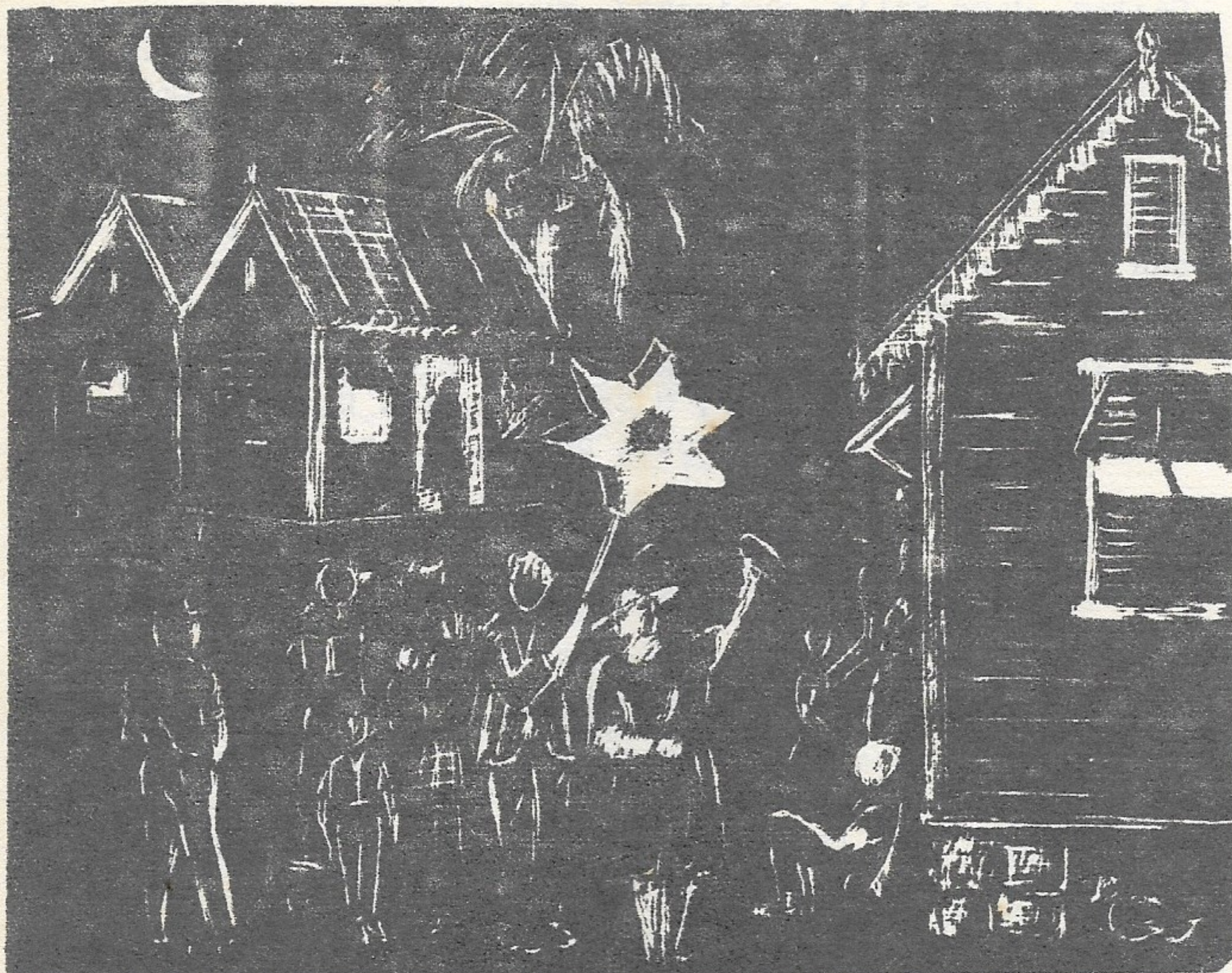


No. 10

4th Quarter, 1984

# Newsletter of



## The Barbados Museum & Historical Society



## DIRECTOR'S PAGE

Workshop The Organization of American States and the Caribbean curators at the Museum, November 12-20.

Instructors were Prof. Alphonso Soto Soria, Mexico, Dr. Jill Vexler, Washington D.C., Roderick Ebanks, Jamaica, the Director, Deputy Director and the curatorial staff of the Barbados Museum.

