

**BODIES, MEMORIES, AND EMPIRE:
LIFE STORIES ABOUT GROWING UP IN JAMAICA 1943 - 1965**

by

YVONNE SALOME BROWN

Teacher Certificate, Mico College 1965
BEd The University of British Columbia 1980
MEd The University of British Columbia 1983
Dip Ed The University of British Columbia 1991

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

in

THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES

(Educational Policy and Leadership)

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

April 2005

© Yvonne Salome Brown 2005

ABSTRACT

“What’s a mother?” is the first and most significant question I remember asking as a child. It led to another: “Who is my mother?” Particular events, people, and landscapes of my past in Jamaica beckoned me to return to the land of my birth to search for the answers to these two questions. Once begun, the investigation raised more questions: Without a mother to give me a sense of self, then ‘Who am I?’ – ‘Who have I become?’ – ‘What forces have shaped my character and my outlook on life?’.

I use my body as a living archive from which to retrieve fragmentary details from inestimable amounts of data, stored in the conscious and the unconscious. I construct life stories that blend fictional and non-fictional elements. Conversations with Caribbean friends and acquaintances both prompt my memory and elaborate details. Caribbean fiction writers provide models for representing the human condition of Caribbean peoples. Diaries of slavers and plantation owners, primary documents obtained from the National Archives of Jamaica, and the libraries of the University of the West Indies provide further data. I include observations and informed accounts of my travels along the colonial trails. These life stories are about my motherlust, my family, my church, my schooling and political moments in the history of the island we call Jamaica. History and politics explain the social phenomena that emerge.

In composing these narratives, I speak in three embodied voices: the subject, researcher, and author. I bring in the voices of significant family members, teachers, preachers, friends and the folk in the Jamaican patois.

These stories attest to the truth-value of genetic, autobiographical, topographical, and archival memory as matrices within which to conduct narrative inquiry into one’s origin. Embedded within these stories are lessons about identity formation, curricular policy, schooling and the content of a colonial education, the subjugation of the history of African people in New World slavery, and critiques of multiculturalism and globalization.

It is my aim that in reading these stories, students, teachers, educational and community leaders will appreciate the generative potential of repressed memories.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract	ii
Table of Contents	iii
List of Figures	vii
Acknowledgements	viii
Preface	xiii
Chapter I INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Finding Myself	1
1.2 Methodological Approaches	4
1.3 In Lieu of My Family Tree	12
Chapter II THE IMPERIAL CONTEXT	13
2.1 Colonial Jamaica: A Historical Perspective	16
2.2 Colonial Jamaica: A Political Perspective	21
2.3 Colonial Trails: A Personal Perspective	23
Chapter III EARLY CHILDHOOD MEMORIES 1947 – 1950	31
3.1 My Life with Aunt Joyce and Uncle Harold circa 1947	31
3.2 Public Works and My Father	41
3.3 Journey into Sugarcane	42
3.4 Life with Eutedra Williams	43
3.5 Parson Pickney	45
3.6 Recollections of My Infant School Years	46
3.7 The People of Hazard	50
3.8 Epilogue	54

Chapter IV LOUISIANA BLUES circa 1950 – 1954	57
4.1 Why We Moved to Louisiana	57
4.2 Louisiana Village	59
4.3 My Father's Birds	62
4.4 My Father the House Inspector	64
4.5 My Father's Morning Routine	66
4.6 The Grey Tin Case	67
4.7 Louisiana Blues	68
4.8 Hop a Truck and Pull a Cane	72
4.9 Memories of Mango Walk School	74
4.10 Queen Elizabeth's Coronation	89
4.11 How I Found My Way Back to May Pen	92
Chapter V LIFE AND SCHOOLING IN MAY PEN circa 1955 – 1962	95
5.1 A Familiar Place	95
5.2 The Supermarket	95
5.3 Toyland	96
5.4 The Picture Shows	96
5.5 The May Pen Market	97
5.6 The Butchers	101
5.7 Remembering the Market People	102
5.8 The Grass Yard	104
5.9 How Life Started in May Pen	105
5.10 " I Move Back with Aunt Joyce 1957 – 1959	108

