

Honoring Our Caribbean Ancestors: Commemorating 150 years of the Second Wave of People of African Descent in Costa Rica

Honrando a nuestros ancestros caribeños:
Commemorando 150 años de la segunda ola de personas de descendencia africana en Costa Rica.

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Abstract

The year 2022 commemorates 150 years of the arrival of Caribbean immigrants to Costa Rica for the construction of the railroad during the late XIX century and later for labor in the banana plantations during early XX Century. Unfortunately, there is virtually any acknowledgement of the important role that individuals be national, or foreigners play in the economic development of a nation. While some nationals may be recognized for their outstanding contribution or achievements it is rare for immigrants and especially if they are not part of the hegemonic ethnic group. Late XIX and early XX century Afro-Caribbean migrants are not the exception. The objective of this article is to bring to the collective Costa Rican imagination the names of seven Afro Caribbean individual migrants and a family who contributed to the economic, cultural, and

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reproductive development of this country by honoring them making their stories visible through memory. The article gathered information through oral history between January and March 2022 along with the revision and analysis of newspaper archives and other documentation.

Key Words: Migration, Costa Rica, Caribbean, Jamaican migrants, Visibility



Resumen

El año 2022 conmemora 150 años de la migración de personas afrodescendientes para la construcción del ferrocarril en Costa Rica a finales del siglo XIX y más tarde a inicios del siglo XX en las plantaciones de banano. Lamentablemente dentro de la historia general los nombres e historias de las personas quienes contribuyen con el desarrollo de estos países sean nacionales o extranjeros y en especial si estos no son parte del grupo étnico hegemónico, en la mayoría de los casos son ignorados. Los inmigrantes de finales del siglo XIX no son la excepción. El objetivo de este artículo es el de traer al imaginario del colectivo costarricense siete nombres de individuos/a Afrocaribeños y una familia quienes contribuyeron al desarrollo económico, cultural y reproductivo de este país, honrándoles, visibilizándoles por medio de la memoria. Este artículo recoge historia oral entre enero y marzo del 2022, la revisión y análisis de periódicos además de otras publicaciones.

Palabras clave: Migración, Costa Rica, Caribe, migrantes jamaicanos, visibilidad





Courtesy of Lic. Delroy Barton Brown
Tool remnants of railroad construction photo taken in front of
the lodge Rorre Alba 13 in Turrialba

Historiography on the construction of a railroad provides information of the dynamics of XIX century Costa Rican administration allowing a foreign white company as the United Fruit Company to manage the national project of a construction of a railroad but having issues with the ethnicity of some of the immigrant labor force.²

Some investigation focused their attention on how this group of migrants managed to survive within the country during the first half of the XX century. [Paula Palmer \(1979\)](#) documents oral history from Afro Caribbean descendants in Talamanca. [Aviva Chomsky \(1996\)](#) social history analyses the United Fruit Company in Costa Rica and how it dealt with especially the Jamaican migrant labor force. [Ronald Harpelle \(2001\)](#), [Diana Senior Angulo \(2011\)](#), [Reina Rosario \(2015\)](#) and [Carmen Hutchinson Miller \(2015\)](#) focus their investigation on how afro Caribbean immigrants, specially Jamaicans adapted and resisted culturally within a society which was not intend for them to be a part of.³ This article will contribute by providing

2 See *Gaceta oficial* 1862 which prohibited the entry of Africans and Chinese in the Costa Rican territory.
3 See *Gaceta Oficial* “El Senado y Cámara de Representantes de Costa Rica, reunidos en Congreso” 1862 p. 5 this is about the racist law Ley de Bases y colonización. See Carmen Hutchinson Miller. “Evidencias de racismo en Costa Rica: discursos, imágenes, terminologías y experiencias”. *Revista Digital FILAH*. Año 15. No. 23, pp. 1-54.



information on some of these Afro Caribbean migrants who bravely decided to venture into foreign country in search for a better life for their present, and future.

The main objective of this article is to honor the second wave of Afro-Caribbean immigrants to Costa Rica during the latter part of the XIX, and the second half of the XX century by rescuing the names, stories, and images of seven Jamaican individual migrants and a family who were born in the XIX century making their way to Port Limon, Costa Rica in search for better labor opportunities. The second objective is to continue contributing with the United Nation Declaration of the International Decade for Afro descendants under the theme, Afro descendants: recognition, justice, and development 2014-2024 with this research focused on Afro Caribbean migrant labor during the XX century. The sources are ongoing XX century newspaper archive search and analysis, as well as the collecting of oral history between January and March of 2022.

Migration

According to [Chomsky \(1996\)](#) ‘between 1900 and 1913 some twenty thousand Jamaicans, along with much smaller numbers of other West Indians, migrated to Costa Rica’ (p. 34). Mary Chamberlain (1988) in her discussion on Caribbean migration and globalize identities ‘states that... few, if any, people are more global and more migratory than those from the Caribbean (p. 1).^{4 5} [Verene Shepherd \(1999\)](#) discusses the pull and push factors for Jamaican emigration, confirming that,

Jamaica was among the earliest British Caribbean territory to experience emigration to a non-Caribbean country. Between 1850 and 1852, a number of people, mainly men, left for the California old mines. Some may even have gone to the gold fields of Australia. Most of them returned without the expected fortune. Approximately 2,000 men left to work for American companies on the building of the Panamanian railroad from 1850 to 1855, and then the Panama Canal when a French Company, de Lesseps, began to dig one across the Isthmus of Panama in 1881 (p. 143).⁶

4 For more on Caribbean migration see Barry B. Levine. *The Caribbean Exodus*. Praeger Publishers, 1987.

5 See for the case of Barbados. Elaine P. Rocha and Frederick Alleyne. “Millie gone to Brazil: Barbadian Migration to Brazil in the early 20th century. *Journal of the Barbados Museum and Historical Society*, v. 58, December 2012, p. 1-42.

