Popular Culture

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The past does have its value and our knowledge of it is precious. By preserving the literary evidence of our past, by preserving the documents, the songs, the stories—we preserve an essential link with the past. History depends for its existence on this work of preservation. Without evidence, there is no history. Through history we can know the past, and know ourselves by knowing how we have come to be what we are.

Elsa Goveia, 1959

The ability to recollect and recount experiences is integral to cultural development. All cultures are shaped and defined by past experiences, and the Anglo-Caribbean culture is no different in this regard. Recalling social and economic experiences contributes to the development of a cultural identity and supports both the retention and evolution of cultural norms and practices. Past experiences, once recounted by griots or storytellers in pre-colonial Africa, reside not only in the hearts, minds, and memories of people, but also through resources which provide both a visual and verbal record of events. Looking back at past events encourages acceptance and appreciation of the social, political, and cultural influences which mold society.

This paper will discuss the role of oral and visual collections as heritage knowledgebases and supporters of cultural identity. The critical issues which help shape identity and contribute to the development of Anglo-Caribbean popular culture will also be addressed. Attention will be given to documenting major oral and visual collections in Barbados, and their contribution towards a fuller understanding of Barbadian culture and identity.

The political and social events in the Caribbean region over the last three hundred years have had a significant impact on the formation of cultural trends and cultural heritage development. Caribbean territories were created as a result of political jostling for control among the Spanish, French, Dutch, and English. As a consequence, many islands reflect diverse aspects of European culture. When merged with the customs and practices of the indigenous
Amerindians, and people transported as cheap labour from Africa and Asia, a cultural melting pot emerges which reflects the cultures of people of European, Amerindian, African, and Asian origin. This intertwining of traditions and customs has produced what can be loosely termed “Caribbean culture.”

Cultural anthropologists are aware of the challenges faced when attempting to succinctly define culture. In addition to addressing customs and lifestyles, culture also embraces tangible and intangible factors. Culture is regarded as a combination of ideas and beliefs by some, while others prefer to look at specific behavior, such as institutions and administrations, buildings and houses, and the influence used to regulate people’s lives (Eller 2009, 25). *The New Oxford Dictionary of English* (1998) attempts to address both tangible and intangible culture by offering the following definition: “The arts and other manifestations of human intellectual achievement regarded collectively. The customs, art, social institutions and achievements of a particular nation, people or other social group.” In an attempt to coin an anthropologically based definition of culture, Eller (2009, 25) identifies Taylor’s definition, which suggests that “culture includes knowledge, belief, art, moral, law, custom and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society.” While giving more weight to the intangible influences of culture, this definition acknowledges the multiplicity of issues which have an impact on cultural development as well as cultural identity.

The literature provides several definitions and discussions on popular culture, with many theorists supporting an interpretation that popular culture emerged out of the industrial revolution (Parker 2011, 148). When applied to Caribbean society, one recognizes that popular culture has existed in the region for over two hundred years. This evolving and ever-changing aspect of popular culture encourages researchers to recognize its dynamic nature.

Popular culture has been defined as a “form of culture emanating from the modern period that is both produced and consumed by the masses” (Parker 2011, 152). It has also been described as an aspect of culture which has evolved out of the daily living experiences of people, has become their expression of self-identity, and eventually the *modus operandi*, accepted approach, and lifestyle of the majority. Essentially, it is the form of culture which is favored and enjoyed by many people (Parker 2011, 162).

**Anglo-Caribbean Cultural Awareness and Identity**

The concept of Caribbean popular culture has been debated since the early 1900s, with much attention given to the impact of the changing social and political landscape on the transformation of Caribbean identity (Edwards 2001, v). This emergence from a colonial society into one more conscious of an independent identity, gave rise to a nationalist psyche which encouraged the development of literature, visual arts, and expression through dance and acting (Edwards 2001, vi). Since popular culture is considered fluid and dynamic in
nature, administrators of cultural policy are challenged to be sensitive to it by developing policies that are responsive to the continuously changing demands of the field (Mulcahy 2006, 325).