5.11	School Layout of the All-Age School	112
5.12	The Comprehensive School Experiment	114
5.13	Curricula of the All-Age School	115
5.14	Curricula of the Comprehensive School	116
5.15	Child Welfare	126
Chapter VI	CLARENDON COLLEGE, CHAPELTON 1960 – 1961	129
6.1	The First Morning	129
6.2	The December before Clarendon College	132
6.3	A Pause to Pay Tribute to Aunt Joyce	136
6.4	Auntie Black Rescues Me	140
6.5	Opening Ceremonies	147
6.6	Some Good Learning Times	151
6.7	What's a Mother?	160
6.8	Barclay's Bank Dominion, Colonial, and Overseas	161
Chapter VII	BECOMING A TEACHER: MICO COLLEGE 1962 – 1965	168
7.1	Deciding to Go to Mico College	168
7.2	The Independence Batch 1962 – 1965	170
7.3	Who is My Mother?	177
7.4	The College Curriculum	183
7.5	I Develop My Approach to Teaching	185
7.6	Academic Studies	187
7.7	Remembering My Tutors Warmly	188
7.8	Achieving Academic Excellence	190

7.9 Mico College: the Total Institution	192
7.10 Denominational Affiliation	193
7.11 Pastoral Care and the Tutorial System	196
7.12 Athletics and Games	196
7.13 Music and Culture	197
7.14 Extra-curricula Program	198
7.15 The House System	200
7.16 Sexuality in College	201
7.17 Student of the Year Contest	203
7.18 Graduation and Future Prospects	207
Chapter VIII REVELATIONS AND REFLECTIONS	210
8.1 Bodies, Memories, and Empire	210
8.2 Bodies	211
8.3 Memories	213
8.4 Empire	220
8.5 Preliminary Conclusions	224
8.6 Implications for Education Practice	228
8.7 Postscript	230
Bibliography	231
Appendix I Glossary of Patois Speech	246
Appendix II Map of Jamaica	252
Appendix III Letter to Mrs Vinette Elliott	253
Appendix IV Review: The Making of New World Slavery	256

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 2.1	African Diaspora in the Americas	14
Figure 2.2	Slave colonies of the Americas & Caribbean, c. 1750	15
Figure 2.3	Significant events in Jamaica during the Imperial era	22
Figure 3.1	Aunt Joyce & Uncle Harold, c. 1950	36
Figure 4.1	Running a hoop to school	75
Figure 4.2	Exercise book bearing the new Queen's portrait	90
Figure 4.3	Yvonne's beloved brother Trevor	94
Figure 5.1	Yvonne visiting May Pen Clocktower	98
Figure 5.2	Caribbean Market Scene	100
Figure 5.3	Uncle Harry & Auntie Black, c. 1961	105
Figure 5.4	Yvonne, Education Week 1958	113
Figure 6.1	Aunt Joyce & Yvonne, c. 1961	137
Figure 6.2	Yvonne's 1961 report card from Clarendon College	156
Figure 6.3	Sisters: Sonia and Yvonne, 1960	157
Figure 6.4	The Hon. Charles Archibald Reid OBE PC MLC	166
Figure 7.1	Yvonne in College, c. 1963	174
Figure 7.2	Teaching certificate of Lucy May Reid	179
Figure 7.3	General Assembly with the Hon Edward Seaga, 1965	195
Figure 7.4	Yvonne with Girl Guide Company at Mico College, 1965	199
Figure 7.5	Mrs Glen Owen, wife of the Principal of Mico College	204
Figure 7.6	Yvonne, Student of the Year 1965, meets the Governor-General	206

Unless otherwise noted, all photographic figures are from the collection of the author.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In the preparation of this dissertation, many writers, professors, colleagues and friends have helped me, directly and indirectly. It is impossible for me to single out each one. I humbly ask that my failing not be construed as ingratitude. To those I have not mentioned, I hope you will receive these stories as gifts. However, I must express my appreciation to a few individuals who have done something outstanding to enable my pursuit of doctoral studies and the research and writing of this dissertation.

First, I want to acknowledge the tremendous influence of black women writers from the continent of Africa and the African Diaspora of the Americas and the Caribbean. I mention two among them whose influence permeates my work. First, I owe a huge debt to the Nobel Laureate, Toni Morrison, whose literary works and literary criticism build on the salience of the memory of the slave trade and slavery in the Americas on the psychology of women. She showed me the way. Her own explanation of how she has used memory in her work offered me imaginative possibilities in how I could create a text from excavating my memory. Her novel Beloved and her series of lectures Playing in the dark: Whiteness and the literary imagination kept speaking to me, reassuring me that I too might excavate my memory to produce something worthwhile. By her work and example, she made me believe that I had the responsibility to remember the mother ancestors, to re-member the limbs severed in slavery as well as to rememorize the deluges of the past. Her caution about the desire to disremember was useful at times when I found some memories too painful to recall.