Delegates were: Sonita Barrett, Nevis, Greta Bennett, Costa Rica, Clare Broadbridge, Trinidad, Anita Ebanks, Grand Cayman, John Falix. Surinamed, Edward Henry, Antigua, Lennox Honychurch, Dominica, Michael Jessamy, Grenada, Dr. Earle Kirby, St. Vincent, Sandra Philip, Tortola, Clayton Rodney, Guyana, Dr. J.D. Elder, Tobago. Gregor Williams, St. Lucia.

Special representatives were: Sheila Graham, Jamaica, O.A.S. and Ed Winslow, New York State Museum, Albany, representing Partners of the Americas.

Christine Matthews, Department of Archives, Victor Matthews, C.E.D.A., Michael Taylor, U.S.A.I.D., and David Crowley, U.S. Peace Corps made special presentations.

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## New Members of the Barbados Museum and Historical Society

George Walton Payne - Bridgetown  
Ms. Valerie B. Jones- Christ Church  
Dr.T.A. Hassell, M.B.B.S., F.R.C.P., F.A.C.C.-  
St.Michael  
Dr and Mrs. Ian Desmond Smyth - St. Joseph  
Mr and Mrs. Alair Shepherd - St. Michael  
Dr.Fred G. Reader and Sen. Gwen Reader - St. George  
Dr and Mrs. Sylvester Brathwaite - St. James  
Ms. Peggy Florence Blades - Jamaica  
Ms. Annette Trotman - St. Michael  
Ms.Marjorie Shone - St. James  
Mr. Ronald Ramsay - St. James  
Ms. Hazel Anne Oxenford - St. James  
Ms. Atheline Haynes - Christ Church  
Mr. Geoffrey Markland Hart - Christ Church



## SHOP TALK

The 1984 selection of Christmas cards features three 19th century West Indian scenes and are still available in the gift shop.

A reproduction of the 19th century "Sailors Valentine" has been added to the stock in the shop. The octagonal shaped box fashioned from fine hardwood contains an exquisite arrangement of local shells.

Historic Churches of Barbados written by the late Barbara Hill and edited by Dr. Henry Fraser is available at the museum gift shop. It is lavishly illustrated with photographs and has 17 pen and wash drawings by Barbara Hill.

Folk Songs of Barbados, compiled by Trevor Marshall, Peggy McGreary, and Grace Thompson, is now on the book rack in the shop and will make an excellent gift for a budding musician or an adult interested in folk history.

Artist of Barbados, compiled by the Barbados Arts Council, has biographical information about the country's artists. The book features some illustrations.

Also on the book rack, The Silver Men: West Indian Labour Migration to Panama 1850-1914 by Velma Newton will have special interest for those who have family who made this migration.



## THE REDS OF CHRISTMAS

A rich, cool glass of SORREL is surely one of the delights of Christmas in the Caribbean. Also known by such varied names as French Sorrel, Indian Sorrel, Jelly Okra and Florida Cranberry, the Sorrel plant originated in Africa and was introduced to Barbados in 1696.

Traditionally the most popular use of the Sorrel plant has been in making the drink by steeping the calyces in water after the flower has dried. However there are several references to other uses of the plant. In 1717 Sloan wrote that the "capsular leaves were made use of for making Tarts, Gellies and Wine, to be used in fevers, and hot distempers, to allay heat, and quench thirst."

Griffith Hughes, writing in 1750 says that there were two kinds of Sorrel "the Red and the White" and that "the respective Wines will be of these different colours, but of the same taste." Although the white variety is now quite uncommon in Barbados, anyone interested in experimenting should perhaps observe Phyllis Clarke's Jamaican recipe which allows more water for the drink of the white variety because it is more acid. A sauce similar to cranberry sauce and useful as a relish with meat or poultry can be made by stewing Sorrel with sugar.

The word "sorrel" is thought to be adopted from the old French "surelle", which was itself an adoption of the Germanic "sur" meaning sour. However Louise Bennett of Jamaica relates a fanciful tale of Anancy the spider in which Anancy has just discovered the "red sinting." His customers take to saying that the concoction tastes "like real-real wine..... so real, so real." Of course Anancy insists that this was the origin of the name of this delightful annual plant which is ready for cutting five or six months after planting. It is closely related to the common garden Hibiscus and is known scientifically as Hibiscus sabdariffa.

