locations.

The pay for sugar cane cutters is based on the weight (in tons) of the total stalks that were cut that day. The cane cutters do not have set work hours. Their work day and their pay depend on how much sugar cane they can cut in any amount of time. They could work five hours, eight hours, or even ten hours. We learned from the cane cutters that pay was typically the equivalent of $4.00 USD or $5.00 USD per ton of sugar delivered to the factory, and a typical worker would cut two or three tons per day.
Cutting sugar cane is a physically taxing job that carries a high risk of injury. Although the work is instrumental to the success of the sugar industry, cutting cane is one of the lowest-paying occupations in Jamaica. Many Jamaicans view the job as a last resort. 26-year-old Chuntai is single mother with two sons, and she is one of the few women in this line of work. She cuts sugar cane in the Petersfield area to provide for her family. When we met her in the fields, she told us that her goal was for her sons to gain a good education so that they would not have to work as cane cutters when they grew up.

Workers Park and the 1938 Workers’ Rebellion

The Workers Park near the grounds of the Frome Factory is a public space dedicated to the memory of sugar workers who lost their lives in the most important labor action in Jamaican history. That action, the 1938 workers’ rebellion in Frome, stemmed from a long period of frustration and exploitation dating all the way back to emancipation, a century earlier. Leading up to the 1920’s, the working and living conditions of the Jamaican people—like other West Indians living under colonial rule—were still unfathomably inhumane. Sugar workers were poverty-stricken and most lived in overcrowded conditions, with entire families having to share one room in company barracks. The lack of space and clean water was an optimal breeding ground for diseases such as malaria, yaws, and tuberculosis. As for the quality of work,
unemployment rates skyrocketed and the extremely low wages were not enough to cover the cost of living.

The workers struggled to improve their conditions, but trade unions were illegal at this time. The workers’ only recourse was to strike and to vandalize estate property. Unfortunately, these strikes generally gave employers an upper hand by allowing them to hire replacement labor and keeping strikers out of work—and out of a paycheck. On top of this, because sugar cane is a seasonal crop, workers are only employed part of the year. This type of employment further suppressed incomes and hindered the workers in successfully organizing against their employers.

In the late 1920s, after the sugar crisis in Cuba, many immigrants returned to Jamaica, increasing both the competition for jobs and the growth of unemployment. Soon Jamaica, like the rest of the world, was engulfed by the Great Depression. In Jamaica this further cut into workers’ wages and led to even higher taxes on goods and services. The working classes had no option but to rise up. While strikes and riots took place in Jamaica and throughout the Caribbean in the early 1930s (including in St. Kitts, St. Vincent, St. Lucia, Trinidad, Barbados, and British Guyana), the most consequential rebellion was located at Frome in 1938.

In 1938, sugar workers were paid one shilling a week—the equivalent of seventeen cents a week in US currency. In other words, the wage that was distributed to the cane cutters was not sufficient to sustain any kind of well-being. Sugar workers protested throughout Jamaica, with major uprisings in St. Thomas (early January), Kingston (late January) and Frome (April, May and June). The Frome rebellion began in late April as a dispute over wages. Workers were angry with the employers due to the continuous pay cuts and went to the factory office to demand action. During the confrontation at the office, someone in the crowd of workers threw a rock, breaking a window. The employers responded by firing warning shots, which only made matters worse. The crowd was further enraged and provoked, so management called in the police to try to control the situation. Management promised the workers a higher wage, but the workers found the new offer to be insufficient compensation for the conditions they had to endure. On May 2nd, the workers rioted, and as the protest turned violent, police were sent in. Some protestors responded by throwing objects at the authorities, and in turn, the police opened fire, killing four people and seriously injuring 14 others, including one official. One of those killed was a pregnant woman, whose baby was also lost. This incident catalyzed a massive wave of unrest throughout the nation and finally caught the attention of the colonial powers.

In the strikes, riots and protests sparked by the events at Frome, property was damaged, individuals were attacked, and streets were blockaded. Eight fatalities ensued, with one hundred and seventy-one injuries, and over seven hundred arrests and convictions. Even more consequentially, the workers’ rebellion at Frome inspired the beginnings of serious movements for Jamaican nationalism and trade
unionism. National heroes Alexander Bustamante and Norman Manley emerged in the wake of the Frome rebellion to champion the rights of working people, to improve working conditions, and to demand universal suffrage and the end of colonial rule.

Learning about the 1938 worker’s rebellion is an essential part of Jamaican history, Westmoreland history, labor history and the history of sugar production. We feel that a visit to the Workers’ Park is a valuable aspect of the Heritage Trail. The monument at the park bears the following inscription:

TO LABOUR LEADER BUSTAMANTE AND THE WORKERS FOR THEIR COURAGEOUS FIGHT IN 1938 ON BEHALF OF THE WORKING PEOPLE OF JAMAICA.

Alexander Bustamante was a participant in the Frome strikes and later went on to become the first Prime Minister of Jamaica after independence. However, Mr. Brown—our host and guide, and a former sugar worker himself—notes that there is still progress to be made.

“Bustamante became a national hero,” Mr. Brown reminded us, “but the poor people, they still have to cut the cane.”

Mr. Brown recounts the story of the 1938 Rebellion and its effect on subsequent labor history in Jamaica. He is standing in front of the monument to the workers. (Photo by Mary Cain.)