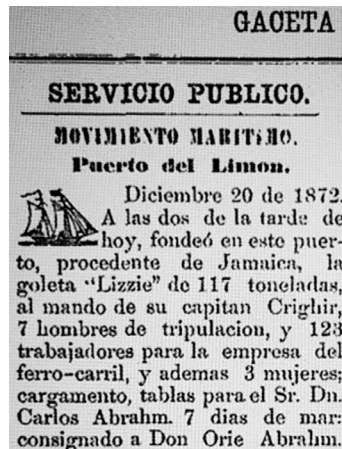
6 For more on Jamaican migration to Panama see “West Indian Participation in the Construction of the Panama Canal”. Publications of the Proceedings of Symposium held at the University of the West Indies Mona-Jamaica June 15-17, 2000. Latin American Caribbean Centre (LAAC. UWI Mona Kingston 7, Jamaica.



In this reference Shepherd left out the migration of Jamaicans to the Central American country of Costa Rica in 1872. While the majority came directly from Jamaica many left Panama to join the labor force in the neighboring country. There is insufficient scholarship on Jamaican migration to Costa Rica nonetheless the issues describe below would have been some of the reason for their settlement in the Province of Limon in the late XIX century. [Shepherd \(1999\)](#) continues to describe,

‘low wages, poor economic conditions, dramatic increase in population, the decline in the sugar industry in places like Jamaica, and the failure of diversification to meet the need for alternative jobs, were all push factors. In addition, opportunities for work outside agriculture, in industry and manufacture or crafts were limited (p. 141).

[Shepherd \(1999\)](#) helps us to understand some of the reasons why so many Jamaicans answered the call for Costa Rica. The following image is an historical record which can be used as one of the official moments for the entry of Jamaicans in 1872⁷ found in *Gaceta Oficial* Jan 15, 1873, p 4.



This historical evidence while confirming the entry of these one hundred and 26 Jamaicans fail to provide their names.⁸ Besides this reference of a reduced number of Jamaican immigrants [Chomsky \(1996\)](#) already informed that they came in the thousands. While in the country they settled in different areas of the province of Limon, and close to where the project was taking place.⁹

7 Historian Peter Gay speaks of the convenient other within racist societies.

8 The research is still searching for these names.

9 See census of 1892, 1927, and 1950 to determine that while the largest numbers were found in the province

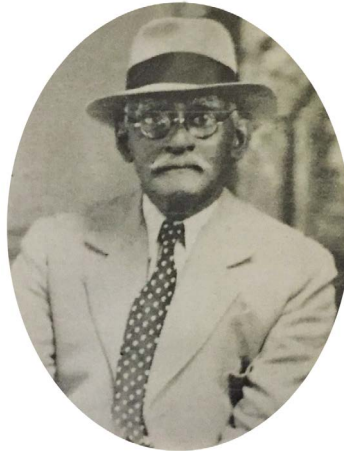




Introducing some late XIX and XX century Jamaican immigrants¹⁰

The individuals introduced to the reader in this section are all Jamaican born who died in Costa Rica. Part of their story shared was gathered through oral history as well as evidence found in the print media. It is important to note that this is not a romanticized approach to history where only the positive is highlighted for disenfranchised people. However, there is the recognition due to the neglect of people of African descent in the official narrative as subjects in this country, that this tends to be the first approach. Part of the stories of the individuals honored in this paper are told by their loved ones, or by individuals who knew of or about them. Therefore, it's a perspective about the lives of these ancestors. Nonetheless it is important from an historiographical point of view for them to be included into the hegemonic discussion.

James Theodore McRae 1864-194911



Photograph courtesy of his granddaughters
Sandra and Ana Patricia McRae Roberts

of Limon they were scattered throughout the country.

10 Primary source for these individuals were gathered from birth and death certificates found on [Familysearch.com](https://www.familysearch.com)

11 Information on James Theodore McRae provided by his granddaughters Sandra McRae Roberts preschool teacher and Ana Patricia McRae Roberts attorney.



James Theodore McRae was born in Kingston Jamaica. He arrived in Costa Rica at the age of 48 in 1912. He came to Costa Rica as a dispenser of drugs. While in Costa Rica he opened a pharmacy in the city of Limon.¹² Based on the news report in 1931 before migrating to Costa Rica he ‘was a Dispenser¹³ and Master of the Poor House of Santa Cruz for several years, also Chief Dispenser at the Kingston Public Hospital’ (*Kingston Daily Gleaner* September 03, 1931, p 9).¹⁴ On settling in Costa Rica he took a second wife by the name of Berta Grant Allen.



Berta Grant Allen with children
Photograph courtesy of her granddaughters
Sandra and Ana Patricia McRae Roberts

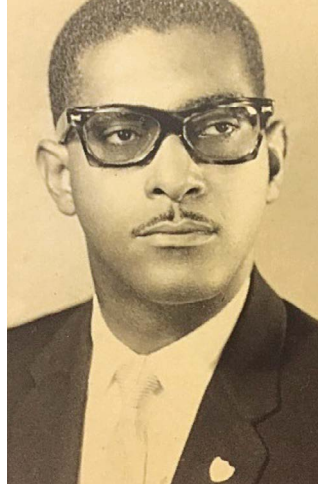
They had four Costa Rican children including Dorothy, Clarence, Luis, and Ana. Their son Luis McRae Grant became the second Afro-Costa Rican member of parliament between 1958-1962.¹⁵

12 The oral history said that he had a pharmacy in Jamaica which was destroyed by fire this motivated him to travel to Port Limon, Costa Rica.

13 Ernestine Watson who lives in Jamaica via WhatsApp on Tuesday March 21, 2022, clarified that pharmacist were called Dispenser. They were train by doctors to dispense drugs. She thinks the first set of diplomas were at CAST in the 60s. Today all pharmacists are trained by UTECH or UWI.

14 See appendix II for part of that news report and his passport.

15 The first one was Alexander Curling who became Benemérito de la Patria-Padre de la Igualdad Jurídica.



Luis McRae Grant. Son of James Theodore McRae
Member of parliament in Costa Rica 1958-1962
Photograph courtesy of his daughters Sandra and Ana Patricia McRae Roberts

Samuel Charles Nation was born in Jamaica in 1869-1942

Of the individuals discussed in this research Samuel Charles Nation is the one who is mentioned in two academic papers¹⁶ and of who archival information is abundant which underscores first the important role he played in the second half of XX century Afro Costa Rican history due to his contribution in the print media. Secondly, records found in archival documents opens a window into part of his everyday complicated life in the provinces of Limon and Cartago.