Anglo-Caribbean culture has been influenced by three major phases, which can be described as preslavery, slavery, and postcolonial. The European competition for colonies, the system of slavery and indenture, and a method of administration which exploited divisions of race and class, can all be considered elements which shaped the development of Caribbean culture (Lewis 1983, 10). Colonialism forced the colonists and the enslaved to work and live together, thereby establishing the foundation for the development of a plural society. In spite of a forced assimilation, some level of social and cultural separateness occurred, with divisions often established along lines of ethnicity and class (Eller 2009, 306–9). Postcolonial Anglo-Caribbean territories struggled to massage the economic and social status quo of the colonial period. These efforts ultimately led to the emergence of political and cultural nationalism. During this period an expansion in cultural expression and national pride developed. These newly independent nations began to refashion values and attitudes in an effort to adequately reflect those of a multiracial and multi-religious society (Lewis 1987, 325–28).

Geographically, the area known as the Anglo-Caribbean is defined as an archipelago of islands stretching from Trinidad and Tobago in the south to Jamaica further north.¹ The social, cultural, and historical similarities which exist between the mainland countries of Guyana and Belize and those of the English-speaking Caribbean islands, have led to the inclusion of those nations in a political definition of the Anglo-Caribbean. Although the Anglo-Caribbean shares cultural similarities in music, language, food, and folklore, unique social, political, and environmental conditions within each territory have resulted in adaptations in these areas. While differences are recognizable, similarities outweigh them, so that the Anglo-Caribbean region is recognized by social and cultural characteristics which collectively bind them together and distinguish them from surrounding neighbours. This is especially noticeable in the expressions of popular culture which predominate in contemporary Caribbean culture.

A full appreciation of the emergence of popular culture in Barbados requires an understanding of the social and economic environment which dominated the cultural landscape in its colonial and postcolonial periods. Although the island is a member of the social, political, and cultural group of former British Caribbean colonies, Barbados experienced unique sociocultural conditions which impacted the development of their national identity and culture. As early as the 1660s, Barbados had a fully functioning planter class (Beckles 1990, 24). The island also had a slave code which started in 1661 in order to ensure “the better ordering and governing of Negroes.” This essentially functioned as the legal basis for slave-planter relationships (Beckles 1990, 33).
The fact that it is the only Anglo-Caribbean Island which remained under British control, from the year of its colonization in 1627 to its independence from Britain in 1966 points to the level of domination by one culture over the working class population. This unbroken legacy of dominance has enabled the culture of the colonizer to remain as a significant feature in Barbadian society to this day. The island’s unofficial name, “Little England,” illustrates the extent to which colonial Barbadian society was culturally forced to mirror British customs and societal structure (Stafford 2005, 104). Although similar stratifications by race and class occurred in almost every Caribbean territory, in Barbados, non-European expressions of culture and customs were discouraged. Marshall describes colonial Barbados as a society in which a racial caste system flourished and local culture was considered “culturally subordinate to British norms and values” (2001, 1). For example, laws prohibiting the use of the African drum were enforced in the early 1600s in an attempt to suppress any links to an African identity (Burrowes 2000, 97). The Anglican religion was dominant on the island, and at one time there was only a marginal separation of church and state.

As a consequence, attempts are ongoing in an independent Barbados, to reawaken a formerly subdued African heritage and encourage cultural acceptance and self-pride. The society experienced an upsurge in cultural appreciation and national pride as they became more aware of other aspects of their culture (Joseph 2012, 18–19). This awakening took many forms, from attempts to record oral histories and otherwise document social and living conditions, to a heightened awareness and metamorphosis of expression in drama, music, dance, and visual art (Marshall 2001, 1). The establishment of a National Cultural Foundation (NCF), and the launch of the National Independence Festival of Creative Arts (NIFCA), gave more recognition and impetus to raising national awareness and pride and were critical to cultural and national development (Marshall 2001, 3).² The National Development Plan for Barbados also supported and continues to support this movement with calls for the promotion of values and customs that collectively contribute to the development of a cultural identity (Barbados Government 1993, 175).

