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THE WEST INDIES DISPLAYED

Prints of the West Indies cover a period of roughly 150 years—from the close of the 17th. century until the mid 19th. century. The hey-day of these prints was from *circa* 1780 to 1850. Towards the close of the 19th. century the camera became popular and photographs took the place of steel engravings and lithographs as a means of recording scenery and the picturesque.

Earlier, illustrations appeared in books in the form of woodcuts, wood engravings or copper engravings. Richard Ligon's *History of Barbados* published in 1657 contains plates of natural history subjects. Father Du Tetre's *The History of the Carriby Islands* translated by John Davies and published in 1660 also contains a number of natural history and ethnographical illustrations. By 1722, when Father Jean-Baptiste Labat's *Nouveau Voyage aux Isles de L'Amérique* was published, the woodcut illustrations were quite numerous. Some of these are of especial interest such as the making of indigo, or the illustrations relating to the history of sugar. Included in this work are not only natural history subjects but those of ethnography, manufacturing processes as well as maps and plans. Father Labat visited the British Islands in the Caribbean between two wars with France and appears to have acted as a spy. It is to be regretted that books containing prints are often mutilated for the sake of their prints.

Some maps also contain sketches of topographical or architectural interest. James Ogilby's map of Barbados 1671, bears a scene depicting a sugar mill being revolved by slave power. William Mayo's map of Barbados, 1722, has a vignette of Codrington College.

The artists who made the drawings for the book illustrations were, in most cases, the authors. But later when larger prints were published, not as book illustrations, the subject matter of the original drawing was sometimes slightly re-arranged, so that it is not always easy today to identify exactly the viewpoint of a particular panorama. The

majority of these artists were amateurs. For the most part they were soldiers, sailors, clergymen or ladies, who were travellers, or exiles from their native land serving in the Caribbean. Amid a new and strange setting with its luxurious and often contorted vegetation, its fever-haunted swamps, its fantastic colours and, above all, its brilliant sunlight, the artists felt compelled to record such unfamiliar scenes. This artistic recording of the Caribbean Islands was probably to some extent a form of escapism from the deadly monotony and routine of service life in the tropics. But this interest went deeper.

The English taste for topographical descriptive art dated from Tudor times. The then new English gentry commissioned portraits of their houses and parks from itinerant artists, and of themselves from artists of higher standing. Before the days of Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712—1778) and his views on Nature, it had been considered that Nature was crude and ugly. The Electress Sophia of Hanover in her *Memoirs*,⁽¹⁾ states that as a young married woman when she did the Grand Tour neither she nor any member of her party bothered even to look out of the coach windows as they travelled from Bologna to Rome. Instead, her party played cards.

Later, picturesque landscape became fashionable. This was the result of foreign artists working in Rome, who were deeply impressed by their romantic surroundings and the architectural ruins of a civilisation much earlier than their own. A French artist, Nicholas Poussin (1592—1665) created the picturesque-classical landscape which was developed and popularised by Claude Gellée ‡ (1600—1682) and his followers, who included an English artist, Richard Wilson (1714—1782). Wilson returned to England to romanticise and immortalise the Welsh landscape. He is sometimes called the 'Father of English landscape'. Young gentlemen of birth returning from the Grand Tour often brought home with them landscapes by

‡ More popularly Claude le Lorraine, after his native province.

Poussin and his followers to grace their country seats.

In Britain, Richard Wilson, who became the first Secretary of the newly founded Royal Academy, did much to popularise topographical art. Albums of views, cathedrals, castles, country houses etc., also became popular. (2)

It is not surprising, therefore, that with the deeper interest being taken in topographical art and landscape in Britain, those who journeyed to the tropical Caribbean should wish to make drawings and paintings of the strange and wonderful panoramas they saw before them. The picturesque landscape, its inhabitants, whether Caribs, coloured folk, or the plantocracy, the luxurious vegetation the bizarre fruit and flowers all attracted the eye. For those on active service, there was more than a passing interest in the fortifications, harbours and battles of the Caribbean.

Yet, for all its unfamiliar forms and colours, the topography of the West Indies was tamed by artists, engravers and lithographers. Thus, the rugged grandeur of its mountains appear as the Downs on a sunny day; the Caribbean more closely resembles in colour the Straits of Dover, for gone are its indigo violet and aquamarine tints, and towns, like St. Pierre, more than 100 years before it was reduced to a pile of rubble by Mt. Pelé in 1902, look like a Cornish village. Yet this draining of colour was necessary for the media used. Thus, we are able to examine the topography of the islands as these were seen through the eyes of several generations ago. This is part of the period charm of these prints. It was left to the oil painters of the 20th. century to depict the Caribbean scene as we see it today. Its colours and forms are enshrined in the Martiniquan landscapes of Paul Gauguin (1848—1903) and the sable Jamaican beauties of Augustus John (1878—1961).