Paul Wilson and Justin Bakerman

During our second day visiting Frome, we had encounters with two prominent citizens who shared their insights into the history of Jamaica. The first was Councillor Paul Wilson, who represents Frome in the Westmoreland Parish Council. Councillor Wilson met us at the Workers’ Park and told us “you are standing at the location of a pivotal moment in Jamaican history.” In addition to reflecting on the significance of the rebellion in terms of securing more rights for workers and the eventual end of colonial rule, Councillor Wilson spoke passionately about the many contributions Jamaica has made to freedom struggles internationally. He noted with pride that Jamaica was the first nation to sign onto a United Nations resolution condemning apartheid in South Africa, and that the independence movements in Zimbabwe and Kenya drew inspiration from the Jamaican example. And as evidence of the nation’s ongoing role on the global stage, Councillor Wilson cited the many official visits made by world leaders to Jamaica. In 2015 alone, seven current and former heads of state visited the island nation, including President Barack Obama of the United States, former Prime Minister Tony Blair of Great Britain and Prime Minister Shinzo Abe of Japan. “When we go out into the world,” Councillor Wilson said, “Jamaicans stand tall.”
Former sugar worker Justin Bakeman offered us a more local perspective on Jamaican history. We visited the 89-year-old at his home near Frome. Over a long life, he held many jobs in the sugar industry: working in the fields, planting cane, cutting cane, driving the tractor, working in the factory. Mr. Bakeman told us that he worked with heavy equipment in these various capacities and he impressed upon us the danger of the work. Every day is really dangerous, he said, because the equipment can cause severe injuries and even death. He also lamented the loss of a sense of community among sugar workers, symbolized by the closure of the workers’ club under the current management. “When I was there, it was better than now, from what I hear and understand,” he said. Mr. Bakeman came of age shortly after the 1930 rebellion and worked in the sugar industry during the exciting years around decolonization. Now, like many Jamaicans we met, he sees the arrival of new foreign corporate interests (like the Chinese-owned Pan Caribbean Sugar Company which operates Frome) as disadvantageous for the local people.

**Cabaritta River**

The Cabaritta River is the main source of fresh water for the people of Westmoreland. It is the longest and largest river in Westmoreland. It leads to the caves and is used for irrigation of the sugar cane fields. Hence, Westmoreland is often referred to as the “Wet West.” Historically, the river has been the lifeblood of the region. People have bathed in the Cabaritta River and they do their laundry there if their homes do not have running water. Before the installation of modern plumbing in houses in the 1940s and 1950s, women brought tubs on their heads to the river to wash themselves and their clothing. The river is an important source of water for the economy, culture and daily lives of the Jamaicans who live in Westmoreland.
Manning’s High School

Throughout our exploration of the sugar industry and the labor history of Jamaica, we repeatedly encountered the theme of education. From Chuntai, the young woman who cuts cane to support her children, from the octogenarian Mr. Bakerman, and from our hosts in Petersfield, we heard consistently about the importance of education as the way forward for subsequent generations of Jamaicans. Education is very important to the people of Jamaica, because it paves the way to economic opportunity, opening the door to higher wages and better working conditions.

One of Jamaica’s most prestigious high schools is located in Westmoreland Parish: Manning’s High School Savana-la-Mar. Manning’s is the second oldest school on the island. In 1711, English planter Thomas Manning bequeathed a gift of land and resources for the financing of a school on the western part of the island. Originally an institution for the education of white children, Manning’s now admits all children on a competitive basis and it remains known as one of the best secondary schools in all of the Caribbean.

Old Fort and Landing in Savanna-la-Mar

Savanna-la-Mar is the chief town and capital of Westmoreland Parish, Jamaica. Construction of a fort on the waterfront began in the 18th century, but the structure was never completed. Nowadays all that remains is the shore-side outer wall and the partly submerged shell of the structure; much of the outer wall has fallen into the sea. Also in ruins is the old landing, where processed sugar was loaded onto vessels for export to all parts of the world.

Near the Old Fort is a commercial district and market for local Jamaicans. When we visited the market, we saw people selling produce, clothing and household items. This is an example of self-employed workers in Jamaica selling products that they produced.
Roaring River and Caves

Of all of the locations of the Heritage Trail, the Roaring River and Caves allowed us the most opportunity to enjoy a natural landscape. At Roaring River Park, we were met by scenery filled with vibrant blues and herbal greens. The cotton tree, the water lilies, the herbs, the fish in the river, everything contributed to Roaring River’s essence of life. . . take a calming stroll along the river, gaze at the enormous cotton tree, take a swim, or even venture into the cave. If you’re looking to de-stress and find some peace, the Meditation Room is a great place to do so. With no distractions in this dark, quiet area within the cave, one has the ideal space to meditate. If spiritual healing is what you need, you can go to the Repair Room to pray. If perhaps your wounds are physical instead of spiritual, you can pay a visit to the Healing Pool to soak and allow the mineral water to heal your wounds. Perhaps healing is not on your agenda but instead you seek a nice informative tour. If this is the case, your tour might be guided by Deavon. He will guide you through the cave, leading you through every cranny because there is always something to be pointed out. He will show you the turtle, fish, and horse that have been carved into the cave over the years. He will let you sit in the Healing Pool, test your swimming abilities in the Swimming Pool, take you to the Repair Room, and meditate with you in the Meditation Room. He will show you the candles that locals leave in the cave, an old tradition that they say “keeps the good spirit with you.” Deavon will gladly take you to the Music Room as well, where he’ll play a song for you using the hollow walls of the cave, a stick, and a can.

Roaring River Park and Caves is a great example of nature at its finest. However, there is more to Roaring River than just natural beauty. Deavon told us about the different communities that get their water from Roaring River. He also taught us about the medicinal herbs used to heal heartburn, diabetes and blood
pressure, and about how the local people make teas and juices with tea leaves and fruits grown in along the banks. Together, both the Roaring River and the Caves create a unique destination on a list of many.

When thinking about Roaring River’s significance to Jamaicans and the Heritage Trail we can see that it is a symbol, representing an aspect of Jamaican culture. We can see some of the many beliefs Jamaicans hold or have held in the past. The belief of healing is a common theme in Roaring River and Caves. Whether you consume the medicinal herbs, calm yourself in the Meditation Room, or take a dip in the Healing Pool, you will restore some aspect of yourself inside or out. Roaring River also gives a glimpse of the spiritual beliefs of Jamaicans—beliefs that are held outside of traditional church. You can see these beliefs through the prayers made in the Repair Room, through the mindfulness practiced in the Meditation Room, and through the candles left in the caves.

Though our guide Deavon did not talk a lot about the significance of the caves at Roaring River to the history of slavery, we also know that these rare underground formations provided safe have for slaves who were running away from the sugar plantations in the area. With their hidden entrances, the caves provided an ideal hideout for people in flight. Now, in the 21st century, in addition to the emotional, spiritual and physical healing the caves provide, the Roaring River community also depends on the park to attract tourists for economic sustenance.