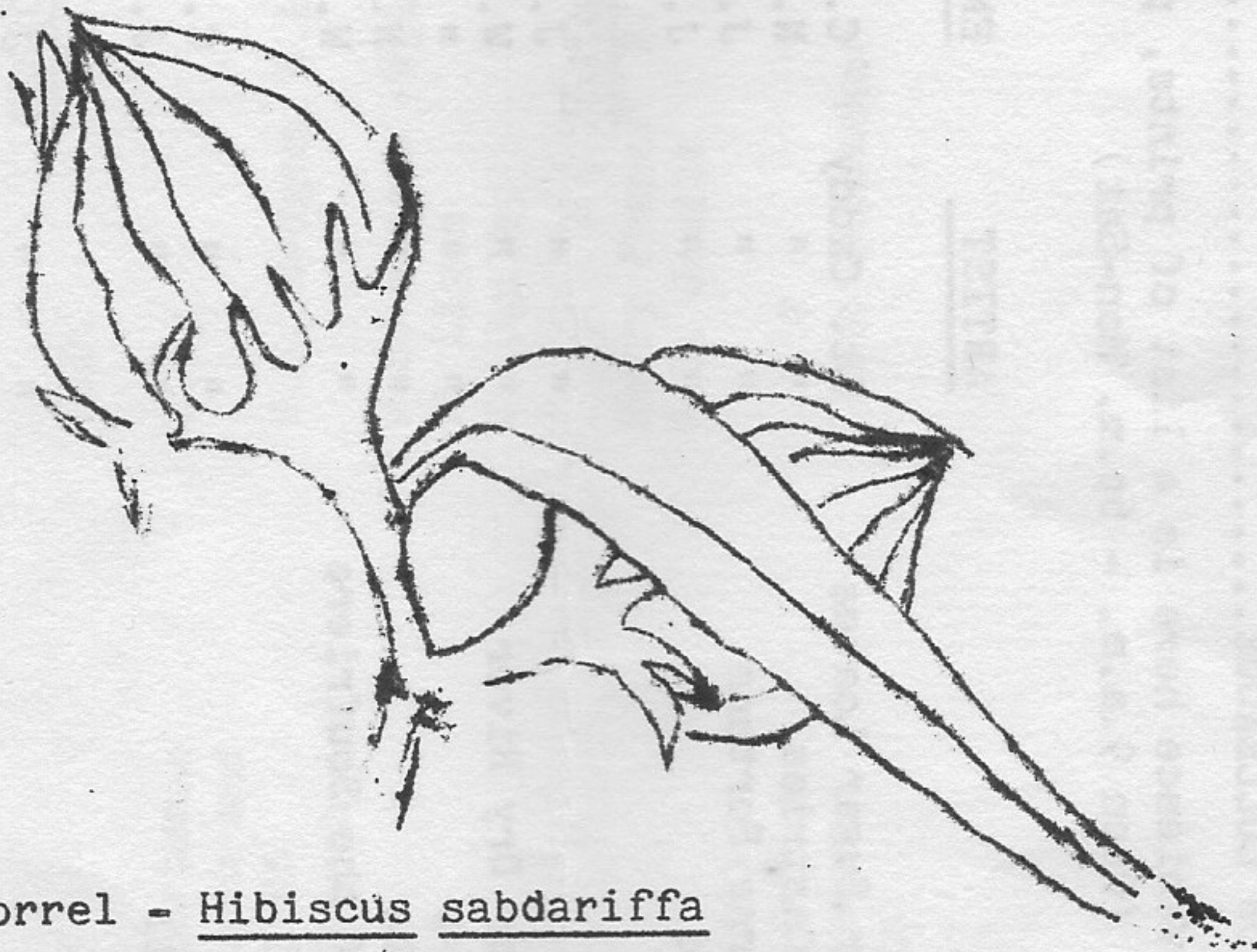
Another Red of Christmas is the Poinsettia (*Euphorbia pulcherrima*). Originating in Mexico but now widely cultivated in the tropics, the beauty of the Poinsettia is not due to its flowers which are quite small and inconspicuous, green and yellow.



The large red rosettes are in fact modified leaves, called bracts.

Blooming of the Poinsettia is controlled by the length of the day and normally the flowers and magnificent red heads will only appear when the daylight hours are short. For this reason street lights have been known to postpone blooming.

THE SORREL AND POINSETTIA SHOW US THAT RED IS A TRUE COLOUR OF CHRISTMAS.



Sorrel - Hibiscus sabdariffa



DECORATE YOUR HOME OR OFFICE WITH FINE REPRODUCTIONS OR GIVE A GIFT OF APPRECIATION TO A LOVED ONE OR COLLEAGUE.....