Information gathered for Samuel Charles Nation were his christening, marriage, death, and birth certificates of his children along with XX century newspapers, in particular *The Limon Searchlight*¹⁷ which provides a wealth of information on the daily lives of immigrants and their children during the second half of the XX century, with archival documentation that help to piece Nation's personal story.

Samuel Charles Nation was born in Jamaica on May 4th, 1869. He was christened on April 4, 1877, in the parish of St. Elizabeth in the county of Cornwall. His father was Mathew Nation and his mother Eliza Kinlock. Nation had an older

¹⁶ Anacristina Rossi (2002) and Valeria Grinberg Pla (2008).

¹⁷ According to Pla (2018) Nation published chronicles and articles regularly in *The Times* 1912-1913, *The Searchlight* 1929-1931, and the *Atlantic Voice* in the English section 1934-1942 p. 30.



sister by the name of Ruth Mary who was born on May 3, 1864, who was also christened on the same day her little brother was. At the time of the christenings, they were living in St. Elizabeth at Berlmi.

At twenty-five years old he married Anna Louisa Williams on April 1, of 1894. Based on the marriage certificate at the time he was a planter and his wife a seamstress. Both living in Middle Quarter, St. Elizabeth. The couple went on to have four children, three boys and a girl. All the children were born in Jamaica.

The first son Cecil¹⁸ was born in Mulgrave St. Elizabeth on March 31, 1894. His second son born on March 21, 1896¹⁹. On the registration certificate only the sex of the child appears, male. The third child was a girl born July 23, 1897²⁰. Like her second brother her name does not appear on the certificate only the word female. These three children were born in the district of Shaws in the parish of St. Elizabeth. The fourth child Mathew Aubrey Nibb Nation was born on July 27, 1899²¹ in Kingston. The family was living at 35 West Parade in Kingston.

Based on this information at the time of marriage Anna Louisa was already pregnant with their first child who came to the world a little more than a month later. Two years later the second son arrived followed by a daughter. Then, two years after the birth of their daughter, the last son came to the world in Kingston which means that the family moved to the capital of Jamaica. One can suggest for better work opportunities or maybe this was the move which motivated the migration to Costa Rica since he was already, based on the last child's birth certificate working at the Jamaican railroad. Therefore, this working environment could have exposed him to information on railroad jobs in other countries.

This research has not found any documentation stating the exact date of Nation's arrival on Costa Rican soil, one has to guesstimate that it could be during the first decade of the 20th century based on archival documents and print media evidence. There is an entry in the national archive of an expire statute of limitation of an accusation made by a Samuel Charles Nation against Lucas Alvarado Chaves for damages in 1881. In this document Samuel Charles Nation is asking for the payment for damages, loss, and injuries.²²

18 Cecil was registered on April 14, 1894, and Samuel Nation was registered as a planter.

19 Boy was registered on April 14, 1896, and Samuel Nation was registered as a clerk.

20 Was registered August 2, 1897, and Samuel Nation was registered as a clerk.

21 Mathew was registered on August 21, 1899, and Nation was registered as a plate layer, Jamaican railroad

22 See archival document CR AN CR-AN-AH-CSJ-EXPJU-004804. Fecha, 1881.11-11.





Guided by the date of this entry and the date of birth of Samuel Charles Nation Kinlock he would have been 12 years of age. It is not certain at this stage of the research that this is the same person, and if he is, it can be suggested that probably he was brought or came to some family member already living in Costa Rica. The name Samuel Charles Nation or Samuel Charles Kinlock appears in other archival documentation from the Alcaldía de Limon during the years of 1908, 1909, 1917, 1920 and 1939. In-depth research is needed to determine how early he migrated and under what circumstances.

If guided by the dates, his writings appear in the *Times* newspaper 1912²³ there is a probability that he might have migrated to Costa Rica in his forties. By 1912 he was 43 years old. If this year is accepted for his arrival, he was already a married man and father of four, as well as with a wealth of working experience. *The Searchlight*²⁴ of which he was the editor is the most reliable evidence of his presence in Costa Rica during the 1930s, and *La Voz del Atlántico* in the 40s.



*The Searchlight*²⁵ opens a window into the everyday life, not only of the Afro-Caribbean community but also that of Nation's. The evidence indicates his involvement in the United Negro Improvement Association (UNIA)²⁶, his pulse on what was happening in the country and how it affected the migrant population as well as information of tensions with members of the community and with the present leaders of the UNIA.²⁷ He was also president of the Agricultural and Building

23 According to Pla 2008 p. 30 Nation was writing articles and chronicles in *The Times* (1912-1913), *The Searchlight* (1929-1931), both as the editor, *The Atlantic Voice* (1934-1942) where he wrote the English section.

24 Between 1929 and 1931 there are 96 copies of the *The Searchlight* that can be found electronically at sinabi.go.cr

25 Based on the information found in *The Limon Searchlight* Saturday November 2. 1929 p. 1 the first number of this newspaper was issued on October 26, 1929.

26 This newspaper helped this researcher to piece information of the UNIA in Costa Rica. See Carmen Hutchinson Miller (2020) "La UNIA en Costa Rica". *Hoja Filosófica*. No. 52. Agosto 2020 p. 31-58.

27 For tensions with the leadership of the UNIA search the Limon Searchlight between June and October of 1930s and January of 1931.





Association.²⁸ The archival evidence suggest that he was involved in other ventures like administrating a laundry matt, and buying a stall in the market which resulted in lawsuits.²⁹

There is archival evidence in Costa Rica between 1909 and 1942 which seems that he was either in court because he was bringing a lawsuit against someone or someone against him.³⁰ From the lawsuits, editor of the newspaper, member of the UNIA and president of the Agricultural and Building Corporation, Nation certainly would have been a well-known Jamaican in the province of Limon and Cartago³¹ and by some important individuals from the province of San Jose³².