**Students’ Personal Reflections**

**Kylene Alexander:** Roaring River and Caves was one of our most interactive tours we took in Jamaica. Instead of reading about it we were able to see the river and medicinal herbs, go inside the caves, swim in the Healing Pool, meditate in the Meditation Room, and swim in the and the river. What I enjoyed most about Roaring River and Caves was that it allowed me to see a different side of Jamaica. In class and on our tours to the Workers Park and to the sugar cane fields we would learn about the struggles of Jamaican workers. Roaring River and Caves focused on anything but the workers and I appreciated that we could learn about a different side of Jamaica, a side filled with nature and spiritual beliefs. Because Roaring River was so interactive and provided a nice change of pace in the Heritage Trail, I think it should be a regular destination for travelers, and Jamaicans who don’t live in the area. Travelers could get a new insight on the way of life for many, but not all, Jamaicans. Roaring River and Caves can be a
place that Jamaicans from other areas, and travelers if they would like, come to visit when they themselves seek to meditate, pray, and heal themselves.

**Kelsea Hunter:** Jamaica is one of the best experiences while attending Agnes Scott. Jamaica opened my eyes to different cultures and to have the opportunity to meet some amazing people in Jamaica. It was such a mind-blowing experience because even though Jamaica is a different country I still found myself relating to things I have common with many Jamaicans. The history trail is great because we don't really learn history of Jamaica and the struggles the country had trying to establish itself. I loved going on the history trail because we saw real people and places that was affected by slavery. I want to thank Agnes Scott and the people who help make this a requirement, and to experience it. I will remember that for the rest of life.

**Brittney Pugh:** We had the wonderful opportunity to visit a sugar cane field and experience firsthand how sugar cane is cultivated. It showed me how difficult this form of manual labor is and shed light on the pay inequality that seems to be prominent in the sugar cane industry. It also showed me a small fraction of what the slaves who were forced to do this work experienced; the hot sun, the constant cutting from the early hours of the day and well into the darkness of night.

**Laura Sato:** The trip was an extraordinary experience. Visiting all of these places was incredible and showed me a wide range of the history and the lifestyle of the working class in Jamaica. I found that the sugar cane fields were the biggest eye-opener for me. In class, we have spoken about the process of cutting sugar and processing it. However, being able to experience first-hand was really amazing. I was able to experience something that I had only been able to read and hear about. I also thoroughly enjoyed being able to visit Roaring River and Caves. Being able to learn about these places allowed for me to learn the culture of the working people of Jamaica. It also allowed for me to personally bond with many of my peers on the trip. Visiting Jamaica has not only taught me about the history and culture of Jamaica but also allowing me to find myself.

**Kayla Trumbull:** Visiting Jamaica was an extraordinary experience. Not only did I get to visit totally new and beautiful places, but I also got to learn about the rich history inside the country as well. The people by far were the best kind of human beings I’ve ever been around, and I certainly do believe that kindness and generosity is native to their culture. This trip was definitely an amazing one due to the fact that I could witness and exchange experiences from and with other people outside my own country. The fact that I even got such a fantastic opportunity to learn about such an amazing culture and country makes me extremely happy. On top of which, this trip helped to expand my horizons with new things and be more receptive to different ways of life.

*The Roaring River. (Photo by Mackenzie Adair.)*
Chapter Three
History and Tourism in a Maroon Village
A Day in Accompong

by Karrie Jackson, Sierra Moody and Samantha Mooney

In their classroom-based work at Agnes Scott College, these students have been learning about the themes of race, slavery, imperialism, globalization, identity and ethical travel. We pursued experiential knowledge of these themes while on the ground in Jamaica, and nowhere were they more evident to us than in Accompong. Our visit to the Maroon community was a highlight of our journey. We spent a day there exploring Maroon history and customs, touring the village and enjoying music and dance performances. Students were struck by Accompong’s palpable ties to the African past and by the fierce sense of identity and community that the residents exhibit.

In the pages that follow, student authors examine the history of Accompong and the distinctive place of Maroon identity within Jamaican culture. The students also reflect on heritage preservation in Accompong, expressing appreciation for the way community members value and commemorate their history. At the same time, the authors caution against the forces of commercial tourism, noting the fine line between authentic preservation and the generation of revenue.

*   *   *   *   *

On Wednesday, March 9th, halfway through our stay, our group visited Accompong, one of the earliest and largest Maroon communities in Jamaica. The day trip to Accompong was the centerpiece of our study of how different historical forces have affected Jamaican culture and identity. Our goal was to encourage and foster preservation in Jamaica by establishing a historical trail for the willing tourist. In order to do so, we discovered that there needs to be a form or balance, between history and the tourism industry. Interestingly, this relatively quiet village in the mountains had the best examples of historical preservation from the entire week. Not only does it offer great historical value, but it also has a rich connection with African culture which is less apparent in other parts of Jamaica.

Accompong is situated in the Cockpit Country, a region marked a unique quirk of geography featuring indentations in the mountains that leave isolated pockets that are difficult to access. This area is divided by large hills and ridges. Hundreds of years ago, escaped slaves used the Cockpit Country to establish communities outside the control of imperial powers, such as Britain and Spain. The slaves had to walk up the entire mountain
for several miles to get to these Accompong, even without extensive knowledge of the area. The inaccessibility of the area and its remoteness from other townships served as a critical component of defense.

Maroon communities in Jamaica are split into two sections—the windward and the leeward—based on location in relation to the rest of the island. The Leeward Maroons are located in the western portion of Jamaica, and Accompong is within this subgroup along with Trelawney Town. The Windward Maroon communities are on the eastern half of the island and consist of Moorestown, Charlestown, St. Thomas, and Nannytown. Kojo (also known as Cudjoe), the famed leader and colonel of the Maroons, divided the leadership of these areas up among his most loyal followers, but continued to lead Accompong by himself. Nanny of the Maroons, Kojo’s sister, is one of the most noted figures in Jamaica, and her image alongside that of her brother appears all over Accompong and throughout Jamaica. Nanny was a brilliant tactical leader and resistance fighter and was given control of the Blue Mountain terrain.

Residents of Accompong performing traditional music and dance, in front of a mural depicting National Heroes Kojo and Nanny. (Photo by Reagin Turner.)

Today Accompong exists as a small farming community of 1,500 people, though more than 50,000 descendants can trace their lineage to the town. The houses are brightly painted with traditional African colors, and community lands extend for over twenty miles towards the Black River. The inhabitants are considered an indigenous population and do not pay tax. Ferring William is current community leader or “colonel.”