Several Caribbean women writers validated my desire to write about the English-speaking Caribbean reality. The dub poet Lillian Allen was the first to invite me to write in the 1980s. I hope these stories will please her. Erna Brodber, Olive Senior, Merle Hodge, Dionne Brand, M Nourbese Philip, Lucille Mathurin-Mair, and Jamaica Kincaid are just a few whose work inspired me. I single out Jamaica Kincaid as my Caribbean literary model. I tried to emulate how she wove the personal, with the historical and the contemporary to problematize her female identity formation in Antigua. Her strident critique of the legacy of colonial education and the corruption of the local elite is in the tradition of the rebel woman of slavery days.

There are a number of professors in the Faculty of Education and in the Faculty of Arts whose research and teaching have influenced me greatly. I will start with the members of my committee. They carried a heavy emotional load in guiding me through the dissertation process. Professor Jean Barman, the chair of my committee, taught graduate courses on race, nation, and memory in the history of education that allowed me to find a paradigm within which to conduct my study. Most significant, I could not have written this dissertation without her unconditional validation of my stories and the care that she took in offering me reassurance at times when I quaked under the weight of emotions. Professor Dawn Currie's 1991 course in advanced feminist theory provided me a space to theorize about the experience and the institution of motherhood. I acknowledge Professor Currie's sponsoring me to develop and offer Women's Studies 411, The Presence of African/Black Women in the Americas to the UBC Women's Studies Program, when she was chair of the Women's Studies Program. Professor Gloria Onyeoziri, the only African woman professor at UBC, through her grounding in African and Caribbean women's literature and literary criticism nourished me with a poetic understanding of my project. Without the support and encouragement of my supervising committee I would not have been able to get past the pain and shame to create this text.

Professor Paul Krause, of the history department, taught a course on African American history, for the first time in UBC's history, in 1995, that brought together history, fiction, autobiography and music by and about African Americans. This was the very first time in all my forty-eight year association with the institution of education – in Jamaica and in British Columbia – that I had a course dealing with Black people and reading works by Black historians, sociologists, historians, novelists. I remain eternally grateful to Professor Krause for developing and offering that course. It stands as perhaps the only history course at UBC that deals solely with Black people in the Americas.

Dr Nancy Sheehan, former Dean of the Faculty of Education, respected and valued my anti-racism work and curriculum development that contribute to the Education community on African and Diaspora Literature for children. She was most supportive of me during my term as school trustee. She never failed to acknowledge and compliment my work. I thank Professor Patricia Vertinsky, former head of the Department of Educational Studies, for giving me sound advice and pointing me to the doctor of

education program at a crucial time in my career. Professor Peter Seixas in founding the Centre for the Study of Historical Consciousness has fostered many dialogues on memory, history, and narrative. I have benefitted immensely from my participation in them.

I thank Professor Marion Porath, former Associate Dean Teacher Education, for encouraging me to start this doctoral program and for advocating release time for me to start in the summer of 2000, which was at a very difficult time in the office.

Professor Graeme Chalmers, former holder of the David Lam Chair of Multicultural Education, offered an inclusive vision of how a Faculty of Education could develop a teacher education program incorporating a critical multiculturalism. I learned much from the ways in which, on behalf of the Faculty, he was able to reach out to various communities to include multiple perspectives and to host diverse peoples from the community in the Faculty. I was gratified in participating in and observing his work.

I appreciated the care with which Dr Jon Shapiro, Senior Associate Dean Administration in the Faculty of Education wrote the letter approving my undertaking studies while I worked fulltime. I hope that I have served the Faculty well through undertaking these studies.

Professor Cecille DePass, Faculty of Education, University of Calgary, my Jamaican compatriot, has been a sister, mentor, and friend. She has worked valiantly to remind me of my scholarly abilities at times when I seriously doubted myself. Dr DePass pulled me from the Point Grey edge from time to time, to share panels with her at learned conferences and thus rekindled my love of travel and learning. I took a course from George Elliott Clarke, professor, poet and novelist on African-Canadian literature and learned from him a few tips of the writer's craft – details, details, details.