It seems he was also esteemed by the staff of *La Voz del Atlántico* who extended warmest salutation for the marriage of his first-born son Cecil Nation.³³ This ceremony was performed on December 24th, 1941. The event was recorded during the month of January of the following year. Cecil married a woman by the name of Anzonetta Cox Jones from Siquirres.³⁴ This child was from his marriage with his wife in Jamaica according to the birth certificate. Based on archival findings there is a probability that he also had children in Costa Rica with another woman. In 1914 there is an investigation against Samuel Nation by Amanda Beckford Bell of the paternity of two children³⁵



La Voz del Atlántico 10 enero, 1942 p. 8.

28 See his signature as the president of this association in *The Searchlight*, April 12, "A Notification". 1931, p. 4.
29 See archival reference CR AN CR-AN-AH-CSJ-EXPJU-000474, fecha, 1909-02-11, CR AN CR-AN-AH-CSJ-EXPJU-003142, fecha, 1909-09-20.
30 See appendix I of the different lawsuits against and in favor of Samuel Charles Nation.
31 He had correspondence for the Limon Searchlight news and distribution in the province of Cartago and in the province of Limon. See in *The Searchlight* the mention of an agent in Perera in Cartago November 29, 1930, p 5., October 11, the mention of A Satchett a reporter in Cimarrones 1930 p 8., a Mr. R.A. Brooks November 22, 1930, p 1.
32 One of his friends was Carlos Orozco Amador. See *The Searchlight*. "For the benefit of English readers, the much-appreciated letter of Mr. Amador touching all the points affecting the province is translated" Saturday November 2, 1929, p. 1.
33 From the date of his birth 1894 he would have been 41 years old at the time of his marriage with Anzonetta Cox Jones.
34 In-depth research is needed to determine if the entire family migrated to Costa Rica.
35 CR AN CR-AN-AH-CSJ-EXPJU-001442, fecha, 1914-02-17





Nation died in Port Limon at the age of 73. Based on the information gathered on him he is an interesting subject for investigation. Therefore, further research is needed on this Jamaican man.

Alfred William Spence Henry 1877-1964



Photograph courtesy of granddaughter Dr. Marva Spence Sharpe

Granddaughter³⁶ of Alfred Spence Henry shares that he was born in the parish of St. Elizabeth. The family is not sure of the date he arrived in Costa Rica. He came with the trade of carpentry which afforded him the opportunity to work building bridges for the railroad project.



Some of Mr. Alfred William Spence Henry working tools
Photographs courtesy of his granddaughter Dr. Marva Spence Sharpe

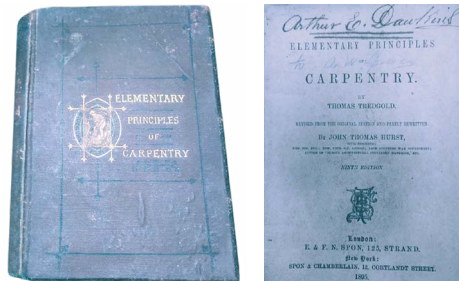
36 For more details on Alfred's story, you can watch the YouTube channel Aportes Afrocostarricenses y Diasporicos video Honrando al ancestro Alfred William Spence Henry.

While in Costa Rica he met and married Rhoda Burnett also from Jamaica. She was a widower and brought to the marriage two children from her previous relationship Edith Adams Burnett, and James Adams Burnett. From the Spence-Burnett union they reproduced three children Zila Spence Burnett who unfortunately died of typhoid fever at the age of fourteen,³⁷ Ina Spence Burnett and Ferdinand Spence Burnett who was the father of Dr. Marva Spence Sharpe.



Married couple, family portrait of the Spence Burnett family, and Rhoda with her daughter Ina
Photograph courtesy of Dr. Marva Spence Shaw-granddaughter

Besides being a carpenter and a family man Alfred also taught the trade of carpentry to younger men from the community. Franklyn Perry Price³⁸ shared that one of his brothers used to receive lessons from Mr. Alfred Spence Henry. Alfred had a library including books dealing with carpentry and lodges in his house.



One of Mr. Alfred William Spence Henry's carpentry book
Photograph courtesy of Dr. Marva Spence Shaw-granddaughter

37 Unfortunately, they were not the only parents during the first half of the XX century suffering from the loss of a child. See *The Searchlight* October 4, 1930, p. 1. "A Child crushed by an engine in Squirres". *La Voz del Atlantico* August 10, 1935, p 5. "Youngster crushed by train".

38 One of the contributors to the oral history about his father Jasper Murray Davis.

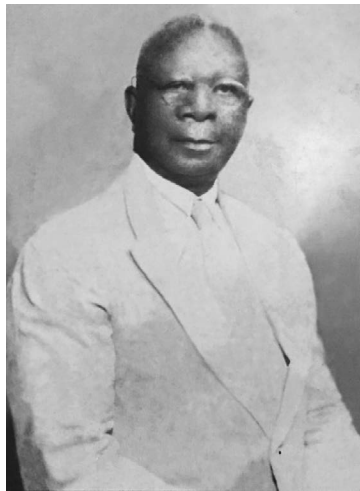


Mr. Spence Henry was also involved in organizations like the church, and the lodge.³⁹



Photograph courtesy of Dr. Marva Spence Shaw-granddaughter

Wilford Stanford Goulbourne Watson 1884-197840



Wilford Stanford Goulbourne

Photograph courtesy of grandson Engineer Roy McDonald Bourne

³⁹ See appendix III photographs of some of Alfred possessions he left behind.

⁴⁰ Oral history from his grandson Agronomist Engineer Roy McDonald Bourne AKA Roy Goulbourne, who also has qualification in Business Administration and a Masters in Geology.





Wilford Stanford Goulbourne was born in Kingston Jamaica in February of 1884. His parents were George Goulbourne W., and Jene Ann Watson. He married Lucy Bell Mc Donald Forbes in the Port of Limon on September 30, 1922. Lucy was a Jamaican⁴¹ who entered the marriage with a child, Roy MacDonald Forbes which Wilford adopted. His son Roy McDonald Bourne is the one sharing Wilford's story.