The supportive relationship which culture provides to economic development is also recognized. This Draft Plan of Action calls for “an informed respect for our cultural heritage” as an attainable goal for every Barbadian (Barbados. Ministry of Education 1996, 6). Interestingly, the document also addresses the need to preserve cultural heritage and the importance of capturing the oral and folk traditions (Barbados. Ministry of Education 1996, 20).

The Role of Oral and Visual Records in Strengthening Cultural Awareness and Identity

A greater appreciation of the socioeconomic circumstances which influenced Caribbean culture is obtained through the development of collections
which focus on acquiring nontraditional resources. The collecting of oral history or the “collection of spoken memories and personal commentaries of historical significance through recorded interviews” is one important way of capturing vital information (Ritchie 1995, 1). Allowing people to reflect and reminisce about their lives and experiences provides the researcher with an opportunity to identify data which can be used to educate, support cultural development, and strengthen the identity of working people, whose lives were not normally documented (Parks and Thompson 1998, ix). Although primary written sources provide a historical record, the oral account gives information on the same subject from a different perspective. Oral history captures the social experience of the average person and documents language, folklore, customs, and infrastructure. It is a powerful tool as it records issues and situations which often escape the written historical account (Sitton 1983, 4). Ultimately, oral history collections provide support and definition to a nation’s cultural identity and awareness. By documenting the scope and content of these collections, it is hoped that knowledge of their existence will sensitize people to the important role they play in raising cultural awareness and pride.

The major oral history and postcard collections in Barbados are located at the Cave Hill Campus of The University of the West Indies (UWI) and the National Library Service (NLS). The following sections will examine these collections.

First Person Plural

“First Person Plural” is one of the earliest known oral history projects in Barbados. Located at The UWI Cave Hill campus, Barbados, “First Person Plural” was initiated as a UNESCO-funded project through the Commonwealth Caribbean Resource Centre (COMCARC). The objective of the project was to document and make sound recordings of various aspects of Barbadian culture. The project ran from approximately 1974 to 1975 and was coordinated by John Wickham, a respected Barbadian literary critic. “First Person Plural” recruited researchers to assist with data collection, and secondary school students to transcribe audio tapes. The project sought to capture the ideas and opinions of people considered knowledgeable in particular professional activities or fields of work. It also hoped to record the activities and practices of daily life, such as religious customs, modes of dress, and moral values of Barbadians during the early part of the twentieth century. Approximately forty people representing a range of pursuits were interviewed, including musicians, trade unionists, literary critics, and writers. In an effort to capture experiences from a wider cross-section of society, interviews were also conducted with people in a geriatric hospital. As indicated at the project’s conception, the interviewers focused on social and religious values, customs, modes of dress, and food. On completion of the interviews, the transcripts were lodged with the Ministry of Education and subsequently deposited with the National Archives of Barbados.
The Oral History Project (OHP) at UWI, Cave Hill

The oral history and nonprint collections on the other two campuses of The UWI—St. Augustine (Trinidad and Tobago) and Mona (Jamaica)—are well documented. A smaller but similar collection exists at the Cave Hill campus, and the collection provides the researcher with a singular glimpse into the social history of Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean.

The Oral History Project (OHP) at The UWI Cave Hill Campus was started by the Department of History sometime during the period between 1974 and 1975. The project was spearheaded by Professor Woodville Marshall, Dr. Tony Phillips, and some postgraduate students (Rouse-Jones and Brown 2000, 25). They recognized the importance of supplementing printed or traditional sources of information with firsthand accounts. This project has the distinction of being one of the oldest continuous projects at the Cave Hill Campus. Its broad objective is to “utilize oral history methodology to facilitate research into under documented areas of local history and to capture the perspective of non-elites” (OHP Report Sept 2010, 2). More specifically, the project has the following goals: identification of research areas and appropriate interviewees; collection, transcription, and preservation of the information; provision of training in oral history techniques and the development of local history research in the Department of History, Cave Hill Campus.