There are a number of Jamaican and Caribbean friends and acquaintances who gave substantial cultural support during my research and writing. Vince D'Oyley, professor emeritus, and Stan Raymond, both Miconians, helped me remember some details of the college. Barbara Binns, my Jamaican contemporary, was my informant at times when I needed to check details of life and times in Jamaica during our childhood. We enjoyed childhood reminiscences of life in Jamaica. She always commended me for taking the time to write these stories. I tested the truth-value of some of my stories with

her. Above all we had some hearty laughs at some of the absurdities of growing up in a colonial society. Regular Saturday morning conversations with Nadine Chambers pulled her into volunteering for some valuable archival searches when she went on trips to Jamaica. Through her contact, Jean King provided valuable research assistance in searching The Daily Gleaner archive and the National Library of Jamaica to find information on the Honorable Charles Reid. Adassa Brooks, Noga Gayle, Marlene John, Betty Lough, and Maxine Wishart, have loaned books, shared childhood stories, and helped me in various ways to remember details and to laugh.

I thank Mrs Vinette Elliott, my infant school principal, for her willingness to correspond with me to answer the many questions I asked to check my memory of infant school. It was good to meet Mrs Elliott again after nearly fifty years. Lorna Coke, my teacher friend in Jamaica was ever willing to track down one more obscure item in the National Archive or the University of the West Indies Library for me.

A number of daughter friends and scholars offered generously of their time and scholarly insights. Kara McDonald and Hartej Gill read my stories with great interest from the very beginning. If it were not for their substantive comments about alternative ways of doing theory, these stories may never have been written and presented. Kara's comments on the value of writing about traveling the colonial trails helped me to recompose parts of it for Chapter II. Euphrates Gobina persuaded me that my stories could have appeal to Africans. She was the first to convince me that I had produced a manuscript, after insisting that she compile my first draft of stories.

I sincerely thank Professor Jim Gaskell, Associate Dean of External Programs and Learning Technologies, for his sensitivity to my need for some time to get the writing done. Without those Fridays off to write, the work may have been consigned to the bin of many half finished projects. Professors Stephen Petrina encouraged me and provided resources to validate my methodology when I almost lost my confidence.

I take this opportunity to express my admiration for the founders, elders, and professors of the Native Indian Teacher Education Program (NITEP) and the Ts' 'kel Program for First Nations educational administrators. I have learned so much about striving for restorative justice and ways of asserting educational self-determination after the devastation of the residential schools. I am thankful that I could always find an

empathetic ear when I needed to talk to someone whom I knew would understand the hurts of colonialism.

I thank the University of British Columbia for its generous tuition waivers, which enabled me to undertake doctoral studies. This program is important for the access it provides employees who could not otherwise afford graduate studies.

Garry Fletcher copy-edited and assisted with layout of the text and images. Garry's generosity of spirit and knowledge of the British Empire were a boon to producing the final text. We shared many resonances of the English curriculum.

To my children – Andrea, Gail, and Winston – I owe so much. Through their grace I was able to be the mother to them that I wished I had had. They taught me the meaning of unconditional love. As the folk would say “Tank Gad, me live fe see dem pass de worse.” Winston was most obliging in helping me with my various computer troubles. Son, I appreciate your patience more than you will ever know.

Finally, I acknowledge the tremendous legacy of strength and integrity bequeathed by the fine examples of resistance, creativity, and honour of my African and European ancestors who were consigned to live out the nightmare of enslavement, and plantation life in Jamaica. I hope these stories honour their memory.

This work is dedicated to my late mother, Lucy May Reid.

PREFACE

This narrative inquiry concerning bodies, memories, and empire reveals an abundance of contradictions and tensions, loveliness in ugliness, and above, all astonishing insights into the legacies of African enslavement in the New World, British colonization and empire building.

These real life stories are about my motherlust, my family, my church, my schooling in the island we call Jamaica.

They are about bodies and the breaking of flesh.

They are about memory, history, and landscape.

They are about migration of labour.

They are about sugar production and rise of consumption.

They are about the trade in enslaved African bodies.

They are about racialized chattel slavery.

They are about the emancipation of slavery and the degradation of free labour.

They are about the psychological and socio-economic legacy of colonization on my life, and on the lives of other descendants of colony and empire.

They are about the power of education to transform, harm, and heal, simultaneously.

They are about the repression of knowledge about the exploitation of Africa.

They are about miscegenation.

They are about extreme brutality.

They are about racism and human degradation.

They are about struggle for dignity and wholeness.

They are about making sense of my past in colony and empire.

CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

1.1 Finding Myself

My body signifies many stories. My female body, which is to say my brain, my heart, my soul, my flesh, my physiognomy, and my spirit, all are marked by events of the past into which I was born. It is the past of the Colony of Jamaica, New World slavery, plantation economy, and English missionary education, set within the culture of the British Empire as it flourished and faded. A long past, yet my body remembers. This was the realization I came to when I was brought, at last, to question how I came to be born in Jamaica; and how in particular I came to have this body that, by no will nor permission of mine, caused so many moments of disruption and discomfort in what thought themselves to be multicultural classrooms and workplaces.

Multicultural discourse – how calm, and irreproachable the expression – was for me an inviting door, one through which I believed I might easily pass in the search for understanding. And so my inquiry began, on my own behalf first, and then on behalf of African and Black students, as a simple quest for knowledge with which to make informed curricular and pedagogical interventions. During the course of my reading and reflection, I discovered the racial, economic, and sexual collision of Africa, Europe, and the Americas that – incredibly – had made me: one among millions of coloured, mulatto, quadroon, octoroon children, the fruit of black virgins, Ewe, Ashanti, Twi, Yoruba, Hausa and Ibo, deflowered by white men. The deflorescence I speak of was no ordinary sexual act of biological maturation. It was the deliberate racialized sexual assault whose purpose was domination (Beckles 1995; Bakare-Yusuf, 1999). Whites from Portugal, Holland, Spain, France, Denmark, and England ravished the African women as, simultaneously, they plundered the African landscape for its gold, diamonds, iron, salt, gums, cloves, coffee, copper, leopard skins, rhinoceros horns, and, especially, for its ivory – the white, and the black.

The harvesting of black ivory (Walvin, 2001) depopulated the continent, destroying clans, tribes, kingdoms, and nation-states (Harris, 1987). The rape of the healthiest and most beautiful women was relentless. It started at the point of capture and sale; it continued in the barracoons spread along what became known as the Slave Coast of Africa, and within the officers' quarters in the slave castles. We can imagine the sexual

assaults, by white men and black, within the confines of the slave ships that plied the triangular trade, especially along the Middle Passage, and thereafter in the great houses of the plantations. Sexual assaults continued as an integral part of the violence which controlled and enforced labour in the tobacco fields of Virginia and Kentucky; in the cane fields of Barbados, Jamaica, Cuba, Puerto Rico, and Haiti; and in the rice fields of the Carolinas (Beckles, 1995; Gerima, 1993; Moitt 1995). White rape of black took place over a period of more than 350 years. For 250 of those years it accompanied the unoutlawed trade in African bodies; and then continued through a further century of legal African chattel slavery, in what the Europeans conceived of as the New World.

My physiognomy is the living record of this terrible lineage. My mother is the descendent line of Africa enslaved: taken from the Slave Coast, a place unknown in origin, but probably somewhere that would have been known to my paternal descent – English and Scottish colonizers – as the Guineas or Ghana. I cannot be sure because too much of that lineage is lost, or hidden. This at least I have direct knowledge of, because my father's family hid my maternal lineage from me. In the same way, the knowledge regimes of schooling have, for the most part, hidden the facts and truth of the brutal history of Africa from those who, like myself, have good reason to learn them. I struggle daily to heal the scars of willful ignorance and epistemic violence that silence the history of enslavement in this, the so-called New World (Trouillot, 1995).

I was born as a byproduct of those in the service of Empire in the colony of Jamaica. I grew up hearing that Africa has no history; Africa has no culture; black people were made to serve the white man. I continue to hear derogatory assertions about Africa. Africa is the Dark Continent. Africa is the basket case of the world. Africa is the land of savages and backwardness.

But what did that mean to me? Jamaicans were and fundamentally still are categorized as black, white, and – my own kind – coloured. If I was not 'white', I was certainly not 'black'. I did not believe that assertions of black Africa described me, even half-wise. Only when I moved to Canada did I 'become' black, that is, I had 'blackness', in the North American sense, bestowed upon me; only through living and working in British Columbia, and observing and experiencing indigenous social phenomena, have I been compelled to acknowledge, explicitly, the obvious African part of my genetic heritage.

In the present study, I seek out this repressed physical and cultural heritage. I confront some haunting memories of my life in Jamaica, and come to an understanding of how dynamics of colonization, race, skin colour, commodity production, and empire played out in my family, schooling, and in the very landscape of the places in which I lived. The basic tool of this research, then, is my autobiographical memory, from which I construct real life stories. But I have found myself obligated to go beyond the examination of a single (that is, my own), life history. For it remains a major aim to forward the understanding I have already mentioned, and contribute to the body of texts supporting critical dialogue which, through necessary curricular and pedagogical interventions, can give greater credence to critical multiculturalism and anti-racist education.