Lucy Bell McDonald Forbes
Photograph courtesy of grandson Engineer Roy McDonald Bourne

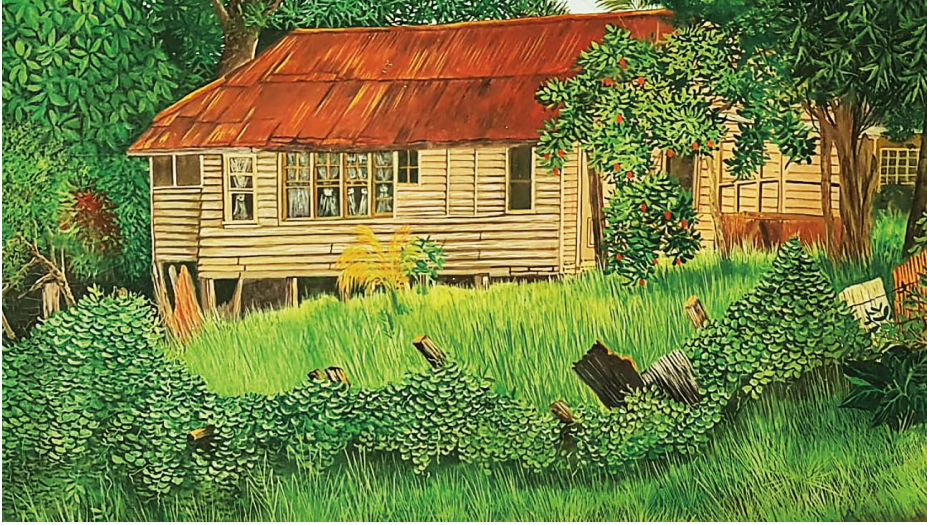
Before establishing and getting married Wilford began his journey for a better life in 1908 when he left Jamaica for new opportunities in Cuba.⁴² He worked on the cane plantations for a couple years then migrating to Panama where he also worked on the canal project. During the year 1912 he migrated to the Port of Limon and started working with the Northern Railway Company as a carpenter. As head of the company in that department he contributed with the building of the American Zone houses, found around what is today, Tony Facio Hospital.

41 Born in the parish of St. Elizabeth 1885.

42 For more on West Indian migration to Cuba see "Intra-Caribbean Migration: The Cuban Connection (1890-Present)" Second in Seminar Series on Intra-Regional Migration. Publication of the Proceedings of Seminar held at the University of the West Indies Mona, Jamaica. Latin American Caribbean Centre (LAAC), UWI, Mona, Kingston 7, Jamaica.



He took advantage of his stable job at the railway company, and he purchased a piece of land in Jamaica Town in the Port of Limon 150 meters east form the Colegio Diurno de Limon.⁴³ This land was purchased from a protestant pastor by the name of Eduard Augustus Pitt for the sum of ¢6 thousand colones⁴⁴ cancelled in two instalments. On this land he builds the family house along with tree more houses to rent.



This painting of Wilford house is on his grandson Roy McDonald's wall

Wilford was also dedicated to agriculture and the farming of cacao, oca, yuca, guandu, mangos, soursop, sorrel, ackee, water apple, and breadfruit. He was also raising cattle, horses, sheep, and goats in addition he is considered the first beekeeper in Limon. Below are some of the materials used for the honey. The bottles stored the honey collected which were shipped to Germany. The wax is over 40 years old.

43 This is one of Port Limon oldest secondary schools.

44 This is Costa Rican currency.





Beekeeper



Bottle that
stored honey



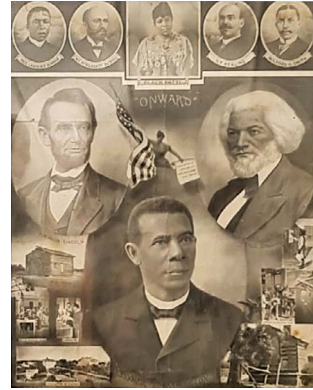
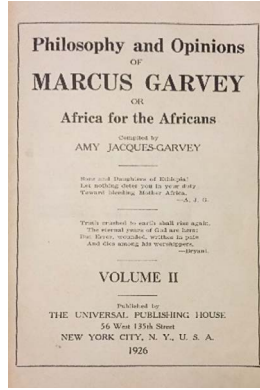
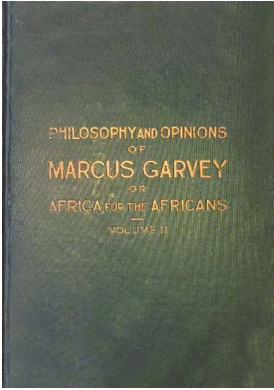
Honey Wax

Photographs courtesy of grandson Engineer Roy McDonald Bourne

Twelve years after purchasing the land in Jamaica Town he bought a farm through a contract of renting land for ¢106 colones per year. The property had an extension of around 13 hectares in Santa Rosa in the province of Limon where he planted coconut. The land is still in the family.

Wilford was an active member of the Mechanic lodge in Jamaica Town. He was hands-on in the construction and maintenance of the building and served for many years as its treasure. He was also an active member of the Methodist Church. He participated in the design and construction of the first Methodist Church of the province of Limon which was his pride and joy. His grandson thinks he never missed any church activity. He would dress in his best attire to attend service. He was a Sunday School teacher for many years.

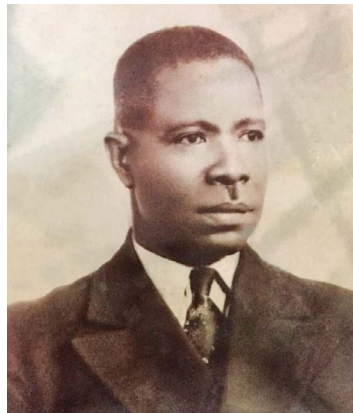
As an African descendant Mr. Stanford Goulbourne philosophy was clear. This is confirmed by the kinds of books he had in his library. The research suggest that he was a Garveyite based on one of the books he owned, and the leaders displayed on the walls of his house. His grandson said he had a large picture of Marcus Garvey that was borrowed and never returned.



Photographs courtesy of grandson Engineer Roy McDonald Bourne

Mr. Wilford Stanley Goulbourne worked for the Northern Railway Company for 45 years (1957). He retired at the age of 70 and was awarded a trip with his wife Lucy Bell for two weeks to his home island Jamaica. Years later he died of a heart attack on January 30, 1978.