The OHP has conducted over one hundred fifty interviews, which amount to over three hundred hours of taped material, much of it collected on audio cassettes. All tapes, CDs, transcripts, and equipment have been indexed and are stored together in the OHP room. The tapes are not accessible to the public but can be used by postgraduate research students.

The initial objective was to utilize the oral history methodology as a means of capturing various social and cultural events, specifically the lifestyle, customs and traditions of the working class. The project focused initially on documenting plantation and village life; the growth and development of socio-cultural institutions, such as friendly societies; and the emergence of cricket clubs. As a consequence, the OHP has captured and recorded several life histories of Barbadians from a wide cross-section of society. Attempts were also made to record the evolution of the local business sector, the emergence of the labour movement, and the development of local politics (OHP Report 2010, 2).

Scope of the Collection

The OHP has developed an important and wide-ranging collection of several hundred hours of interviews and taped recordings. Much of the oral history material has been collected by undergraduate and postgraduate students, as part of the research for their history or cultural studies courses. The project has also received grants that facilitate the documentation of the national heritage.
One such grant funded a project called “Preserving Alternative Caribbean Voices” (OHP Report 2010, 3).

The OHP has undertaken to collect data that documents the development of The UWI Cave Hill campus. Extensive interviews were recorded with the late Sir Sidney Martin, a former principal. These interviews were conducted over a two-year period and provide valuable insight into the issues surrounding the early stages of campus development. Another early endeavor of the OHP involved interviews aimed at collecting information on the formation of Rock Hall, the first free village in Barbados. These interviews give useful information on the post emancipation period and the socioeconomic issues which affected the former slave population.

Activities undertaken by the labour movement in the 1970s and 1980s were documented during interviews conducted with the late Wynter Crawford. These interviews formed the basis for the publication of a book on his life—*I Speak for the People*—edited by Woodville Marshall, who was also instrumental in gathering information on the first free village in Barbados. Part of the OHP collection is comprised of donations of work by regional and international researchers. These include some useful specialized primary resources which document Barbadian social history, such as:

- **The Connie Sutton Collection**
  Conducted between 1989 and 1990 by an anthropologist, this collection of field interviews attempts to describe plantation and tenantry life in Barbados.

- **Fraternities and Friendly Societies in Barbados**
  This collection includes interviews held with people associated with Free Masonry and friendly societies. The collection also provides information on the Cooperative Credit Union movement and the Landship Movement.

- **Barbados Migration to Cuba**
  Information in this area was collected as part of the work undertaken for a doctoral thesis “From Bridgetown to Baragua” in which oral testimonies were extensively used. This collection is particularly valuable because it provides useful insights into an otherwise little-known area, of the life of Barbadian migrants in Cuba.

- **The Barbadian Middle Class**
  This collection contains approximately fifteen interviews which were conducted from 2003 through 2004. It focuses on the growth, development, and life histories of the black middle class between 1838 and 1988.
• Barbados/UK Migration Project
“Collecting the Memories: The Barbados/UK Migration Experience,” is one of the more interesting projects undertaken in collaboration with the OHP. It was initiated by Barbadian migrants to the UK who had returned to Barbados and wanted to record their journeys in both directions. Launched in 2003, the project includes over sixty interviews. All tapes have been transcribed and additional supportive materials, such as photographs, have been digitized. This project also spawned several other parallel ones, such as research into migration and gender in Caribbean society.

• Gender in Caribbean History
This project, called “Remembering the West Indies Federation,” seeks to record the life stories of men and women by looking at the impact of class, race, and gender on their lives. It is one of the largest collections in the OHP, which also has a regional focus and collaborates with The UWI Federal Archives Centre to document the short-lived West Indies Federation. Launched in 2006, the project’s interviews were conducted in audio and video formats with people who were directly involved with the West Indies Federation, which lasted from 1958 to 1962 (UWI 2010, 4).