Accompong’s Early History

Accompong was founded by slaves who helped the Spanish to hold out against the British takeover of Jamaica in 1655. Most had escaped during the chaos that occurred during the five years of fighting between the two imperialist powers, and though the British attempted to force the freed slaves back into oppression, they resisted. These communities represented a significant danger to British interests in manufacturing sugar, as plantation slaves could flee and seek refuge or be encouraged to incite
rebellion. Thus began more than fifty years of guerrilla warfare between the two sides. Led by Colonel Kojo, Accompong quickly became a flourishing center for the resistance.

The craftiness of the Maroon fighters was undeniable. In some cases, they often used natural resources to combat the British. For example, the *Mimosa pudica*, or more colloquially referred to as the shy plant, grows in shaded areas and closes upon being touched. As Accompong is in the mountains and the area is guarded heavily by trees and greenery, the shy plant was an excellent marker for tracking activity. This made it easy for resistance fighters to identify when the British were preparing or mounting an attack. According to Richard Price, “To the bewilderment of their European enemies, whose rigid and conventional tactics were learnt on the open battlefields of Europe, these highly adaptable and mobile warriors took maximum advantage of local environments, striking and withdrawing with great rapidity, making extensive uses of ambushes to catch their adversaries in crossfire, fighting only when and where they chose, depending on intelligence networks among non-Maroons (both slaves and white settlers).” (Heuman)

Accompong was one of the first Maroon communities to stage a successful battle against the British in a conflict known as the First Maroon War. Not only was this conflict a significant drain on resources for the British, both physically and financially, but it also prevented the cultivation of more valuable land. On January 6th, 1739, the residents of Accompong and the British signed a peace treaty in what is now referred to as the Peace Cave. This accord acknowledged the independence of Accompong and other westward Maroon communities as sovereign states, free from British rule and policed by local leaders. The Maroons received a tract of land that spanned 1500 acres, northwest of Trelawney Town. In return, Accompong and other westward communities agreed not to accept refugee slaves in the future and to fight alongside the British if called upon to do so. Moreover, the Maroon communities were supposed to return runaway slaves to the Chief Magistrate of the Parish, and would even be compensated for their trouble. (Jamaican National Library)

**Sense of Community**

One recurring element that has flourished from the time of the town’s origins into the present is a unique sense of community. One example is the Kindah tree, a large mango tree planted towards the edge of the town, is where Kojo and other leaders plotted battle plans against the British. Nowadays, it symbolizes the African word for which it is named (“kindah” meaning “one family”), and many elders are buried there, including Kojo himself about three-quarters of a mile away. Villagers today celebrate local rituals under the trees, cooking wild boar, chicken and birds in the traditional way without any seasoning except pimento leaves; villagers claim that this spice along with smoke, is the secret to a good jerk. (Residents of Accompong eschew salts and spices in ritual cooking because, aside from pimento, no seasonings were available to the earliest runaway slaves who had to fend for themselves in the remote mountain terrain.) Kojo and other ancestors are honored annually in elaborate ceremonies. Unfortunately, the location of Old Trelawney Town is currently under water, but food is always taken there during Independence Day to pay tribute to that community’s achievements.
It is undeniable that the inhabitants of Accompong feel strongly connected to their African lineage, and because of Accompong’s historic isolation, residents have been able to preserve more of their ancestors’ African identities than other Jamaicans. There are three separate graveyards in Accompong, one each for descendants of the Ashanti, the Congolese and the Coromantee. All three graveyards are united, however, by their common practice of using trees as headstones. In the early days, Croton, Dragon’s Blood, Color Brush and Crab Apple trees were used as grave markers, and the graves were very deep—some were more than six feet down, due to concerns about wild animals. Nowadays, the graves are rather shallow at around 42 inches. Upon death, regardless of tribal affiliation, the abeng horn is blown and the entire community comes together to mourn.

The abeng is a traditional horn instrument that serves as a symbol of the Maroon people. The abeng is sounded by village leaders to summon the community, to warn of attack, to celebrate rituals and to mourn the dead. One abeng at Accompong is more than 400 years old. The instrument is derived from African tradition and not only binds the Maroon community together, but has been adopted as an emblem of Pan-Africanism by people throughout the African Diaspora.

**Criminal Justice**

Accompong’s sense of community is also demonstrated by its exceptionally low crime rate. Though the nation of Jamaica struggles with the problem of violent crime, only two murders have been committed in Accompong in the past thirty-five years. In accordance with the peace agreement of 1739, Accompong is self-policing and operates a village judicial system. Traditionally, punishments for minor offenses consisted of whipping with cat-o-nine-tails, with justice meted out at the old parade grounds where soldiers were trained. In 1950, however, the new school was constructed on that site, and nowadays punishments usually consist of fines or community service. In the rare cases of violent crime (murder and rape) the Accompong authorities turn suspects over to the “outward government” of the surrounding parish. As our tour guide put it, most inhabitants of Accompong are cousins and are also descended from the deceased royal family. This sense of interconnectedness makes it challenging to stay angry at anyone as technically they are all related.

**History vs. Tourism**

With its museum, historical markers, heritage sites and tributes to national heroes, Accompong contains a rich history that is beneficial for travelers and the local Jamaicans alike. There is strong sense of historical and ancestral appreciation within the community. Their history is passed down in different forms, such as oral traditions, living memory, and heritage sites. Murals depicting national heroes are painted on village walls for all to see, a constant reminder of the past and where Accompong has come from. Memorials commemorate individuals who played a key role in the community. Interestingly, these memorials pay tribute not just to figures from the distant past,
but also from recent memory as well; one wall honors significant heroes from the 20th century. Tourists can carry from Accompong a richer appreciation for Jamaican history, while visitors from other parts of Jamaica can leave with a whole new perspective on their ancestors’ history. A strong sense of identity comes from knowing one’s history and how one fits into it, from having a narrative which is familiar and welcoming and well-known. Yet much of Accompong is unfamiliar to many Jamaicans; most typically Jamaican schoolchildren are taught history from the British perspective, which can serve to impair a sense of Jamaican national identity. In contrast, Accompong stands as an example of living, tangible history.