Stanley Delessor Britton Davidson 1894-1977



Photograph courtesy of his son Garret Britton Riley and his wife Esmeralda Gonzales-Britton

Oral history for Mr. Stanley Delessor Britton Davidson is gathered from two of his children Garret Britton Riley, and his wife Esmeralda Gonzalez as well as from his younger daughter Yolanda Britton Riley.⁴⁵ Information is also gathered from death and marriage certificates.

Stanley Delessor Britton Davidson was born in Jamaica in the parish of St. Mary. His parents were Alexander Britton and Margaret Amanda Davidson both Jamaicans, and from the parish of St. Mary. He also had a sister by the name of Ethel Maud Britton Riley. Stanley participated in the first World War (1914-1918). After the war end, he migrated to Costa Rica. The date of his arrival is unclear.

According to the oral history different to other immigrants who worked on the railway construction he came to work as a teacher in the province of Limon, Estrada. There he also administered the whole-sale store of the Norther Company. He also met and married Jamaican born Miriam Alberta Riley Frankson in 1926 in Port Limon, Costa Rica. The marriage reproduced four children Sadie, Garret, Earl, and Yolanda.



Photograph courtesy of her son Garret Britton Riley and his wife Esmeralda Gonzales-Britton

Stanley was interested in agriculture. He worked land in Bananito where he grew bananas, he had around 57 hectares. In Matina he had 5-hectares of cacao trees. Some of the land he purchased and other they would ‘denunciar tierras’ meaning that they would take ownership of idle lands. He used to buy dry cacao and sell to a man by the name of William Ruben. He also had a person in the capital, San Jose who would purchase from him. He used to fill train wagons with his produce to be sold in San Jose.

45 Watch video on the youtube channel Aportes Afrocostarricenses y Diasporicos Pt 1 and 2 “Mistoria Yolanda Britton Riley Exdeportista y Microbiologa Jubilada”



In the Port of Limon, he was a businessman. He was also involved in the social aspects of the community. His son said he was one of the first Afro descendant in a Municipality position (Munícipe) in the province of Limon. He was concerned about the older people and was involved in establishing one of the first Hospital for the Elderly in the province of Limon. Stanley died in Costa Rica in 1977.

Miss Ethel Maud Britton Davidson 1898-1982



Photograph courtesy of her nephew
Garret Britton Riley and his wife Esmeralda Gonzales-Britton

This Jamaican woman born in the XIX century found herself into my imagination a long time ago while searching XX century newspapers circulated within the migrant Caribbean community. Interestingly this find opened and introduced a world of information about her brother Stanley who was previously discusses.



The Atlantic November 5, 1949, p 7.

Based on this newspaper clipping Ethel was being welcomed from Habana Cuba on her visit to her brother Stanley Britton living in the province of Limon. Her nephew, the retired agronomist engineer Garret Britton Riley confirms that she migrated from Jamaica to Cuba, finally settling in the province of Limon. Years later she would live in San Jose with him and his family. Based on the oral history she remained single and childless until her death.

The Brittons have a tradition of entrepreneurship and Ethel as well as her brother previously discussed were following in the steps of their parents Alexander Britton and Margaret Davidson who were shop keepers in Kingston Jamaica⁴⁶. Her nephew Garret continues to inform that after relocating in the province of Limon she managed a small hotel upstairs of the building that is today the Mas x Menos in the city of Limon. Franklyn Perry Price also shares that she was an English teacher. Ethel died in San Jose in 1982.

Jasper Murray Davis



Photograph courtesy of his son
Retired Teacher Franklyn Perry Price

46 Information gathered from Ethel birth certificate.



Based on the oral history gathered by one of his sons Franklyn Perry Price, he was a carpenter. Before settling in the Port Limon, he migrated from Jamaica to Panama after his mother died to live with a sister at the age of 14. Based on the oral history he had more than one relative living in Panama.

Jasper Murray Davis was born in Jamaica in the parish of St, Catherine. His mother was Emily Davis. After settling in the Port of Limon he marries a woman 30 years younger, Eugenie Perry.⁴⁷ He started having children in his forties. They reproduce many children of which unfortunately some died during birth or through miscarriages.



Eugenie Perry

Photograph courtesy of her son Retired Lecturer Franklyn Perry Price

Jasper was a carpenter and was very proud to state that he worked on the building of the market in the city of Limon when it was inaugurated in 1941. Economic constrains brought by political decision when the company was moved to the pacific, forced Jasper and his family to migrate internally. They moved to Bata-an where he was hired to build the ‘cuadrantes y zonitas’ area where the North Americans lived.⁴⁸

Despite financial hardship Jasper managed to lease a land where he had his house in Cieneguita in Port Limon. This land is located today close to the Asilo de Ancianos in front of the school next to the Ebais. Based on the oral history he never

47 She was born in Costa Rica with Jamaican citizenship. Later she chooses the Costa Rican nationality.

48 This is a topic that needs further discussion on the Abaca plantation in Costa Rica and its economic impact on the people and the province of Limon.



returned to Jamaica, but he was informed through the *Daily Gleaner* which he used to receive regularly. Jasper could read music, belonged to the Garvey Movement, the Jamaica Burial Scheme, and many lodges.

He loved Costa Rica, Pepe Figuerres, and particularly the province of Limon, he never ventured to know any other province. According to his son Franklyn he went to Cartago only when he fell ill and had to be hospitalized. Honesty is his legacy his remarks. Jasper was a literate Jamaican man, and a Rosicrucian dying circa 1975.⁴⁹

The Orane Family⁵⁰

Information gathered for the Orane family will be explained through photographs provided by the descendant, odontologist Odel Orane Anglin. Based on the oral history of the eight children of Jamaicans John Orane and Maria Keene the tree male migrated to Costa Rica. The date of their arrival is unclear.



These are Odel Orane Anglin greatgrandparents
Photographs courtesy of Odontologist Odel Orane Anglin

⁴⁹ See appendix IV for the poem wrote in honour of his father Jasper Murray Davis.