Looking Ahead
In spite of the challenges of limited storage and funding, the OHP continues to pursue new projects. The importance of documenting oral and intangible heritage is recognized and more emphasis will be given to this area in the future. In a society where records of the past are predominantly oral in nature, this activity compares to preserving written culture in other societies.

The survival of the OHP depends on adequate funding to support the purchase of storage and recording equipment, adequate accommodation for staff and student researchers, and the provision of training on the methodology used in oral research. Attention is also being given to the cataloging and preservation of collected material. Recommendations have been made on the ideal environmental conditions for the storage of tapes, as well as the correct archival equipment required to ensure their long term survival. Some consideration is also being given to the development of an automated catalogue and the establishment of a sound archive, which would ensure the digitization and preservation of sound bites and images. The establishment of a Centre for Memory, which will encompass both genealogical research as well as oral history, is also compelling attention. The introduction of a Certificate in Genealogical Studies by the Department of History would make the development of such a centre imperative. In addition, along with a photograph collection also being
considered to support the audio, this unit would strengthen linkages between oral history and genealogical research.

Initially, the oral history heritage program focused on buildings and tangible heritage. More recognition is now given to documenting oral and intangible heritage. The documentation of popular culture is no longer regarded as a mere offshoot of related topics, such as the labour movement and politics, but has become an area of scholarly interest in its own right. Earlier collaborative attempts initiated between The UWI, The National Library Service (NLS) and the National Cultural Foundation (NCF) to establish a national oral history program, have not yet materialized, primarily due to limited resources (UWI 2010, 2). However, this seems a logical way to best utilize scarce resources, reduce duplication, and ensure the capture of the broadest base of information.

The National Library of Barbados’s Oral History Collection

The National Library’s Oral History Collection provides a unique and fascinating escape into the unwritten social history of Barbados. Its primary focus is to document the political and social issues which affected Barbados during the preindependence era. The collection was started in 1989 as part of preparations for an exhibition to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the 1937 riots. While researching this topic, it was felt that written accounts of the riots, which were well-documented in official reports, could be supported by eyewitness accounts. As a base from which to start, the Summary of the Report of the Dean Commission of Enquiry, concerning the 1937 disturbances in Barbados, was used to identify suitable interviewees. Persons interviewed represented a wide cross-section of society; from politicians to the man in the street and they were asked to give an account of what they witnessed. Interviews were conducted with about fifty subjects. One of the most informative interviews recorded was with Wynter Crawford. He served as the Island’s Deputy Premier from 1961 to 1965. In 1937, he was the editor of The Observer newspaper. The location of this newspaper’s office enabled him to witness the riots from a position of safety and with a “front row” seat. Thus, his recollections provide an extremely useful account of what transpired.

In another initiative, the National Library conducted a series of interviews in preparation for a 1989 exhibition to commemorate the three hundred fiftieth anniversary of the Parliament of Barbados, the third oldest such institution in the Commonwealth. People interviewed included Theodore Branker, Speaker of the House at the time of Barbados’s independence; Lionel Hutchinson, Librarian for Parliament; and Anthony Phillips, lecturer and historian. These interviews all provided considerable insight into preindependence parliamentary procedures and activities. Following these two successful ventures of recording the social history of the island, the NLS sought international financial support in an effort to continue and expand its oral history project. Funding was received from the Organization of American States (OAS) which
facilitated training in interview techniques. In 1993, a project to interview senior citizens in the St. Michael and Christ Church Geriatric Hospitals, was started in an effort to record the lifestyle and social experiences of the average Barbadian in the 1930s and 1940s (Boyce 2011, 1).

The National Library Service’s Oral History Project also conducted interviews with subjects from across the social sector. One was with the late Jack Dear, a former corporate lawyer and chairman of the Barbados Board of Tourism. His vivid recordings of accounts by centenarians regarding the east coast railway invaluably augment the original collection of written and pictorial accounts on this now defunct mode of Barbadian transportation. The recordings are also invaluable sources of information on the sociocultural conditions which existed in Barbados in the early part of the twentieth century. The recordings have been edited and listed but most are still to be transcribed. Consequently, much of this information is unavailable to researchers as of this writing.