For your convenience here is a list of prints, posters and postcards available at the Museum Shop. (Open 9.a.m. - 6p.m. Mon-Sat)

<u>TITLE</u>	<u>ARTIST</u>	<u>ENGRAVER</u>	<u>PUBLISHERS AND DATE</u>	<u>PRICE</u>
<u>St. Lucia</u>				
The Pitons or Sugar Loaves	Lt. Caddy	C. Hunt	Ackerman 1837	\$15.00
The Town of Castries	"	N. Fielding	"	"
View From Morne Fortune	"	J. Harris	"	"
Pigeon Island	"	J. Harris	"	"
<u>St. Vincent</u>				
<u>Kingston</u>				
The Rabacca or Dry River	"	J. Harris	"	"
Basaltic Rocks	"	W. Westall	"	"
Fort Charlotte	"	"	"	"
Old Crater of the Soufriere	"	N. Fielding	"	"
	"	W. Westall	"	"
<u>St. Kitts</u>				
<u>Sandy Point</u>				
Brimstone Hill	"	C. Hunte	"	"
	"	J. Harris	"	"
<u>Dominica</u>				
<u>Roseau</u>				
	"	J. Harris	"	"
<u>Barbados</u>				
Rachel Pringle of Barbados	E.D.	T. Rowlandson	W. Holland 1796	\$30.00
St. Ann's Garrison & Savannah	W.H. Freeman	Day & Sons	I. Bowen 1853	\$25.00
Map of Barbados	P. Lea		J. Sellars 1685	\$20.00
Trafalgar Square Bridgetown	J.M. Carter	Day & Sons	Jennings 1836	\$15.00
West Indian Flower Girl	A. Brunias	A. Brunias	1793	\$30.00



Barbados Mulatto Girl  
Interior of a Distillery

A. Brunias A. Brunias  
W. Clarke

1793 \$30.00  
1823 \$10.00

Cabbage Palm Tree  
Banana Tree  
Coconut Tree  
Pawpaw Tree

# POSTERS

G. Hughes  
" "  
" "  
" "

1750 \$ 5.00  
" " "  
" " "  
" " "

Rachel Pringle  
Negro Market  
West Indian Sportsman  
St. John's Church and  
Hackleton's Cliff  
St. Philip's Church and  
Moncrieffe  
Map of Barbados  
Map of Barbados

# POSTCARDS

E.D. T. Rowlandson

W. Holland 1796 \$ 1.00  
Motte 1800 \$ 1.00  
W. Holland 1807 \$ 1.50

J.F.

W.S. Hedges W.L. Walton

R.H. Schomburghk .80¢

W.S. Hedges W.L. Walton  
R. Ligon  
J. Ogilby

1848 .50¢  
1657 .50¢  
1670 .50¢

# POSTCARDS OF PAINTINGS

Henry Fraser N/A

R.D. Jewitt

1981 .50¢  
1831 .50¢

?

Isaac Sailmaker

1742 .75¢  
1694 .50¢  
1980 .50¢



## LIBRARY NOTES

The response to our Coffee Morning fund raiser for the library, which was held in the home of Mrs. David Devenish on November 8th, was very gratifying. \$120.00 was allocated to the museum fund. A tour of the library was organised for those who were not familiar with the facilities.

USIS The librarian responded to an invitation from the United States Information Service to attend the opening of their new library. This is very valuable resource library and can be used by anyone in Barbados. It is located in Downton Bridgetown, Nichols House, above Radio Shack.

During November, Twenty-Two Persons used the museum library for geneological and general research.

Additions to the Library The library has been made more attractive with a new grey table cloth which was made by Mrs. Jean Blondin of the Turtle Shoppe. The cloth is padded, this protects the table and allows researchers to work more comfortably.

Mrs. Joanne Sanders has presented to the Museum Library a copy of the Sixth Volume of her Barbados Records. The first three volumes summarized all wills recorded in Barbados up to 1725 and the next two listed all marriages up to 1800. To these she has now added Baptisms 1637-1800 published by the Genealogical Publishing Company of Baltimore.



## COLLECTION STUDY REVEALS NEEDS

The Museum curatorial staff recently completed a month long compilation of objects received here from 1933-1981. After categorising them, in either physical material or use classification, for storage and cataloguing purposes, we've found some interesting facts.

As expected the museum has large collections of glass, silver, china and art objects. However we found an abundance of decorative arts, clothing and accessories, ethnological materials and money. These items, which have never been sufficiently described or catalogued will become priority for study during the next few months.

