



The Newsletter of the Barbados Genealogy Group (BGG)

# Connections

## The Legacy of Major Herbert Walter Peebles

by Sharon Marshall

“A forum for family researchers in Barbados and the diaspora to stay connected through news, articles, tips and tricks.”

### BGG Objectives

- Encourage and promote family research.
- Foster communication, cooperation, mentorship.
- Educational talks, discussions and workshops.
- Share resources.
- Develop presentation skills.
- Advocacy in family research.
- Provide encouragement and support to young people in researching their family history.

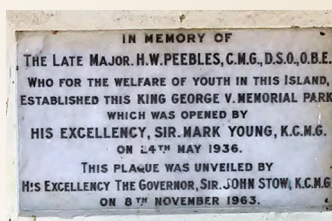
### Mission Statement

*“To inspire and encourage Barbadian-related family history research and to foster the development of individual and shared identities.”*

For those who have heard of him, Major Herbert Walter Peebles is best known in Barbados as the driving force behind the establishment of the King George the Fifth Memorial Park (KGVM). But his legacy is much wider than this.

As a colonial civil servant in the British West Indies, this Englishman also left his mark in places such as the British Virgin Islands, Dominica, Montserrat and St. Vincent, where he served as Administrator. Peebles Hospital in Tortola, BVI; Peebles Park in Roseau, Dominica; and Peebles Street in Plymouth, Montserrat are part of his regional legacy.

In Barbados, he testified at the Moyne Commission hearings following the 1937 riots, and was actively engaged in finding



employment for returned soldiers at the end of World War II as chair of the Rehabilitation

Committee. KGVM Park was a passion for Major Peebles. It was not only a place of recreation for the people of St. Philip, but offered agricultural plots for boys, Christmas cheer for children and clothing for the needy. Women in the parish were engaged to make the clothes. Peebles House at Princess Margaret Secondary School is perhaps recognition of his contribution to the parish.

Peebles was born in Cheltenham, Gloucester,

England, in December 1877 to Colonel Thomas Peebles and Elizabeth Peebles, née Chiappini. The life he lived was one of service and adventure in diverse places such as South Africa, Somaliland, Nigeria, British Honduras, Canada, and the West Indies.

Major Peebles was a decorated veteran of the Boer War, where he served with the Canadian Mounted Rifles and the British Army. He was also decorated for his British Army service in World War I.

Peebles died at Bayley's Plantation, St. Philip, on 25 March 1955. His final resting place is the Barbados Military Cemetery at Gravesend.

# MIGRATION STORIES

Many persons seek to migrate in order to better themselves and their family. The thrill of new experiences and cultures can be sometimes tempered by feelings of uncertainty for what lies ahead. Although Barbadians have historically benefitted from these travels, there are some cases in which the migration experience was less than ideal, sometimes resulting in appeals for help and some seeking to return to the land of their birth.

There are accounts of Barbadians who travelled to Africa and other countries in the Americas who encountered harrowing experiences. In an April 1906 edition of the Barbados Advocate newspaper, a letter was published by Barbadian migrants that outlined their plight in the South American country of Peru. The following is an extract from that letter:

*Sir- We are sorry to trouble you But pleas to put this in your papers about the labours that left barbadoes on the second of march 1905 for peru South America they have not delt with us according to the Contract they took us from Barbados as labours. After we reach there they refuse to give us any wages according to the Contract saying they pay to the Government of Barbados a sum of £150 for each*

*head of us and now we are suffering day by day as Slaves we thought that we was going there as labours but we found out afterwards there is Slaves where we are. We cannot get away for there is soldiers guarding us. That is because they carry us where there is no Council that we can apply to.*

*So we ask you kindly Sir to Drop it in the papers for us.*

*We Remain yours Obedient Servants,*

*John Clarke*

*Joseph Dawson*

*Isaac Conliffe*

*Joseph Nurse*

This letter gave confirmation to reports made by priests, and other travellers, of the enslavement, torture and killing of persons in the Putumayo River district east of Iquitos, Peru



Julio Arana

by the infamous Arana brothers and their armed guards. In 1904, Julio Arana recruited and sent two hundred black Barbadian “wardens” from Bridgetown to “supervise” and “guard” the Putumayo labour force. Two years later, 40 of these Barbadians were repatriated to Barbados after reporting that they were beaten and abused. The many reports of murders and other outrageous acts meted out to British subjects in Peru resulted in the British Consul-general in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, Roger Casement, travelling to the Putumayo rubber camps in September 1910 to investigate these claims. Casement interviewed several Barbadians who reported floggings, torture and murders in the camps. He eventually left the camps with 14 Barbadians, 9 of them decided to relocate to Manaus, Brazil while the other 5 decided to return to Barbados.



Roger Casement

## THE WORRELL FAMILY IN BARBADOS

The surname Worrell is of English origin. It is a locational name derived from either the district of Wirral in Cheshire or the village of Worrall which is located near Sheffield, Yorkshire. Worrell is a fairly common surname in Barbados. The name has been spelt in official records as “W-e-r-r-i-l-l”, “W-o-r-r-a-l-l”, among other minor variations.

The earliest recorded Worrells mentioned in Barbados is Christopher Worrell, the father of Richard Worrell, who was baptised in 1658 in St. Michael’s Church, now the St. Michael’s Cathedral, as well as John Worrell who is recorded to have lived between 1655 and 1718. Other early members of the Worrell family mentioned in local records include the following:

1661— Ralph Worrell of St. Peter who leased a plantation of 90 acres.