Half a dozen of the artists who were responsible for the original drawings of West Indian prints were known for their work outside the Caribbean. Benjamin West, P.R.A. (1738—1806), the American born historical painter, was responsible for "An Indian Chief of the Island of Cuba addressing Columbus concerning a future state", which was engraved by Bartolozzi and is found in Bryan Edwards's *History of the West Indies*. (3) Nicholas Pocock (1741—1821), a well known marine painter, who was present at the Battle of the "Glorious First of June" in 1794 and whose painting of the action between the *Brunswick* and the *Vengeur* hangs in the National Maritime Museum, London, also portrayed the Caribbean. He depicted battle scenes such as Rodney's action off the Saintes in 1782, 'Sir John Moore's attack off Basse-terre, Guadeloupe' as well as more peaceful topographical views of Dominica and Antigua. Robert Dodd (1748—1816), another marine artist painted the close of the Battle of the Saints, when de Grasse's flag-ship strikes to the *Barfleur*. Richard Paton (1716—1791) also painted the Battle of the Saints, which was engraved by James Fittler. (4)

Agostino Brunias, a Roman painter of whom not a great deal is known, was first heard of

in 1752, when he won a third prize for his painting of "Tobias and the Angel" at the Academia del Disegno di S. Luca, Rome. He was later employed by Robert Adam who also took him to England. He exhibited his paintings in London and went to the West Indies in the 1770's living principally at Dominica. He returned to England and lived in Soho, exhibiting at the Royal Academy in 1777 and 1779, where he showed "A Negro Market" and "A View of the Island of Dominica". Many of his paintings were owned by Sir William Young, Governor of Tobago, who permitted engravings to be made of these to illustrate a Bryan Edwards's *History of the West Indies*. Brunias also depicted scenes in St. Domingo, St. Vincent, St. Kitts, Dominica and Barbados. He was a figure artist of much talent: his figures are always most harmoniously grouped and his work has much delicacy and refinement. (5)

Thomas Rowlandson (1756—1827), one of the most famous English caricaturists, depicted Rachel Pringle of Barbados in 1796. This buxom, mulatto lady is remembered in Barbadian history in connection with the wrecking of her hotel in Bridgetown by Prince William Henry (later King William IV) and his companions on 29th. November 1786. This escapade cost the Prince £700, and Rachel renamed her Hotel the 'Royal Naval Hotel' in consequence. (6)

The artist Jean Michael Cazabon is in a different category. Unlike most of the artists who depicted the Caribbean, he was a West Indian born. Of French ancestry, he was born in Port-of-Spain, Trinidad, in 1813 and educated at St. Edmund's College, Ware. He studied medicine in Paris, but, as he could not stand the sight of blood, he abandoned this profession. He then studied painting under Paul de la Roche, a popular artist of the day, and painted in Italy. Having married a French lady he returned to Trinidad. In 1860, he went to Martinique where he taught in all the principal Schools. He returned to Trinidad in 1870 where he also taught painting in the schools and colleges. He was remembered as an old gentleman with white hair who could not control his pupils. Two volumes of coloured lithographs of Trinidad, after his paintings were published in Paris 1851 and 1857. (7) His work was of a very high quality as can be seen from his original pictures, some of which are preserved in the Victoria Institute, Port-of-Spain, Trinidad. An exhibition of his work was held in Port-of-Spain in 1917.

Lieutenant John Herbert Caddy is one of the few soldier artists of whom we have some information. He was responsible for a very beautiful series of 12 aquatints in 1837 of St. Lucia (4), St. Vincent (5), St. Kitts (2), and Dominica (1). This series originally cost £3. 10/-. In 1816, he was a Cadet at Woolwich and he was stationed for 10 years in the West Indies as an officer of the Royal Regiment of Artillery. He became a Captain in 1840. He married Georgina, daughter of Colonel Richard Hamilton, by whom he had 3 sons and 4 daughters. He retired on half pay in 1844 and settled in Canada. He died in 1887, at Hamilton, Ontario, aged 86.

Some years ago there came to the Barbados Museum a grandson of Lieutenant Caddy, Mr. R. E. Young of Toronto. This gentleman then owned 22 original paintings by his grand-father. Mr. Young was visiting the sites of his grand-father's paintings of the Caribbean and was endeavouring to compare photographs of the sites as they then existed with his grand-father's paintings. (8)

Within the scope of this article it is not possible to list the wood-cuts, engravings and lithographs of the West Indies, but mention must be made of certain of these. The sugar industry is represented by 10 coloured aquatints of Antigua made from drawings by William Clarke, published in 1828. R. Bridgen's "West Indian Scenery" of 27 colour plates about 1830, also depicts sugar-making in Trinidad, together with views of the island and illustrations of slaves being punished.