This dissertation is motivated by my sense of how important is the need to interrogate and inform educators about what it means to be a colonized 'other', teaching and learning in the multicultural and multiracial education system in British Columbia, Canada. As an educator, born and educated in Jamaica between 1943 and 1965, and having lived and worked in Canada for thirty-five years, I have become aware of, and affected and disturbed by, phenomena I have observed: the complex ways in which bodies in classrooms carry the memories of Empire (especially of the English, French, and Spanish), in their physiognomy, speech, schooling, and social standing. I have remarked how these bodies and memories are treated. Multiculturalist discourse notwithstanding, some bodies seem welcomed and invited to enjoy right of place; other bodies, conversely, seem out of place and the source of great discomfort.

Let us compare the high social-standing accorded to white students speaking with the accents of England, Australia, New Zealand, or the United States, with the relatively low standing accorded to or adopted by black and brown students from the Caribbean, India, and Africa. Culturally, linguistically, and directly through the curricula of their schooling, people from these nations share a common colonial and British imperial heritage. But white is the colour of the colonizer; black, brown, yellow and red the colours of the colonized. This is the embodiment of the status differential, which, even without further reinforcement, represents an unspoken rebuff, one that leads some students to resist and act out the rejection they feel, while others become alienated from the education system. Many leave school or universities altogether, and thereby decrease their life-chances.

As both student and teacher, I have experienced and observed how destructive tensions arise when the hegemonic knowledge of the colonizer clashes with the repressed knowledge of the colonized, especially if articulated by those who, like myself, live within embodied memories. I have been especially struck by the ways in which knowledge about the colonized other is subjugated or erased in academic disciplines. Curricular choices leave teachers unprepared to deal with traumatic stories of slavery, colonization, and political domination, whether historical or contemporary.

The omission and erasure of topics dealing with the presence of Africa and Africans in Western historical study are particularly pervasive. It has become fashionable as a pedagogical strategy for teachers and instructors to ask children and adult students to tell their own stories. But, of what use is it to the student to bring forward these stories and experiences, when there is no epistemic base upon which to validate and honour them within a critical and ethical framework? Worse yet, what does it mean for some students to be perennial strangers in their classrooms, where they will learn next to nothing of their ancestral histories and heritage?

1.2 Methodological Approaches

1.2.1 Narrative Form

The chapters of the dissertation are structured chronologically, representing the years between 1943 and 1965. This is the period when the events and places in which I lived, attended school and college, and worked, formed the landscape I have chosen to chronicle.

Drawing on an understanding of narrative inquiry, I write real life stories about growing up in Jamaica, in which I rediscover my family (especially my mother's side), my education, and the panoramas of my early years. I explore how this environment with its special life and history formed my own identity and world-view. As its starting point, the study makes use of stories about my early life in Jamaica. I follow Jill Ker Conway (1998) and her memoir of growing up in Australia, in wishing to convey my sense of the importance of my education, of my liberation through access to education, and the variety of steps I took to take control of my life (p.163). To imbue these stories with significance beyond myself, I offer interpretations within a historical context in relation to relevant specific child-rearing

practices, educational policies, and economic conditions. Bullough & Pinnegar (2001) count these steps as necessary to turn self-study into rigorous qualitative research.

In aspiring to meet this test of quality, the study draws upon several research traditions. In an effort to give texture and depth to my description of selected events in these years, I draw on the written histories of the founding of the societies in the Caribbean and the Americas. The narrative I construct begins, however, with my recollection of coming into consciousness. The first and most profound question I have ever asked as an infant characterizes what I call my 'motherlust': What's a mother?

I endeavour therefore to look back at the braided histories, into which and with which I was born; and among and through which I lived the first twenty-three years of my life. With these means I have aimed to develop the tools necessary to answer the emerging questions: Who is my mother? How did I come to have the family I had? Who educated whom, for what purpose, under what circumstances, in what places?

What meanings can I now ascribe to the events I experienced? How did these histories determine the kind of schooling and education I had, and the type of person I have become? And will answers to these questions provide a valid historical understanding of my place in the world?

The study is empirical, in that I excavate my memory to name the sensory experiences of growing up in Jamaica. I use these sensations to distinguish a selection of critical incidents in my family, and schooling and education. The study is also hermeneutic, in that it seeks to elucidate the meaning of these experiences and events.