⁵⁰ Oral history gathered by a descendant of this family Dentist Odel Orane.



The brothers who migrated from Jamaica were Eustace Orane Keene aka Jack, Edwin Orane Keene, and Louis Orane Keene.



Eustace



Edwin



Louis

Photographs courtesy of Odontologist Odel Orane Anglin

The oral history states, Louis was the eldest brother. The Orane brothers became businessmen in the port of Limon, also owning land in Siquirres. Judging by the ads found in the newspapers of the period it can be suggested that they probably migrated between the first and second decade of the XX century.



The Limon Searchlight November 23, 1929, p. 3

Eustace known in the port of Limon as Jack Orane was the owner of the famous store, and his brother Edwin had a Hat store in front of where is today the parking lot of the supermarket Mas x Menos in Port Limon.⁵¹ Louis on the other hand oversaw land in Siquirres.



Louis Orane Keen photograph taken in San Jose, Costa Rica
Photograph courtesy of his grandson Odontologist Odel Orane Anglin

Jacks' business was very successful evidence of which is found seventeen years later from the ad found in 1929.⁵²

⁵¹ Property is still owned by the family.

⁵² Is important to note that during this period they were other businesses in the province of Limon like tailoring, bakeries, restaurants and hotels to mention a few which further studies will analyse.



Atlantic Voice January 5, 1946, p. 6.

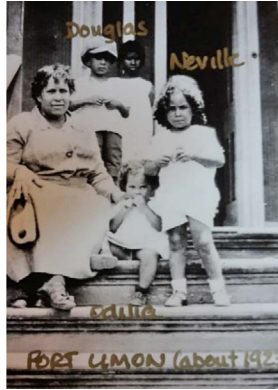
The business allowed Eustace and his family to live comfortably in the port of Limon. The following photograph was the house owned Eustace and his family.⁵³



Photograph courtesy of his grandnephew Odontologist Odel Orane Anglin

Of the tree brothers both Eustace and Edwin returned to Jamaica. Eustace had three children with his Jamaican wife Clara Maxwell. The children are Douglas, Neville, and Odilia. They decided to raise them in Jamaica. The parents did not want their offspring having to deal with discrimination in their own country.

⁵³ The house no longer exists. The space can be located behind Sam's Supermarket or for better reference on 5th avenue in front of Walters and Chavarria Clinic in Port Limon.



Clara with children while living in Port Limon circa 1923



Douglas Orane



Neville Orane
hijo de Jack



Odilia Orane

Photograph courtesy of Odontologist Odel Orane Anglin

Edwin had one daughter Constance Orane, born in Jamaica. Louis is the one who had a full and interesting life in Costa Rica, where he died. Louis became Odel's grandfather. Louis had three children Osmond, Sylvia and Aubrey who died from tetanus at the age of 12, all from his second marriage with a woman from Almirante, Ms. Edith Wood Heron.



1922-1995

Photograph courtesy of his son Odontologist Odel Orane Anglin

On December 6 of 1952, Louis's son, Osmond tied the knot with Louise Anglin Garvey in that way cementing his father roots in Costa Rica. Osmond went on to have Romel Orane who is a lawyer, Odel Orane who is an Odontologist, Alman Orane who is a gynocologist and Melva Orane who is an Executive Secretary.



Osmond Orane Wood and Louise Anglin Garvey
Photograph courtesy of their son Odel Orane Anglin



As stated previously Jack Orane business was successful to the extent that he was able also to employed family members as is shown in the photograph below, his nephew Osmond working in the store.



Osmond Orane Wood in Jack Orane's store
Photograph courtesy of his son Odel Orane Anglin

During late XX century Osmond opened and administered a restaurant called la Antillita in the port of Limon on May 1st, 1992. Today that restaurant is not administered by the family the local is rented out for other business.



Osmond on the day of the opening of the restaurant la Antillita
Photograph courtesy of his son Odel Orane Anglin

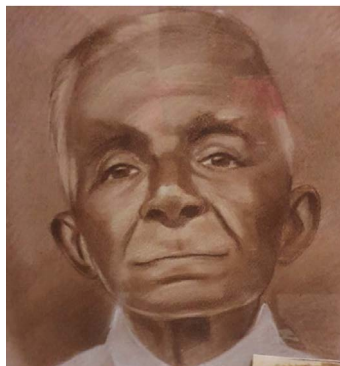


When Eustace and his family decided to return to Jamaica around 1930s, he left Mr. Leslie Angus as the administrator of the store. Eustace traveled back and forth to check on his investment. Jack Orane store was a landmark in the port in of Limon which unfortunately was destroyed by fire on January 11, 1977.



Mr. Leslie Angus administrator of Jack Orane's store
Photograph courtesy of Odontologist Odel Orane Anglin

As it relates to Louis, the brother who remained, the research was unable to determine the year of his death. Undoubtedly, he left his legacy of hard work and determination shown through his second and third generation who are continuing to make their mark in different professional fields in Costa Rica and beyond.



Louis Orane Keen as an Elder
Photograph courtesy of his grandson Odontologist Odel Orane Anglin

Conclusion

This paper cannot do justice to these subject's life stories. Nonetheless the objective is achieved in making them visible, highlighting aspects of their lives their loved ones deemed important to share in honoring them.

The oral history tells of these Jamaican men and women coming from parishes like St. Elizabeth, Kingston, St. Mary, and St. Catherine. The migratory routes of some of the subjects featured before settling in Costa Rica were from Jamaica to Cuba, and from Panama to Costa Rica. Some as in the case of Mr. Stanley Britton, right after participating in the first World War.

The world in which these subjects existed was not one which offered them as people of African descent opportunities for a better and dignified life. It is important to underscore that despite the political and economic scenario in their country of birth and the countries they migrated in search for working opportunities did not make them behave as victims. They were victimized by a capitalist and racist system, nonetheless they thrived. All used the skills they brought whether to help with the work with the company who hired them or to create job opportunities in the host country.

Some ceased opportunities for owning land to build their personal homes and investing for rental. Some purchased land for agriculture and take part into the economic development of the country trading national and internationally. Some opened commercial ventures like stores and pharmacies which catered to the need of the community, at the same time raising their Costa Rican children offering them all the opportunities available.