The only series dealing exclusively with Barbados is one of lithographs from drawings by Lieutenant J. W. Carter of the Royal Regiment, which were published in 1836. This consists of 10 lithographs. One of these is of the monument designed by John Lowther which now stands on a triangle at the top of the Garrison Hill. On it is an inscription which commemorates 14 soldiers and one married woman of the 36th. Regiment who were killed by the destruction of Barracks and Hospital during the hurricane of 1831 and whose remains lie close by. One of the lithographs shows the monument at its original site on the sea side of the Hastings Road, opposite to the entrance of the Military Hospital, now Pavilion Court.

Sir Robert Schomburgk, the author of the well known *History of Barbados*, (9) was also responsible for the letterpress which illustrated 12 coloured plates by Charles Bentley of the Interior of British Guiana. In one instance there was a collaboration between a husband and wife—Lieutenant and Mrs. R. E. Porter were responsible for a series of 11 fine lithograph views of Dominica.

A series of 14 aquatints by John Eckstein, published in 1805, depict H.M.S. *Diamond Rock*. The drawings were made on the spot and show not only the occupation of the Rock, the building of fortifications and the life of the Garrison but portraits of the Officers. During the French war *Diamond Rock* was garrisoned by 120 men and boys. It was held for 17 months by the British. (10)

A series of exceptional interest was published in Jamaica, entitled "Sketches of Character," 12 coloured lithographs illustrating habits, occupations and costumes, published in 1837—38. These were the work of J. M. Belisario. "The Milk-woman"—with a tray on her head, "The Watersellers" and "The Chimney Sweep" recall the itinerant tradesmen of a vanished age. The titles of many are as attractive as the lithographs—"Queen or "Maam" of "the Set Girls". Another shows the "Red Set Girls & Jack-in-the-Green", here two groups of girls with sunshades and ostrich feathers in their gay hats stand on either side of "Jack-in-the-Green", who is covered by coconut branches with only his dark feet emerging.

In caricature, the modesty of the artist sometimes only permitted him to sign with initials as "JF", who was responsible for the well-known coloured lithograph of "A West Indian Sportsman", published in 1807, which refers to shooting birds. Here the sportsman lounges under a large umbrella supported by a slave. Another slave approaches with a large glass of sangaree, whilst a third chases flies away. "AJ", was responsible for two excellent caricatures "A Grand Jamaica Ball", and "Segar Smoking Society", two coloured lithographs published in 1802. These are attributed to Ensign Abraham James of 67th. Regiment of Foot (afterwards 2nd. Bn Hampshire Regiment). Both lithographs are amusing social records.

A lady who remains anonymous, was responsible for the original drawing of St. Paul's Church, Bay Street, Bridgetown, which was later lithographed and sold in aid of the erection of a Free Chapel School on Rebutt's land. Another lady, Frances Lord, the niece of Samuel Hall Lord, the builder of Long Bay Castle, Barbados, made an interesting drawing of the Castle and its surroundings, which was lithographed about 1840. The lithograph shows a herd of deer on the beach.

An unusual engraving is the mezzotint of William Unsah Sessarakoo, an African prince. Sessarakoo was entrusted by his father, John Bannishee Corrantee Ohinnee of Anamaboe (a seaport town on the coast of Ghana) to a Captain, who sold Sessarakoo as a slave at Barbados in 1744. Four years later he was redeemed at the earnest request of his father. The mezzotint is after a painting by a German artist, Gabriel Mathias. Sessarakoo's Memoirs were published in England. (12).

The earliest print of Barbados is the copperplate engraving "A Prospect of Bridgetown in Barbados" by Samuel Copen, engraved by J. Kip, 1695. A formidable array of ships are shown in Carlisle Bay and the panorama of the island extends from Needham's Point to Fontabelle. The print is dedicated to H. E. Col. Francis Russell, Captain-General and Chief Governor of Barbados.

The Society received a handsome bequest in 1962 of 63 coloured prints of the West Indies from Sir Edward Cunard, Bart., Several of the prints from the collection have been cleaned and together with other prints belonging to the Society form a unique collection. The Gallery devoted to this collection was formerly a store room. Pilasters from Unionville, White Park, formerly the home of Miss Ethel Sanderson, were donated when the building was taken over by *The Barbados Daily News*. The pilasters now form an architectural feature at the end of the gallery and frame the doorway. Between the pilasters hangs a drawing of Sir Edward Cunard, which was made during a visit to Barbados by his cousin Olive Snell, a well-known artist, and in private life the wife of Colonel Eben Pike. This drawing was the gift of Victor Marson Esq. The floor of terraza tiles was the generous gift of Mr. & Mrs. George Ingham of Connecticut, who have spent many winters in Barbados and take a deep interest in the Museum.