We also found some object areas where the museum is deficient. They include music and musical instruments, domestic furnishings (ie. common household items - kitchen, livingroom and bedroom items from non-plantation households), small sugar production items, textiles (rugs, curtains, lace, embroidery, etc) transportation, small agriculture tools.

In the natural history category - crustaceans (crabs, lobsters), and fish. Although we are not prepared to collect crustaceans at this time, we still would like to know if any exist to be donated later.

If you have such items and would like to donate them to the museum we would be most grateful.

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CONSERVATION TIP Check your collection of water-colours and prints and see how many have wooden or ordinary corrugated paper backing. Both are highly acid and paper can even absorb knot and grain stains from the wood. Acid materials cause fading of colours, deterioration of paper and encourages mould growth.

When having prints, maps and watercolours framed, insist that the framers use acid free materials to retard fading and deterioration.



## CHRISTMAS IN BARBADOS

The blending of many cultures has produced unique Christmas customs in Barbados. The celebration of Christmas is the world's most universally commemorated event and as the immigrant population settled this island country they added their favorite traditions to form the composite that is the Barbadian Christmas.

This is sometimes easily identified by elements in the Christmas menu. Turkey, ham or pork is almost always accompanied by jug-jug. It is the corruption of the Scottish haggis, which was introduced by the Scots who were exiled in Barbados after the Monmouth Rebellion of 1685. The original haggis is a savoury mixture of oatmeal, liver, suet, steamed like a pudding. Barbadians substitute guinea corn flour for the oatmeal, add green pigeon peas, suet or fresh meat and fresh herbs. A dark fruit cake, strongly spiked with rum or brandy tops off the dinner, it is probably an adaptation of English dark cake or plum pudding. A red punch made from the calyces of the sorrel plant is the traditional Christmas drink. These are only a few of the Christmas foods- each family chooses their own favorites.

A favorite memory of many is the village choirs. In anticipation of the holiday season, choir members developed original music and began practicing in October. Christmas Eve night choirsters, led by a member carrying a lighted star created by covering a wooden frame with paper and lighting the interior by a lantern, marched through the village stopping at homes to sing. Villagers shared food and drink with singers. One source said that this tradition began in the 1880's by the Bishop of Barbados who thought the bawdy songs sung at Christmas time should be replaced with sacred music. These choirs continued to add to the festivities until the 1960's. In later years contest to select the most outstanding choirs were held in Bridgetown - singers practiced in seclusion in order that rival choirs would not be knowledgeable about their competition.

Less formal groups, commonly known as "scrubbers," usually not more than four in number, sang through the night on Christmas Eve. Their voices were accompanied by drum, a flute, or maybe innovative instruments such as a comb wrapped in tissue paper. Following their rendition of popular carols they ended with a ditty such as:

'I was passing by a river and my heart began to shiver.  
And if Miss King was a cheerful giver,  
She would give me something to cool my liver.



The days and weeks preceeding Christmas are filled with preparation, the house was scrubbed, maybe painted, furniture varnished, and the best curtains, often new, were hung at the windows and the yard was cleaned, homeowners lacking a grassy lawn often spread sand to give a neat appearance to their entry way. These cleaning preparations plus the baking of cakes and breads, the preparation of the jug-jug, roasting of the meat, turkey, ham, pork or chicken, whatever the budget allowed, filled the days until time for the early church service.

