



The Newsletter of the Barbados Genealogy Group (BGG)

Connections

RUNAWAY SLAVES DIGITAL COLLECTION

“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.

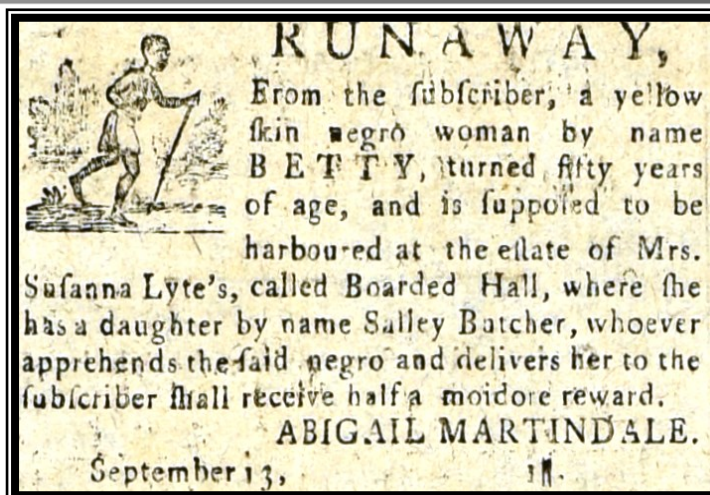
Mission Statement

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

Following the completion of the digitisation of the Barbados Mercury newspaper in December 2018, the Barbados Runaway Slaves Digital Collection project was launched. This project is a collaboration between the Barbados Department of Archives and the Boston-based Early Caribbean Digital Archive. The aim of this project is to transcribe all of the runaway slave ads from the digitised Mercury Newspaper and collate them into a collection.

The initial workshop was held in May 2019 and subsequent workshops were held monthly until November. The format of the workshops involved an introduction to the newspaper and its digitisation; an overview of the Endangered Archives Programme (EAP) portal and instruction on how to access and navigate the interface; instructions on how to digitally snip and transcribe the ads; as well as group discussions about the content of the ads. For this year, 2020, creative ways are being sought to interact with the slave ads either through writings, drawings, paintings, etc.

From a genealogical perspective, the runaway slave ads provide a variety of information about enslaved persons: This include their name(s), age,



appearance, skin colour, skills, accent, any distinguishing features, including ethnic markings, and most importantly their relatives and partners. They also provide information about plantation ownership, which includes the names of current and past owners

To find out more about the Barbados Runaway Slaves Digital Collection and the Endangered Archives Programme (EAP) persons can visit :

<https://eap.bl.uk/project/EAP1086>.

Persons may also view the Mercury newspaper at the following website:

<https://dloc.com/AA00047511/00001>.

Muslims in CARICOM

By Sabir Nakhuda

I am very happy to see that many individuals are now researching their family ancestry. I was fortunate enough to hear many stories about my family from my grandfather as a small child in India. My interest in learning about my families across the globe led me to go a step further and write a book on the history of the East Indians in Barbados which was published in April 2013.

I began research for my second book, 'Muslims of CARICOM' in 2013 and launched it on January 8th, 2020. Despite having read several books on the subject matters, both books are comprised of mostly oral research. There are many stories, especially in the two books published, that can only be had by

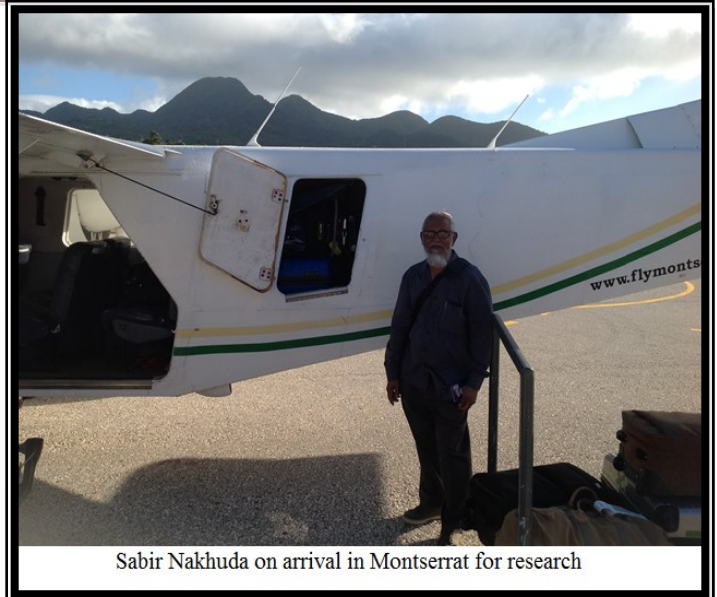
speaking to various individuals from different parts of the world. I find oral research to be very fascinating and informative experience that exposes the human elements of history, which you will not find in any library, archive or museum.

One such experience was in Jamaica, where I met a local Jamaican who converted to Islam a few years earlier. Out of curiosity, I asked him about his conversion to Islam, to which he responded *"One day I was travelling in a mini van and it broke down so I walked to a nearby gas station to catch another van. While waiting, I saw in a corner, a man kneeling and prostrating on the ground. When he finished, I approached him and asked him what he was doing and he told me that he was a Muslim and was saying his prayers. It was then that I remembered that as a child I used to see my grandmother performing the same actions as the man and when I used to ask her about it, she would say that her mother taught her. She never told me that she was a Muslim and that she was praying. I realised that my ancestors were Muslims that must have been forced to become Christians but they were still practising their religion in secret so I decided to follow the religion of my forefathers and became a Muslim."*

I have travelled to all 15 CARICOM countries, some on multiple occasions, as well as India, America and Canada to interview over 300 individuals who all had a story to tell. I often slept at the various mosques or spent a night by an individual kind enough to accommodate me. Not once did I stay at a guest house or hotel, as I was constantly on the move, accompanied by my favourite Eclipse Crackers and bananas for my sustenance.