An essential aspect of the method is the dialogue and tension that develop between the observed or experienced, and the imagined. On one hand this narrative is 'non-fiction', in that it describes actual incidents in my life, complemented by primary and secondary sources on educational policies and historical writings, especially African and Caribbean theorists. These data are supported by historians of different periods relevant to the study.

On the other hand the narrative is 'fiction', in that I apply creative techniques to imagine a version of my life, and thereby to construct a particular kind of truth (Zinsser, 1995). I originate this truth by use of connotative and denotative language, and of metaphoric language, through which I am empowered to verbalize and interpret the truth within me, that is, my embodied knowledge (Richardson, 2000). I draw heavily on the elements of fiction; and as such, I concern myself with issues of voice and voices, plot,

themes, narration, analysis, and setting. Points of view, perspectives, preoccupation, and tropes and pathos are applied where it seems important to do so. Literary devices such as parable, allusions, monologues, imagery, metaphors, and dialogues are instrumental in establishing pathos, atmosphere, and resolution of ethical dilemmas of truth-telling and confidentiality. Foreshadowing, flash-backs, flash-forwards, and associated contextual analysis drive dominant and subsidiary narrative themes, the fictive 'plot' and 'subplots'.

1.2.2 Narrative Voices

Essential to my method is the plurality of voice in which the inquiry is narrated. I use three embodied voices in one: the voices of protagonist, narrator, and researcher/scholar.

Most evidently, I am protagonist, the central voice in this dramatized life-story. Yet, second, I have also to speak as disinterested narrator, objective but omnipresent. As I write, I respond to the feel and the flow of this narrative voice. Third, I interject the voice of researcher, the essential commentator of scholarly analysis and meaning. This is the voice that, to a degree, regulates the whole, and calls for validation of its inspirational content.

My voices move between narration, stream of conscious thought, and scholarly analysis, and it seems important to me that these voices should not be artificially isolated, but should be heard to move easily between registers. Moreover, my individualized voices join intermittently with other essential utterances: folk speech in the Jamaican patios; theoretical constructs; historical facts; and the words of other writers, all of whom join their voices with mine to tell the story, to theorize, and to comprehend the experiences of our multi-layered histories.

A word about the voice of the folk: alongside the formal hegemonic English voice of school, church, and government, is the patois voice of the displaced and dispossessed of the streets, cane pieces (fields), and the market places. In my time, domestic servants, yard-boys, shop-helpers spoke patois. It is a dialect of English, having some West African-derived syntax, vocabulary and performative features, adaptations, and inventions. I include a glossary of this speech in **Appendix I**. The patois is largely unwritten, since the schooled and literate regarded it as the speech of low-class black people. But all Jamaicans born and raised in the island understand the patois, even if some do not speak it.

When I grew up we were discouraged from speaking patois because it was said to be a mark of illiteracy and low class. During the period of which I write, the majority of the

population spoke only patois. People judged quality of schooling by the ability to utilize the words and grammar of Standard English. Hardly anything in Jamaica provides such an endless source of ridicule and comedy as does the inability to maintain Standard English with consequent lapse into patois. We would often describe someone whose normal speech is patois trying to sustain Standard English as doing 'speaky-spokey'. Yet it is not unusual to find Standard English mixed with patois in the same sentence, by schooled and unschooled alike.

The ability to mix both speeches or to switch from one to the other is both psychological and functional. In the psychological dimension, patois speakers are self-conscious, aware of being looked down upon and judged by their inability to command the English Language. Functionally, fluent speakers of both languages act like chameleons in conversations and arguments. They code switch to be impressive or to gain advantage in an argument, or to ridicule and put down. Equally, only the patois can produce the biting retorts which superbly skewer the antics of middle- and upper-class pretension.

I love the patois as much as I love being among the market people. I draw upon it throughout my writing because, in my opinion, the wisdom required to survive displacement and dispossession is encoded in the oratory of patois as forcefully as it might otherwise be presented in English language literature. I wish that I could have written the whole dissertation in the patois. This would not, however, be a form suitable for passive study, but would call for performance and recitation, in the style of Louise Bennett, Jamaican poet, who speaks her work in the patois. The patois cannot remain inert on the page, but lives in the speech of Jamaica. (For the linguistic and sociolinguistic debates concerning standard English, dialect, Creole, patois, African influences, Nation languages, and Jamaica talk, see Alleyne, 1988; Morris, 1999; Roberts, 1998.)

1.2.3 Research Sources

This exploration involved seven research activities.