The National Library of Barbados’s Postcard and Photograph Collection

The National Library also has a significant collection of photographs and postcards, which contains over one thousand photographs and approximately five hundred postcards. These depict a range of topics, from early buildings and street scenes to depictions of social life and living conditions. A large number of the photographs and postcards are recorded in catalogues compiled to support variously themed exhibitions. Some of the useful photographic catalogues include, I See, I Remember: Images of Bridgetown, compiled to commemorate the three hundred seventy-fifth anniversary of Bridgetown. Another, titled The Streets of Bridgetown: A Walk Down Memory Lane, provides perspective on the changing landscape and features a vivid depiction of buildings and commercial street activity from the early 1800s.

The Postcard Collection of the Main Library, The Cave Hill Campus of The University of the West Indies

The postcard collection of the Main Library, formerly part of the Learning Resource Centre (LRC), was started around 1985 by the LRC’s then librarian, Elizabeth Watson. The mandate of the LRC was driven by the need to build a nonprint collection capable of providing audiovisual support to the campus’ curriculum. All aspects of building the collection—from identification and selection of items to budget allocations and storage arrangements—were solely determined by the librarian. When faculty and students become aware of this collection they became involved in helping to build the collection. Postcards were identified and purchased whenever they became available on the international market. In just under thirty years, over one thousand postcards were acquired. A catalogue of all postcards has been developed and is maintained in a database. The database provides the title of the postcard, if one
is available, a brief description of the subject depicted, and the date of original printing. The postcards are currently being digitized as a means of expanding access and limiting the number of people who will need to handle them.

All the islands of the English-speaking Caribbean are represented in the collection. The postcards range in age from one hundred years or more to those produced in the 1960s. The majority reflects the social and cultural history of Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean, and can be arranged under broad categories of architectural and physical structures, scenic and geographical, and social commentary or observation. The content of the postcards ranges from architectural shots of major buildings and private homes, to scenes of major towns and streets. Postcards showing various angles and locations of the Barbados railway also form part of the collection.

The postcards also inadvertently comment on the social structure and commercial activities of the population through images such as the “mauby seller,” the “sweet vendor,” and the “clay pottery vendor” which provide vivid images of the entrepreneurial efforts of a local population that no longer exists. Occupations such as the “Pan Boiler” and the primarily female “Coal Laborers” are also recorded. Postcards of the architectural structures are a lasting record of colonial buildings and other physical structures, and provide many images which no longer exist. Cards with a scenic and geographical content are interesting because they capture a familiar landscape, but also record those buildings which have disappeared. One such example is of the Beaumont Hotel, located near Bathsheba, St. Joseph, Barbados. Postcards of the tram car in Belleville and railway on the East Coast provide visual records of their earlier existence.

The postcards bearing images of the local population are perhaps the most striking, since they capture working and living conditions. Images of washerwomen, a Negro barber, or the sugar cane harvesters, are vivid reminders of working conditions and the level of poverty people endured when these postcards were produced. In addition to their photographic content, the captions and the correspondence written by senders provide even further insights into the Eurocentric perception of the Caribbean as an area of curiosity. Captions such as “Negroes and donkey,” “Three of a kind, wharf rats,” and “Native boys in rags” demonstrate a total lack of understanding or empathy for the plight and poverty of the photos’ subjects. Some of the notes also illustrate how those who bought the cards perceived local culture. Some address the language spoken by the local population. In a manner which is intended to poke fun at the language, various popular phrases frequently used by the locals are reproduced along with their caricatures. This also suggests cultural identity and how one group of people was perceived by another. This format is a very important source for gleaning information on that period of the island’s history, particularly given that there are not too many written sources of that day and time to which one can refer.
Image 1. Postcard of Barbadian Children. c1902. (Main Library, UWI)

Image 2. Postcard of Wharf Scene, Barbados. c1902. (Main Library, UWI)
Image 3. Postcard of East Coast Railway, Barbados. c1910. (Main Library, UWI)

Image 4. Postcard of Mauby Vendor and Customer, Barbados. c1910. (Main Library, UWI)
Conclusion

A people without the knowledge of their past history, origin and culture is like a tree without roots.