NEVILLE CONNELL

NOTES

1. *Memoirs of Sophia, Electress of Hanover*, ed. by H. Forrester, 1888 at p. 116.
2. *English Painting* by R. H. Wilenski, 1943, Chapter V.
3. Published 1794.
4. *Dictionary of National Biography*.
5. "Agostino Brunias, Romano" by Hans Huth, *Connoisseur*, Vol. CLI, December 1962, pp. 265—269. I am grateful to Mr. & Mrs. Peter Campbell for having brought the article to my attention.
6. "Rachel Pringle of Barbados" by Sir Algernon Aspinall, *Journal of Barbados Museum & Historical Society* Vol. IX, pp. 111—119 A photograph of Rowlandson's print faces p.116. "Prince William Henry's visits to Barbados in 1786 & 1789" by Neville Connell, *Journal of B.M. & H.S.* Vol. 25, pp. 157—164.
7. *The West India Committee Circular* 1923, Vol. 38, p.152.
8. "J. H. Caddy Paintings of the West Indies" by T. Sheppard, *Journal of B.M. & H.S.*, Vol. 3 pp. 186—7.
9. Published London 1847.
10. "The Diamond Rock", Chap. VI of *West Indian Tales of Old* by A. E. Aspinall, 1912, p.124.
11. *West India Committee Circular* 1938. Vol. 53 p 35.
12. "William Unsah Sessarakoo", *Journal of B.M. & H.S.* Vol. 27 p.1 "Royal African or Memoirs of the Young Prince Annamaboe etc." c. 1737.

A NOTABLE AQUISITION

In 1953, as the result of a generous grant to this Society by the National Art Collections Fund, London, the Society was able to purchase a fine silver-gilt covered cup of 1798—9 by William Eley, a London silversmith. This cup is of great historic interest to Barbados, apart from being a handsome piece of plate. It had been presented to Major John Martin Morris, the owner of Jeeves or Boscobelle Plantation, St. Andrew, by the Officers of the St. Andrew's Battalion of the Militia, as a 'testimony of profound respect for him as their Commander and Affectionate Regard as their friend.' The presentation was made on 16th April 1818.

The covered cup bears the Morris Crest and Arms and stands 15 inches high. The lid is decorated with 3 thistle leaves and a thistle head form the terminal. The body of the cup is also decorated with thistle leaves as befits a presentation from the St. Andrew's Battalion of 6th Northern or Scotland Regiment. Major Morris was promoted to Colonel of the St. Andrew's Regiment when the Scotland Regiment was split into two separate Regiments — St. Andrew's Regiment and St. Joseph's Regiment. Colonel Morris, aged 52, was a victim of injuries received during the terrible hurricane of 10—11 August, 1831. With his daughter Mrs. Susannah Foderingham he was buried beneath the walls of Boscobelle when part of the building fell. *

Colonel John Martin Morris had 3 children; his eldest son, Richard Morris was left $\frac{1}{2}$ the Boscobelle plantation with the privilege of purchasing the other half share which was left as to $\frac{1}{4}$ to his brother, George Henry Morris and as to the other $\frac{1}{4}$ to his sister,

Mrs. Susannah Foderingham, who survived the injuries sustained during the 1831 hurricane. Richard Morris became Colonel of the 10th Regiment of St. Andrew's Militia, thus following in his father's footsteps.

On 4th April 1838, 20 years after the presentation to his father, Colonel Richard Morris was presented with an identical silver gilt cup to that received by his father. The wording of the inscription on the cup varies slightly:

Presented by the Officers

OF

*the 10th. Regt. of St. Andrews Militia of the
Island of Barbados*

to Colonel Richard Morris, in *Testimony of their high respect for his efficient, Gentlemanly and URBANE CONDUCT AS THEIR COMMANDER coupled with the strongest affection and regard for his worth*

as their Friend

4th April 1838.

The cup was made by the firm of Edward Barnard, Edward Barnard, Jr., John Barnard and William Barnard of London, and bears the date letter of 1839—40.

Once again this Society is deeply indebted to the National Art Collections Fund, London. This fund has most generously made a grant to enable the Society to purchase the second Morris cup from the executors of a local estate. Both cups now make a most imposing display.

* "The Morris Cup" & "Colonel John Martin Morris," *B.M. & H.S. Journal*, Vol. XXI, p. 2 105—6.