Accompong clearly contains many riches; however, the village is also characterized by a strong competing desire that threatens to override the visitor’s appreciation of history. That competing desire, that threat, is tourism. Our group noticed the conspicuous exchange of money before the performance of traditional music, and while it only towards the end of the tour, we also felt extremely pressured to buy souvenirs. While it’s understandable that Accompong has to make money so that the community can continue to thrive, this commercial, capitalistic approach could be different and not forced on visitors.

Accompong is enlightening in many different ways, however the reaction from our group was somewhat mixed. We each enjoyed the history and the community’s emphasis on heritage and preservation. Indeed, we believe that Accompong sets a profound example of historical preservation for other Jamaican communities. However, we are conflicted about Accompong’s blatant approach to tourism. While some of us found it to be less overt than at other tourist destinations—such as Negril—others found it rather disturbing and thought it risked swallowing up the emphasis on history. Regardless, Accompong’s historical value and African connections are meaningful to all and even gave some of us the sense of coming home.
Works Cited


Chapter Four

Attempts to Preserve History

A Visit to Darliston

by Mizan Gebregziabher, Ajiriohene Joseph, Nathalie Paul and Sarah Waites

We wrapped up our historical exploration of Westmoreland with a trip to the Museum and Culture Bus in the town of Darliston. The visit to Darliston was an opportunity for us to examine various artifacts collected by tourism consultant Mr. Pete Manbode and displayed in the mobile museum he maintains. We also experienced a performance of mento song and dance—a Jamaican musical form that blends elements from Africa (drums) and Europe (guitar)—and we were invited to sample local delicacies including fresh-pressed cane juice and blue drawers (blu draz) for dessert.

In Darliston, Mr. Manbode was our host. He introduced himself to us as “the head cook and pot washer” of the operation, explaining that constrained resources required him to fulfill many roles in his effort to preserve and share Jamaica’s history. Constrained resources also mean that he must exhibit historical artifacts in a refurbished bus rather than in a permanent museum. The bus does offer the advantage of mobility and Mr. Manbode can drive it to locations of interest, but the bus is fairly small which limits the size and number of artifacts that can be displayed. Students found these limitations to be frustrating. But our visit to the Museum and Culture Bus also provided important learning opportunities about the nature of public history, as students realized that historical preservation remains a luxury in many parts of the world.

Mr. Brown specifically asked our group to comment on whether a visit to the culture bus would an appropriate destination for other AOC guests and a recommended addition to the Heritage Trail. The four students who authored this chapter found a modicum of value in the mobile museum, but we note that other members of our group judged it to be very worthwhile. And as the students observe here, the fact that limited resources are on display in the bus provides an education in itself—an education less about historical content than about the politics and economics of trying to preserve it.

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Man B’s Special Museum and Culture Bus

Darliston, home of the Man B Special Museum and Culture Bus was one of the main sites we visited during our trip to Jamaica. Our purpose of going there was to be able to see local attempts to preserve the history of this amazing country and to understand a bit more in depth about Jamaican culture. During our visit, the Man B Special Museum and Culture Bus was parked in Darliston, and we toured this mobile museum filled with artifacts Jamaica’s history—items from as old as slavery
to as current as modern Jamaican music. The bus is very significant as it is one of the few museums that displays Jamaica’s history. It is mobile, which means it can travel in order to reach more people and educate them about Jamaican history. While we did learn some useful facts while touring the bus, as a group we decided that there were some concerns about the value of the experience and the logistical challenges it entailed.

The bus contained a large assortment of items, and our tour guide Mr. Pete Manbode shared many facts about Jamaican history. Among the items the bus contained was a 254-year-old King James Bible and samples of Jamaican currency. Also on display was a courting chair. It used to be that when a man came to call on a woman, he would sit on the courting chair with her -- with the woman's father in between them. If the father did not approve of the man, then no marriage would take place. Another item was an old pot, which ties back into the days of slavery. Slaves were usually fed once a day, generally with some kind of stew or soup that was created by throwing the masters' leftovers into a single pot. In addition, the collection featured a commode, which existed in the days before plumbing and flush toilets. A commode looks like a wooden chair with a hole in the middle. Beneath it would be placed a chamber pot which could be emptied after each use. Some more general facts we learned were that Jamaica was ruled from 1655 to 1962 by European powers, that Nanny of the Maroons was said to have magical powers, and that the Taino Indians were the original inhabitants of the island. We also learned that the Jamaican natural bird is the Tochilic Polytmus, that the national tree is the blue mahoe, and that the national flower is the lignum vitae.

The Darliston history bus is the brainchild of our guide, Mr. Pete Manbode, and it is reputed to be the island’s first mobile museum (Cummings). The bus itself is painted green, yellow, and black - the colors of the Jamaican flag. According to the Jamaica Observer, the bus is a 1994 Marco Polo Benz bus that Mr. Manbode bought for two million Jamaican dollars (Cummings). The Observer also quotes Mr. Manbode explaining why he created the bus in the first place:
I have a passion for my heritage and I have [realized] that a lot of people are adopting the culture from other countries (and), so some of us will have to try and preserve it and show the people where we are coming from so that they can appreciate more of what we have.

Many of the items displayed on the bus were handed down through Mr. Manbode's family, although some others were bought from collectors. When we talked to him, Mr. Manbode said that he had difficulties obtaining items. He did not have as much money to buy items at auctions as do collectors and museums in the United Kingdom and the United States. A pernicious consequence of globalization is the exportation of Jamaican history to elites in other parts of the world who can pay top dollar for precious artifacts.

After our tour of the bus, Mr. Manbode took us out to a pond in the back of the property to teach us about some of the local history. The pond used to be just a small watering hole where people would tie their pigs up to let them drink. Then one night there was a thunderous roar, and when folks woke up the next morning, they found that what used to be a little hole had turned into a whole pond. Legend has it that a mermaid lives in the pond and that every once in a while she requires a sacrifice. Ten years ago, a boy drowned in the pond and only parts of his body were found three years later. As far as anyone knows,
At Darliston, we were also treated to a demonstration of music and dance and samples of local confections. A band played while a man, and sometimes a woman, danced along. At some points, the performers pulled audience members (us!) in to dance with them. The music was Jamaican mento music, although an explanation of the musical traditions or history was not provided. In her personal reflection, Ajirioghene Joseph discusses the music and dancing:

On our visit to Darliston one thing that I found interesting was the mento music as well as the chart of the evolution of music in Jamaica that was located at the back of the museum bus. While in Jamaica, I noticed that music was a big part of their culture and it was nice to see the musicians playing a style of music that I do not typically think of when I think of Jamaican music. The dancing was also interesting because it represented the Caribbean style of dancing that we often see in music videos by Caribbean artists. I would have liked to see more styles of Jamaican music being represented in a demonstration of the evolution of Jamaican music. I think that it’s important to pay attention to the music because it just as in African American culture, we see a transformation of traditional styles of African music into new genres such as blues, jazz and rap. The evolution of Jamaican music is a prime example of African cultural retentions in Jamaica.