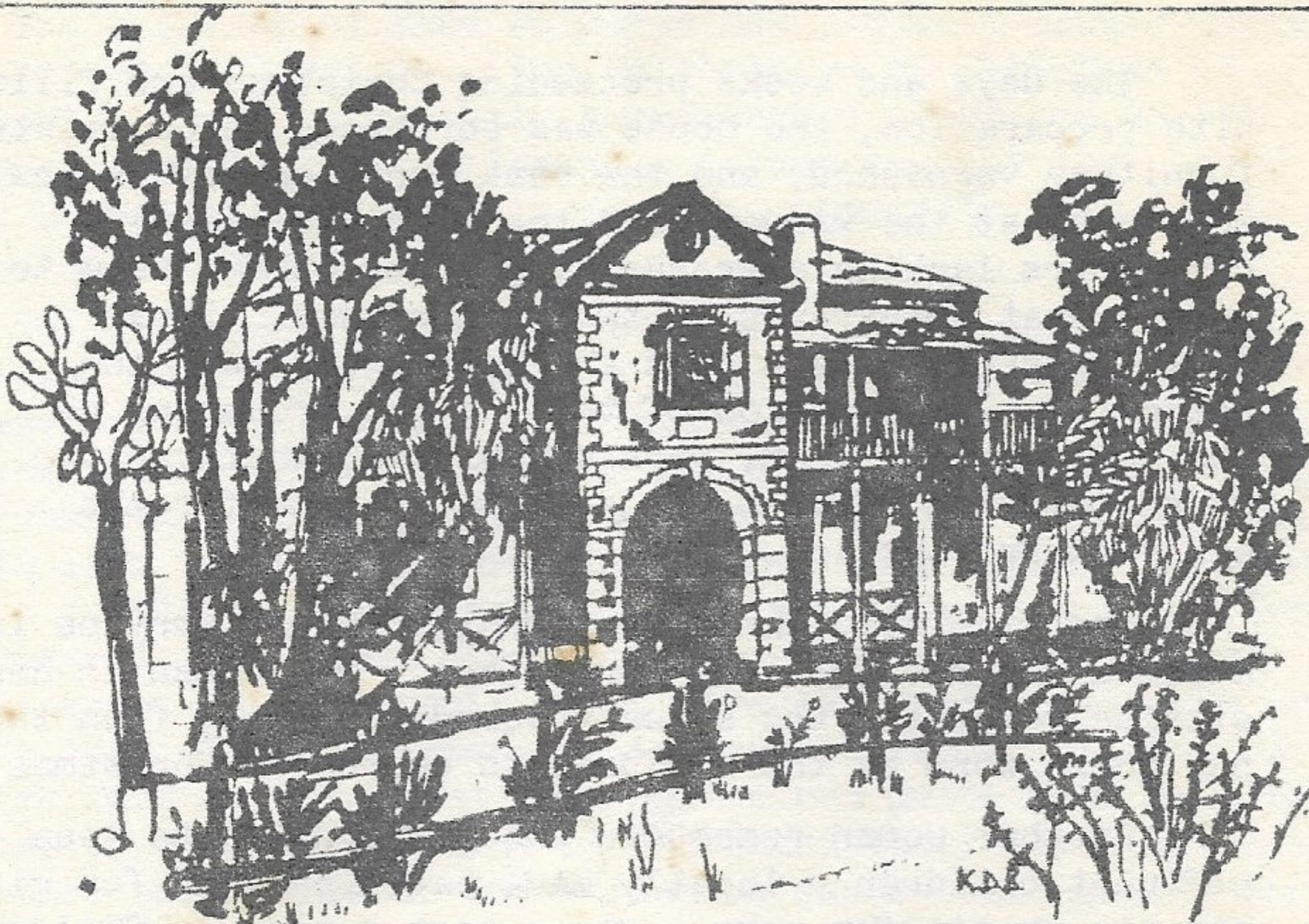
The five a.m. Christmas morning church service is still a favorite of many Barbadians. One woman in her sixties remembers the squeaky sounds emitting from the new shoes worn by the children to church on Christmas.

Another woman remembers the gifts given to less affluent children - locally made paper baskets for girls and pin wheels for boys - these cost a penny. Children in more comfortable circumstances were afforded the pleasure of imported toys. "Crackers" - a gaily decorated paper bauble containing small gifts and treats and created to open when pulled at the Christmas dinner table is a tradition brought from England and adopted by some Barbadians.

Memories are made of these. Because memories make us what we are knowing the background of our memories helps us understand ourselves. The musician remembers sounds, tunes, rhythms and phrasing. The good cook, with a love for cooking, remembers recipes and the special touch that brings distinction. The accountant remembers figures and the devoted family member remembers the activities that do their part in creating traditions.

Christmas is the time to remember the sometimes forgotten, a time to renew old friendships - a time to reflect on the past and to look forward, with hope, to the future.





The Museum Barbados

Kathleen D. Berman is mounting an art exhibition "ALL ABOUT BARBADOS", which will be on exhibit December 18 - January 18.

Mrs. Berman, who was born and educated in London, has been living in Barbados since January, 1984. She specialised in illustration at the Central School of Arts and Crafts in Holburn and gained the National Diploma in Art and Design. Mrs. Berman taught part-time while writing and illustrating books. She has participated in two shows in Barbados, "Art 84" and had her first one person show at A Framing Place.

**Museum Closed**

**December 21 thru December 26 and January 1**