I never regretted the challenges I faced but rather embraced them. I knew that I had a story to tell about the enslaved African Muslims and indentured East Indian Muslims who fought against injustice, tyranny and oppression. They practised and preserved their faith and culture under the most challenging circumstances.

Peace Be With You.



Sabir Nakhuda on arrival in Montserrat for research

BGG ACTIVITIES

Bi-Monthly Meeting

The first Group meeting for 2020, held on Wednesday, January 29th, featured a presentation by Dr. Tara Inniss entitled “*Just Who Do We Think We Are? The Frontline and Fault Lines of Genealogical DNA Testing in the Caribbean*”. In this well attended and informative session, Dr. Inniss highlighted the concerns voiced by persons she had interviewed as it relates to DNA testing. The challenges faced by persons of African descent, the motivational factors that caused Barbadians to use the service and the difficulties in accessing it, as well as the responses to the results.



Dr. Tara Inniss

Left: Dr. Tara Inniss delivering her address

Below: Audience member asks a question during the Q&A



Q&A time

Vision 2020: We Gatherin’

Speightstown, St. Peter

The BMHS’ Mobile Museum visited St. Peter on February 15th for “Speightstown Alive”. The exhibit, located in the Caribbean Art Gallery Mall, included a genealogy component. The literature of the Barbados Genealogy Group was displayed and distributed to visitors, who also benefitted from two Powerpoint displays that featured Barbadian immigrants to Panama

Visitors also got the change to trace their ancestry through the use of the website www.familysearch.org, which was live, and several of the BMHS’ offline databases.

BGG members Nicholas Mayers, Betty St. John and Angela Skeete assisted the Librarian during this exercise.



Nicholas Mayers, information officer, assisting a visitor with genealogical research



Top Left: BGG Information Officer, Nicholas Mayers, assisting a visitor.

Top Right: Librarian Harriet Pierce assisting two visitors.



Bottom Left: Visitors to the BMHS booth.

DEFINITION

ILLEGITIMATE — When going through some baptism records, the word “illegitimate” might be found written under a child’s name. This indicates that the child was born to parents who were not married to each other, or simply put – born out of wedlock. An illegitimate child was also referred to as a “bastard” or “love child”. Even if the child’s parents later married, the child would still be considered illegitimate. Historically in Barbados, the law only recognised the rights of legitimate children to inherit property, and, in the absence of a will, all property descended to the eldest legitimate son.

2020 UPCOMING EVENTS

AS result of the protocols enacted by Government to combat the COVID-19 pandemic, our meetings at the Barbados Museum have been postponed.

Our first Zoom meeting, featuring Sabir Nakhuda, is scheduled for June 11th at 2 pm.

We welcome your submission of articles for our upcoming newsletter due in September. Email your articles to : library@barbmuse.org.bb

Executive of the BGG >>>

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

Trends in Genetic Genealogy

By Lynda Lewis

Genetic Genealogy is the use of DNA testing to determine relationships between individuals.

There is some concern that Genetic Genealogy has entered an era devoid of rules and regulations concerning genetic privacy.

Legislation varies in many countries concerning DNA testing:

- Some ban it outright, unless done under medical supervision.
- In some countries, consumers can be fined for ordering tests outside of a clinical setting.
- Some countries allow testing but insist persons must have “informed consent”
- In some countries there are no legal regulations about how the data can be used.
- Still others have strict requirements on the secondary use of data.

DNA Kit sales in some companies have declined in recent years. There are a few reasons being postulated. Market saturation as some people may not see the need to test because a sibling or another known family member has already tested. Privacy concerns have also risen. There is a possibility of limited utility as the results may not be as accurate as you hoped. The perceived usefulness is limited.

One concern that has arisen is the issue as to who has access to the various DNA Databases and for what purposes. (e.g. Ancestry, 23andMe, GEDmatch etc).

Examples of concern:

- Pharmaceutical companies
- Insurance Companies
- Individuals involved in paternity and inheritance issues
- Law Enforcement
- In the future, biological data could be used for

identifying terrorist suspects

- Tracking Military personnel – exposing sensitive genetic information to outside parties poses personal and operational risks.

Another issue is Forensic Genealogy. Forensic genealogists use the information from a crime to construct a tree and determine who a suspect might be. With no regulations providing guidance and clarity on how and when genetic genealogy could be used to fight crime, private companies are in charge of their decisions. A troubling issue is that in the absence of rules and regulations, one person e.g. GEDmatch owner had the power to both draw the line and change it unilaterally. Another issue is the takeover of some companies by others. E.g. GEDmatch by Verogen a forensic genomics firm.

Genetic genealogy works by comparing crime scene DNA to profiles in databases. Among the profiles investigators can find distant relatives of the nameless suspect. The investigators use traditional genealogy research to identify possible suspects who are tested to match DNA at the crime scene. In 2018/9, a judge forced GEDmatch to allow the police to search its database, even though most of the 1.3million who shared DNA with the sites had not agreed to the search. Privacy concerns arose because not only did users not know their DNA was being searched but relatives who never took DNA could come under suspicion. This investigation led to identification of a serial rapist/ killer. It was not the first case the FBI had done but it left the door open wide to using genetic genealogy. GEDmatch changed its terms requiring users to choose if to allow their data into law investigations.

It will be interesting to see how this aspect of DNA database access and use of the information will develop in the future and what regulations and laws countries will put in place.

The Barbados Museum & 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