In her personal reflection, Nathalie Paul also touches on the trip’s use of music. However, she also discusses the food that was served, which was traditional Jamaican snacks and desserts as well as fresh cane juice. The fresh cane juice was made on the spot, with a portable cane press. We were all able to watch as the cane was pushed through the press, along with some spices to flavor the juice. Nathalie Paul reflects:

When we were at Darliston today, there was a band that was playing mento music. The dancing and music were very interesting to watch and reminded me of other Caribbean styles of dancing. There was a song in particular that I did not like that was about rape and it reminded me of the rape culture that is present in the Caribbean. There was a mini sugar cane press that they used to give us fresh cane juice. I had not known that the sugar cane had to be put through the machines more than one time to get out all the juices. There were other little desserts and treats made from sugar. Overall, Darliston was an interesting place in a way, but I felt that there was not enough there to spend a whole afternoon sitting. Our group was pretty large and we spent a lot of time sitting around waiting and watching the dances as people moved on and off the bus. Then we had the sugar presentation and snacks, and viewing of the pond- I feel it would have saved time if we did more of the activities at one time as opposed to dragging it out. I also felt that there could have been some time spent explaining the origins of the type of music and dance that was there and perhaps the
evolution of music in Jamaica, something I did not hear enough about. More explanation on the types of artifacts shown on the bus would have also helped in making connections to Jamaican history.

In her personal reflection, Mizan Gebregziabher discusses the overall merit of the trip:

While we visited Darliston, Jamaica, I had mixed feelings about the overall trip. I feel that while it was an interesting trip, it should not have taken as long as it did. The timing of everything was kind of disorganized and there was not enough space nor things to do for it to appease everyone that was there. Another thing that could have made this trip more relevant for us is if it related more specifically to slavery so that way we could have applied it more into our learning. A positive that I enjoyed was the entertainment that they had for us; the music was very catchy and it allowed us to see how much they incorporate music into their culture. I believe that if all of the issues are sorted out then it can still hold more significance to not only our trip, but to others as well.

Sarah Waites similarly commented on the overall usefulness of the trip in her personal reflection:

I do not know how much I learned from the trip to Darliston. Even though the trips onto the bus itself were limited in the number of students, I still ended up in the back of the group and had trouble hearing what the guide was saying. The items themselves did not have placards which gave any historical context, and many of them were not actually from Jamaica. I do not know how valuable the food provided was in context of learning, since we had already been eating Jamaican food provided by our host mothers. I likewise did not know what was to be gained from the lake. I also would have liked some explanations regarding the history of the music and dancing. In my opinion, the best part of the trip to Darliston was seeing the sugar cane be pulled through the mill. We spent a lot of time studying sugar and Jamaica, and seeing how the sugar is actually pushed through a mill felt like a nice conclusion to that line of study.

Recommendation for Future Visitors:

In the end, all four of us were in agreement on our recommendations. If Darliston is to remain on the itinerary for future groups, we think some changes need to be made to how it is approached. Rather than using a visit to the bus primarily to appreciate the quality of items on display, it could be reframed as a local attempt to preserve and craft history. This reframing could lead into further discussion of the difficulties of preserving history in Jamaica and the need for more historical preservation. If the trip to Darliston were presented in this light, future students may be able to get more from it than we did.

Beyond the reframing, there are some practical concerns with a trip to Darliston. The size of the bus meant that only six or seven people could board at a time, while everyone else had to wait. Given the size of our group, it took us a very long time to get everyone through the bus. The easiest way to cut down on the time spent waiting to tour the bus at Darliston would be to cut down on the number of people brought. In the future, we recommend that groups visiting Darliston contain no more than
twenty students. While we think the value Darliston provides is limited, with some changes students could still have a valuable learning experience.

Work Cited

Annotated Bibliography

Resources for the Study of History, Culture and Globalization in Jamaica

*by Summer Bosley and Aysha Rahman*

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**Slavery and the Slave Rebellions**


Carrie Gibson’s book, *Empire’s Crossroads: A History of the Caribbean from Columbus to the Present Day*, explores the Caribbean through the impacts of colonization and addresses heavily the lasting effects of Christopher Columbus and other European settlers, slavery, and eurocentrism on Caribbean culture. Gibson discusses Columbus’s quest for Caribbean gold, and on lack of finding any precious metals, his subsequent enslaving of many Amerindians, in order that they might work the sugar cane, tobacco, and cocoa fields. She also discusses the extensive myths and stereotypes against Caribbean people; such as, cannibalism and the way in which the Caribbean peoples welcomed the Europeans. Addressed extensively is the “living death” of slavery and its aftereffects through things like class and colorism.


Audra Diptee’s book *From Africa to Jamaica: The Making of an Atlantic Slave Society*, explores the slave culture of Jamaica, as well as how enslaved Africans would help shape Jamaican society as a whole, and more specifically the economy. Giving a lot of history behind the process of slavery, Diptee talks extensively about the journey from Africa to Jamaica. Diptee takes a comprehensive look at Jamaican slavery by viewing it from both sides. Beginning with a history denoting the raids that would lead to Africans becoming enslaved, Diptee breaks down stereotypes by saying that versus the typically thought of young, virile man, it was women, children, and the elderly who were the most vulnerable during African slave raids, so these were the most susceptible to being enslaved.