1673 – Thomas Worrell, gentleman. Mentioned in a deed of conveyance.

1677 – Mary Worrell, widow, buried at St. Philip’s Parish Church.

1680 – Unnamed Worrell buried at St. Philip’s Parish Church.

1683 – Dr. William Worrell buried at St. Michael’s Church.

1685 – Joseph Worrell buried at St. John’s Parish church  
1715 Richard Worrell married Rebecca Butler at St. Michael’s Church, also a Richard Worrell age 46 named in the census of 1715. No Worrells are named in the census of 1679.

In an apparent “rags to riches” story, a gentleman named John Worrell accumulated capital by working as a tailor. This allowed him to acquire a small sugar estate and slaves in the parish of St. Thomas. Four generations later, his descendants made St. Thomas their home and were buried on land which eventually formed part of a plantation named Sturges. The Worrell family acquired Sedge

Pond estate in St. Andrew, Neils Plantation in St. Michael/St. George, The Spring in St. Thomas and the Hill (or Scotia), in St. Andrew/St. Peter. According to the slave registers, Jonathan Worrell held 109 enslaved persons on Sedge Pond, 14 enslaved persons on Sturges, and 18 enslaved persons in St. Michael.

Marie Anne Catherine Worrell, who was born in France and married into the Worrell family, held 27 enslaved persons on Sedge Pond, 20 enslaved persons on Sturges Plantation, and 55 enslaved persons on Neils Plantation.

The arms of the Worrell family are depicted on the family burial place at Sturges plantation.

Sources: *Journal of the BMHS* vol. 29, no. 1 (1961): 8-23.

# BGG TALK

On Thursday, 5<sup>th</sup> December 2019 the Barbados Genealogy Group collaborated with the History Group of the Barbados Museum & Historical Society to present a talk entitled: “Solving the Mystery of Major Peebles: A Virtual Journey to Islands and Continents”, in the Walled Garden of the Barbados Museum. Dr. Sharon Marshall traced Major Herbert Walter Peebles life from birth to death, highlighting his travels and his contribution to the various countries he visited.

Prior to Dr. Marshall’s talk, Mrs. Patricia Gauge, an overseas friend of the Group, delivered an overview of the RootsTech 2019, which was held in London from October 24-26, 2019.

RootsTech is an annual conference organised by Familysearch.org and dedicated to “celebrating families and discovering family histories”.



## DEFINITION

**Esquire** (abbreviated *Esq.*) is a term of **British** origin (ultimately from Latin "scutarius" in the sense of shield bearer via Old French "esquier"). In **Britain**, it is an unofficial title of respect, having no precise significance, which is used to denote a high, but indeterminate social status. In the **United States**, **Esquire** is mostly used to denote a lawyer in a departure from traditional use and is irrespective of gender.

## 2020 UPCOMING EVENTS

### Group Meetings

**March 19th - "The Muslims of CARICOM" by Mr. Sabir Nakhuda**

**May 20th - "Myths versus Facts: Mining the Genealogical Records" by Prof. Pedro Welch**

### Workshops

**April 4th—"Using Familysearch.org: An Introduction" to be facilitated by Mr. Nicholas Mayers**

# MONUMENT WEBSITE

The website <http://monumentalarchiveproject.com/collections.html> is a free non-subscription website, which allows persons to search the website's collections of images and transcriptions of monumental inscriptions. According to the website, all the inscriptions found on the grounds of 16 Anglican churches, as well as some plantations, were recorded and entered into a database. Persons visiting the site can search and download available images, free of cost.

The "Home" tab takes visitors to a page which outlines the purpose of the site. It also includes a map of Barbados with 16 pointers showing the location of various Anglican churches on the island. Clicking a pointer identifies the church, the number of monuments at the church and the time period represented.

The "About" tab opens a page which provides information about the project which led to this website, its goals, the

persons involved, and their contact information.

The "Collections" tab opens a page which provides a map of Barbados sites, description and citation details.

The "Archives" tab opens a page which has listed all of the monuments included on the website, as well as transcriptions and descriptions.

Some of the listed monuments have an image link under the category "Image". When this link is clicked it opens a page which contains images of all the monuments taken from a particular location. Some of the monuments listed have the letters "NA" under Image to signify that images of the monument are not available.

The "Contribute" tab provides information on why the cemetery records are open access and how persons can contribute. The "Blog" tab opens a WordPress web page which provides a review of one of the persons involved in the project.

**We welcome your submission of articles for our upcoming newsletter due in May. Email your articles to [library@barbmuse.org.bb](mailto:library@barbmuse.org.bb)**

### *Executive of the BGG >>>*

NAME	ROLE
Harriet Pierce	<i>Facilitator</i>
Dr. Patricia Stafford	<i>Deputy Facilitator</i>
Marie-Claire Lyder	<i>Secretary</i>
Nicholas Mayers	<i>Information Officer &amp; Editor</i>
Angela Skeete	<i>Education Officer</i>
Betty St. John & Lynda Lewis	<i>Floor Members</i>

The Barbados Museum and Historical Society was established in 1933 by an Act of Parliament. It is housed in historic buildings which were originally used as the military prison of St. Ann's Garrison.

The Shilstone Memorial Library is a research library. It is open Monday to Friday and every 2nd and 4th Saturday 9am – 1pm.

**Contact Harriet Pierce, Librarian for further information.**

**Address:** St Ann's Garrison, St Michael, Barbados.

**Phone:** 1 246 538 0201