Marcus Garvey

The rhetorical question “Who do you think you are?” seeks to question our knowledge of those historical circumstances which influenced Caribbean development, and encourage an exploration which goes beyond a basic understanding of culture. It also seeks to build a connection to those social circumstances which shaped our society. A full understanding of the meaning of cultural identity can only be gained through the availability of historical records. To rely solely on the view of the colonial administration, or one race or class, would result and has resulted in a one-sided and biased account of social developments. The view of the indigenous population is largely ignored in written accounts on the island and region. Thus, it is the nonverbal voices of ancestral and modern day griots, who struggle to have their voices heard, that provide an opportunity to access and measure the validity of the “Other.” Theirs are the voices which, when captured on tape, provide the foundation for the evolution of popular culture and a better understanding of awareness and identity. These voices are ably supported by the historical images that are provided through postcards and other photographic media. Merely reflecting on the past cannot ensure the development of cultural awareness and identity. It is the availability of oral and pictorial records of the past which help to buttress an understanding of bygone lives and times.

NOTES

1. For the purposes of this paper, the territories which comprise the Anglophone Caribbean are: Antigua & Barbuda, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Guyana, Grenada, Jamaica, St. Kitts-Nevis, Montserrat, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and Trinidad and Tobago.

2. An Act of Parliament was passed in 1983 to establish the National Cultural Foundation (NCF). The NCF is charged with organizing two of the largest festivals in Barbados: Crop Over, which is an annual carnival to celebrate the end of the sugar cane harvest; and the National Independence Festival for Creative Arts (NIFCA) which coincides with Barbados’s independence celebrations during the month of November.

3. Although not included as part of this paper, it is worth noting that the Barbados Museum and Historical Society (BMHS) has a significant collection of audiovisual material, including postcards, photographs, slides, and oral history tapes.

4. I am grateful to Dr. Dorothy Kremser, former Project Director of the “First Person Plural” Oral History Project for providing this information.

5. I am grateful to Dr. Aviston Downes, current Coordinator of the Oral History Project (OHP) in the Dept. of History, UWI, Cave Hill campus, for providing information and departmental reports on the OHP.

6. The OHP is affiliated with the International Oral History Association in the UK. The OHP’s coordinator, Dr. Aviston Downes, served on the Executive Council of the international organization for two years.
7. I am grateful to Mrs. Evonda Callender, Deputy Librarian at the National Library Service (NLS) of Barbados, for providing this account of its Oral History Collection.

8. It is important to record some of the people interviewed for posterity. Interviews were conducted with J. L. Redhead, a storeowner and member of the volunteer force; Captain Grant, a policeman; F. A. Hoyos, a technician at the Cable and Wireless Company, who later wrote a history of Barbados and Lloyd Smith, a driver who gave an account of the impact which the riots had on the rural parishes. Some politicians interviewed were D. D. Gardner and Meneca Cox. Other eyewitness accounts were provided by Cecil Mahon, Mary Stanford, and Cameron Hewitt.

9. The Parliament of Barbados is surpassed in longevity only by those of Great Britain and Bermuda.

10. Information obtained from interview with Mrs. Evonda Callender.

11. I am grateful to Miss Elizabeth Watson, Campus Librarian, Main Library UWI Cave Hill, for providing information on the Postcard Collection.

12. Mauby is a drink made from the bark of a tree. The Dictionary of Caribbean English Usage indicates that it is a refreshing bittersweet, nonalcoholic folk drink made by fermenting or boiling the bark of the Mauby tree (Allsopp 1996, 376).

13. The pan boiler is a profession which is still associated with the sugar industry. The Dictionary of Caribbean English Usage describes the pan boiler as “Professional supervisor of the boiling and evaporation process in ‘vacuum pans’ in the crystallization of sugar.” (Allsopp 1996, 426).

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