In their book, *Out of Many, One People: The Historical Archaeology of Colonial Jamaica*, the authors approach concepts of multiculturalism and colorism in Jamaica thanks to lasting effects of European Colonialism. After the introduction, the book is separated into three parts: The Archaeology of the Early Colonial Period, The Plantation System, and Jamaican Society. On the very first page, the authors set the stage for the book stating that each of the chapters “explored in microcosm the material realities of colonialism as experienced throughout the New World”. It is through this very first quote that one begins to get the sense that the authors are viewing Jamaica through the eyes of globalization. This assumption is confirmed in the epilogue when author Douglass leaves the reader with this: “one goal of this volume [is] to make the historical archaeological community more thoroughly aware of the need to incorporate Caribbean material into comparative studies of the material dimensions of the New World colonial experience.”

In her article, “Remembering Kojo: History, Music, And Gender in the January Sixth Celebration Of The Jamaican Accompong Maroons”, author Jacqueline Cogdell DjeDje gives an extensive and detailed history of the Maroon nation as a whole, but more specifically of Accompong. She also gives a lot of detail and clarity to the Accompong celebration on January sixth, the significance of this celebration to the people of Accompong, and discusses the culture and traditions embedded around and within this celebration. Due to the significance of Captain Kojo to Accompong history, and specifically to this celebration, DjeDje also gives an extensive account of the Maroon War, Kojo’s participation in the war, and the strong African roots that Kojo supported and that the Accompong people maintain to this day.


In his article, “Nanny - Maroon Chieftainess”, Alan Tuelon discusses the Maroon legend Nanny and what it means that she rarely shows up in history, but is well known throughout Jamaica due to the large influence of the Maroon nation. To try to unravel the history of Nanny, Tuelon uses the historical research done by American priest Joseph J. Williams. It is through these two men that we learn more of the history of Nanny, as well as of the Maroon wars and what would become the conquering of the British. Something that Tuelon touches on in his article is the importance of preserving local history. Nanny, to Tuelon, is considered to be a myth and a legend, someone who only exists because of oral history and folklore; however, to the Maroon people, and to the people of Jamaica, this woman is a hero, and is someone who definitely existed. Through his work and through the work of Williams, Tuelon tries to provide a source with the history of Nanny.

**The Maroon Nation of Accompong**


In her book, *The Maroons of Jamaica, 1655-1796: A History of Resistance, Collaboration & Betrayal*, author Mavis Campbell gives an eloquent and thorough study of the Maroon people, covering the history from the British conquest through the late 18th century. Campbell places a large focus on historically accuracy and reader comprehension. The book opens with definitions and a history of the Maroons in the Spain conquered Jamaica before 1655. The most focus is put on the Maroons of the 18th century; the communities they lived in, their culture, and their traditions are researched, examined, and then laid out for the reader to interpret. Campbell also discusses the Maroon and British treaty of 1739, she discusses the events leading up to the treaty, and the lasting effects the treaty has had on the Maroon Nation and to Jamaica as a whole.


In their article “Origins of Marronage: Mitochondrial Lineages of Jamaica’s Accompong Town Maroons”, the authors chose to pick the controversial topic of the Maroon’s lineage. Some scholars argue that the ancestry is African, Taino, and from Jamaica’s indigenous population, while other scholars argue that the Maroon people are descended only from African peoples. Through their research of Mitochondrial DNA, the authors discovered that the Maroon people descend mostly from Africa, but that they also have (a
controversial) lineage associated with indigenous American peoples. Their study used Maroon oral histories, research and data from past archeological research, and discussed the impact of colonization within the Caribbean, specifically within Jamaica and with a specific theme around genetic lineage.

In his essay, “Understanding Pan-Africanism”, author Simon Clarke discusses the history of the term “Pan-African”, as well as his own awakening to the language. The essay begins with Clarke discusses the first time he ever heard the word “Pan-Africanism”. He was a young child with his parents at a conference in Panama, and while he did not yet understand what they were discussing, in accents ranging from the countries of St. Lucia, Trinidad, Jamaica, and various other Caribbean countries and in languages ranging from Creole, Spanish, English, or some combination of the three, Clarke heard this word discussed extensively into the evening. Clarke later goes onto discuss that this is what Pan-Africanism truly looks like, because, as Clarke will go on to discuss, Pan-Africanism is not an idea, but rather a movement founded in 1990 at the Pan African Congress.

Religion in Jamaica

Through his article, “Ships That Will Never Sail: The Paradox of Rastafari Pan-Africanism”, author Barry Chevannes approaches Pan-African ideas and the practices of the Rastafari in Jamaica through two ways. The first approach is done through a study of Marcus Garvey, a man that the Rastafari regard as a prophet, his influences on Black Nationalism, his Back to Africa movement, and his alleged foretelling of the coronation of an Emperor of Ethiopia. The second approach that Chevannes uses involves the three other native Jamaican religions: Revival, Kumina, and Convince. All three of these religions were founded by enslaved Africans, and Rastafarianism would emerge from these, but choose to reject them. Chevannes discusses the emergence of Rastafari tradition and it’s lasting effects on Jamaican culture and the significance it has on the concept of Pan-Africanism.

In his article, "Integration of Immigrants: The Role of Ethnic Churches”, author Wing Tsang discusses the impacts of immigration on the immigrant, the host nation, and on the local community. Throughout the article Wing discusses the creation of a national identity for the immigrant, the importance of this, and the strong assist that churches, specifically those created with communities of color in mind, have on the integration of immigrants into local and broader communities. The study examines the history, functions and, to a greater extent, the impact of a Chinese Christian Church in Jamaica in facilitating Chinese immigrants’ settlement. The results suggest that the church provides stability and provides valuable resources through which integration was made possible.

Sugar and Labor in Jamaica

Author Michelle Harrison in the book *King Sugar* explores the role of the sugar industry in the Caribbean. The author discusses plantation life, sugar as a commodity, sugar as a business, and the evolution of the sugar industry. She uses interviews with sugar cane workers, sellers, and producers to illustrate the process of sugar manufacturing, and explores the past, present, and future of sugar as a whole. The book goes into detail about the historical events, politics, and economics surrounding sugar.


The author describes the political role of laborers in the British Caribbean in the 1930s by introducing the political climate and then discussing section by section different labor rebellions in different countries, one section being dedicated to Jamaica specifically. The author concludes that these labor rebellions empowered workers and convinced them of their own political power and that these rebellions made trade unions lawful where they had not previously been. The author ends by stating that while these rebellions were not coordinated or planned, they were still historically significant.