Some used the print media to inform the immigrants of national and international political and economic events as well as personal and regional situations which could affect the immigrants in Costa Rica. Others were influenced by the philosophy of Marcus Garvey which probably was one of the reasons for their success in the foreign country. The oral history of the subjects in this paper shows us individuals involved in their daily lives which included tragedies like the loss of children through diseases. Happy moments like marriage of their children in Costa Rica, and the visit of relatives in Jamaica.

This paper provided some names, faces and stories of Jamaican immigrants who settled, formed families, and lived full dignified thriving lives within XX century Costa Rican society. These individuals which represent many others who we are yet to make visible by names and stories, contributed to the development of XX



century Costa Rica through their skilled work with the Railroad Company, the businesses they opened, the lands they worked and trade from, the organizations they belong sharing their values, and the children they reproduce who became productive citizens continuing with the development of this country in different professional fields.

It is heartening to learn through the oral history gathered that many of the material gains by these subjects highlighted in this paper are still with their descendants including properties and other inheritance. Costa Rican historiography owes a debt to these men and women. We salute them for their bravery, and we honor their memory in these 150 years since they arrive with a dream for a better tomorrow.

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Appendix I

CR AN CR-AN-AH-CSJ-EXPJU-002947

Título

Expediente de juicio civil ordinario por deuda de ¢50 y 25 sacos de carbón. Promovido por Samuel Charles Nation Kinlock contra David Gordon Price

Fecha(s) 1909-01-28

CR AN CR-AN-AH-CSJ-EXPJU-000469

Título

Expediente de perjuicio de embargo preventivo por ¢278,20 y reconocimiento de un documento por dicho valor, establecido por José Acuña González contra Samuel Nation Kinlock, deudor, Charles Harold Smith, fiador y Ramón González Cortegoza, como apoderado ... »

Fecha(s) 1912-07-12 –

CR AN CR-AN-AH-CSJ-EXPJU-001116

Título

Expediente del juicio civil ordinario por deuda total de 490,00 colones. Establecido por Samuel Charles Nación Skinlock y otros como liquidador de la Sociedad Cristian and Laborewrs Unión of Costa Rica

Fecha(s) 1914-05-05

CR AN CR-AN-AH-CSJ-EXPJU-001595

Título

Expediente de perjuicio de embargo preventivo por 2.000,00 colones. Establecido por Simona Josephine Bruno contra Samuel Charles Nation Skinlock. Decretado el embargo

Fecha(s) 1914-01-06

CR AN CR-AN-AH-CSJ-EXPJU-001099

Título

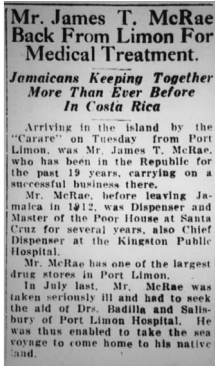
Expediente del juicio civil ordinario sobre pago de arrendamiento de un local para imprenta. Establecido por Enrique Nazarí, apoderado de Virgilio Giorgi contra Samuel Charles Nación Kinlock

Fecha(s) 1914-10-28





Appendix II



Kingston Daily Gleaner
September 03, 1931 p. 9

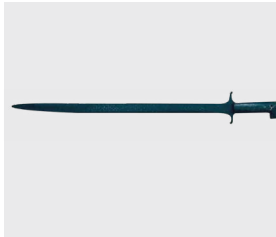


James McRae passport

Appendix III -Belongings of Alfred William Spence Henry



His China set



His lodge sword



His bench



Appendix IV

Poem in honor of Jasper Murray Davis by his son Franklyn Perry Price -Costa Rican Retired teacher

Para aquellos nobles sacerdotes católicos que nos bautizaron, aunque
no éramos católicos: ni nuestros padres, ni nuestros padrinos.

Decir Patria
Mi padre pasó
Entre Costa Rica y Panamá
Alrededor de 70 y seis años
de los 90 y pico que
peregrinaría
por este istmo.
Nunca asimilaría
la hermosa lengua cervantina
ni dijo Patria, nunca.
Jamás entonó
el “noble patria tu hermosa...”
no obstante
amaba esta tierra a morir.
“Di land of freedom” decía.
Ni jamás cantó:
“Es preciso cubrir con un velo”
pero amaba a Costa Rica.
Y más todavía, al ramonense Catalán
retoño de la higuera.

A mi madre la arrullaba el mar Caribe,
fueron las cálidas arenas
de su amada Cieneguita,
su cuna.

Los valles y collados turrialbeños
también atestiguan su cercanía al Coloso.
Siempre habla en castellano, inglés y
el continuiun del circum-Caribe
cantó los himnos patrios y desfila los catorce y 15
de setiembre envuelta en el blanco, azul y rojo.
Su contribución mayor
a esta tierra amada:



un ramillete de 15 negritos
“que no cayeron en hueco alguno.”
Eso sí a algunos, según parece,
no les gustó “Ticolandia”
porque apenas se asoman,
salen corriendo
“como alma que lleva el diablo.”
Aquí jamaicana; allá desconocida.
Y hasta la mitad del siglo 20
“nowherean”
Opta por ser tica y vota por
el ramonense catalán
con el fusil en mano
y la suave fragancia del higo maduro
finalmente pudo decir patria,
aunque mi papá nunca.
Yo por mi parte, igual que ella:
no era de ninguna parte.
“A stranger in my own land”
an as mi, mada wud a se: a true born costarican
un mundo peregrino para mí
sin playa, cerca de colosos como: Irazú, Barba...
“San Gosé,” como decía abuela,
Para mí tierra de “bullying”
matonismo sin razón.
La escuela un calvario, viacrucis.
Sería siempre el otro,
y como dice Quince “Dulce, pero muy dulce para la policía.”
Sí el otro, el odd number
¿Quién me tenía apellidándome Perry,
en un medio donde lo normal sería Ramírez, González o Baker?
Decir Patria para mí distaba mucho todavía.
Dí, sí para un “Hombre de Chocolate.”
Aunque a los 21
reclamaría mi nacionalidad.
Now a true born costa rican también.