This article from national Jamaican newspaper *Jamaica Observer* discusses Westmoreland plans to develop heritage sites. These plans are outlined by the Minister of Tourism and Entertainment Dr. Wykeham McNeill in the article. The author notes that a central part of the plan involves the Fontabelle Great House at Frome, which our group visited, as well as Workers Park, the site of the 1938 worker rebellion, the first bank, and an old water wheel. The owners of the landmarks, as well as the Tourism Product Development Company and the Westmoreland Parish council, are reported to support the plan.

**The Impacts of Globalization on the Jamaican Economy**


This article investigates political unionism in Jamaica and Trinidad. The hypothesis is that trade unions help countries achieve political independence, but do not help achieve the needed economic growth and rather hinder it. The study addresses the reason why countries choose to retain political unionism. The study concludes that during colonial times, union support for political movements was found to be necessary for independence, but after that independence, the relationship between trade unions and political parties turned antagonistic as the political parties were the ones in power and the two groups were no longer fighting for the common cause of independence.


In this article, the author discusses Chinese global development assistance and compares it in part to colonialism and also to post-war developmentalism. The author introduces the paper with an anecdote about meeting two managers from an enterprise supervised by China’s Ministry of Transport. The author compares China’s approach to Western approach by noting that China has no intention of changing the local people’s ideas and ways of life, unlike the Western colonial powers who tried to Westernize the people they subjected, but Chinese investors do demand behavioral changes in certain everyday settings. The author then goes on to use Cambodia as a case study for this idea and others, such as the idea that Chinese modernism views progress is possible in light of cultural change.
Racial Identity in Jamaica


The author, Winnifred Brown-Glaude from the College of New Jersey, explores in this essay the social implications around discussions of skin bleaching and argues that bleached bodies in Jamaica challenge normative notions of race, gender, and identity. The author specifically uses dancehall artist Vybz Kartel to illustrate the way skin bleaching challenges normative ideas about black masculinity. This perspective on skin bleaching and how it opens up important discussions is interesting to note in the light of Christopher Charles’s study on reasons for skin bleaching, which are usually assumed to stem from self-hate, but turn out in the study to vary greatly, which supports Brown-Glaude’s claim.


This study tests the idea that Jamaicans who bleach their skin do so out of self-hate through score comparisons on the Rosenberg Self-Esteem scale. 18 participants, 9 who were in the control group and 9 who were in the research group, took the RSE. The results showed that overall the participants who bleached their skin had a higher self-esteem score than the participants in the control group. The study concludes that skin-bleaching in Jamaica is not done simply as a result of self-hate, and that people have varying reasons for bleaching their skin. This supports Brown-Glaude’s argument that skin bleaching is not just a product of internalized self-hatred but can open up interesting discussions about Black identity.

Jamaican Education


This web page on the Jamaica National Heritage Trust website discusses the history of the Manning’s School, which we visited in Westmoreland. The article goes into detail about the education system in Jamaica, and more specifically discusses the prestige of the Manning’s school and how it is often seen as a “feeder school” for students that wish to go to University.


This article from Jamaican national newspaper The Daily Gleaner discusses the Frome Prep School’s performance in the Westmoreland Spelling Bee, which it has won for several years. Along with the school’s accomplishments, it also discusses the history of Frome and the Sugar Estate, from the plantation and 1938 labour riots to current schools including the prep school, a technical high school, and a campus location of the Montego Bay Community College, giving the area the label of “somewhat of an education belt”.

Roaring River and Land Rights

This article from the Jamaican national newspaper *Jamaica Observer* discusses the visitor dissatisfaction with the Roaring River tourist attraction site, citing safety concerns and poor lighting in the cave as main complaints, as well as dissatisfaction with locals who act as tour guides. The author describes the cave and its history, and talks about the Observer’s own investigation into the allegations of poor lighting and safety, which concluded that the visitors’ complaints were justified. The author also discusses government plans to “revive” the site and agrees that the area is in poor condition.

"Efforts on to Revive Roaring River as Tourist Attraction." *Daily Gleaner. 27 Aug. 2011.*
This article from the Jamaican newspaper *The Daily Gleaner* discusses the Tourism Product Development Company’s plans (at the time it was published) to gain control of the Roaring River attraction, including the Roaring River Cave. The article discusses visitor dissatisfaction, “deplorable” road conditions leading to the site, and other “challenges”. The author’s language implies support for the government acquisition of the property.

This is an article from Amizade, the organization that sends volunteers to Petersfield, about Roaring River and the tourist attractions that the volunteers visit. It describes the history of the site as well as its importance as a visitor attraction in the present.

This page from the Jamaican Caves Organization website discusses flora and fauna of the Roaring River Cave. The Jamaican Caves Organisation conducted a biological assessment of the cave on request of the Tourism Product Development Company, which found the cave to have a significant reduction in biodiversity due to human and other external interference. The report concludes with suggestions to continue tourism in the cave in healthier ways so as to improve the relationship between health of local organisms and the commercial use of the cave.

**Darliston and the Culture Bus**

This article from Jamaican national newspaper *Jamaica Observer* discusses Man B’s Museum and Culture Bus in Darliston. It describes Pete Manbode, the owner and founder of the museum who is also a Tourism Product Development Company trainer, and his reason for starting the museum. The exhibit includes items that have been preserved for centuries, and are mostly collected either from collectors in Westmoreland or from personal family heirlooms. The article also discusses the live band and the genres of music they play, along with the food served, which are part of the museum experience. The article reports that the overall response to the museum, according to Manbode, has been overwhelmingly positive.
LINKS TO ADDITIONAL MATERIALS

In addition to the materials presented in this report, members of our class have developed the following resources to document our learning in Jamaica:

- **Video documentary**—*produced by Elizabeth Kell, Devin Morrison, Shunty Ringfield, and Reagin Turner*
  
  Available at: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v9bpjwHDG5w&feature=em-upload_owner](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v9bpjwHDG5w&feature=em-upload_owner)

- **Photo album**—*produced by Talia Lockridge*

  Available at: [http://gbljamaica.tumblr.com](http://gbljamaica.tumblr.com)

*GBL 102 students from Agnes Scott College with Mr. Brown at the site of Col. John Guthrie’s untended grave.*