1) I excavated my memory to construct portraits of myself at different stages of my development, embedded within my family, in primary and secondary schools, in teachers' college, and in the political economy of the island. Along the way I recreated specific features of the landscape that have left indelible memories. To recall the landscape was to uncover how the lives of Jamaican people were embedded in the history of

commodity production, especially sugar, molasses, rum, and banana, supplying the socio-economic demands of the British Empire.

2) I consulted primary sources on educational policies and programs from the National Library of Jamaica, and from the University of the West Indies archives in Jamaica.

3) I read a number of Caribbean fiction writers and historians, for both information and as models of language and Caribbean sensibilities.

4) I made two trips to Jamaica. My quest to find my mother's people seriously began in 1998 when I insisted that my brother and I go to the city of Christiana, in Northern Manchester, our grandfather's constituency from 1935 – 1944, to find relatives and people who knew him. This visit made my mother's people real, and resulted in further searches in the National Library of Jamaica, the archives of The Daily Gleaner, and yearbooks. During the 1998 trip, I also revisited Chapelton and Clarendon College for the first time since I left in 1961. I took the opportunity to visit my Auntie Black, who is now in her nineties. During our visits, I had several confrontations with her on the subject of why I was kept from knowing any of my mother's people. The second visit took place in 2001, when I made a follow-up trip to Jamaica to revisit the city of May Pen and Spanish Town, original capital of the island. A map of Jamaica is provided in **Appendix II**.

5) I relied on key Jamaican informants with full knowledge of why I was either writing to or reminiscing with them. In this vein, I have corresponded with my infant school principal and visited her to engage in informal conversations about Carron Hall and Windsor Castle schools. Auntie Black was and is a reluctant but vital link to the story of my lineage. I was also particular to solicit casual, that is, unrecorded, conversation with Jamaicans of roughly my age, both to reminisce, and to check the accuracy of some experiences in schooling and the popular history of the island.

6) I analyzed my personal memorabilia, such as report cards, certificates, photo albums of life in Jamaica, college ceremonial programmes, and Girl Guide paraphernalia.

7) Internet searches provided virtual archival materials, which proved of significant value.

1.2.4 Ethical Issues

I faced ethical issues throughout the project. These emerged continually in at least four constituent areas: personal, familial, collegial, and institutional.

1) The personal issues derive from formulating a dissertation in which my subjectivity is so central. How truthful can I be to myself in a document written under the academic supervision and critical scrutiny of my colleagues and peers? To offer oneself as the target of scholarly critique is to make oneself especially vulnerable. How legitimate, how wise indeed, could it be to expose myself in this way? I have continually had to question the ambivalence of my feelings in this respect – I agonized whether I could tell some tales, while excluding others by reason of personal shame. Yet as the writing proceeded, I came to an important point of realization that the heaviest burden of shame attached to my family history was not mine to carry. To accept the legitimate rigours of academic inquiry was therefore (at least in part) to unshoulder another, and wrongful, obligation.

2) The biggest ethical problem for me has been how to write about my family. I adopted the position that a correct approach would be to write about members of my family with an attitude of compassionate understanding. Although this was largely possible, I have found it very difficult to come to sympathetic terms with the figure of my father, and have concluded that this is a process that must continue beyond the present project.

If some of my stories seem incredible to the reader, as they seem to me now, then it may, in part, be explained by childhood perception. The effects of what adults do to children often appear more cruel than adults intend. Notwithstanding this perspective, I made the conscious decision to give pseudonyms to Mango Walk School and the head teacher, in order to remove what otherwise would have been a preoccupation, the inclination to self-censor my account of the brutalities and conditions at that school.

Another ethical concern was how to describe people, especially my family members, in terms of their skin colour and their class. This was an essential question, necessary to convey how, during colonization and slavery, a racist order of social stratification according to skin colour legitimized the enslavement and disenfranchisement of people with black skin. Although the period in which my stories are set was more than a hundred years after the official abolition of slavery, its social and economic consequences and its conventions persisted.

Most evident was privilege according to skin colour. Miscegenation among Africans and Europeans resulted in offspring who bore diverse combinations of skin colour, hair texture, and facial features. Social status was available on a sliding scale, dependent on the shades of black skin – a tint closer to white skin conferring, unsurprisingly, greater

prestige. In due course, three legal classes were established in Jamaica to encode a broad differential: white, coloured (brown), and black. Although the legal division had disappeared by the time I was born, the social practice of prejudice according to colour endured, as it does to this day within families and in the society at large.

Colour and class played a central role in my family dynamics. My mother's side of the family (whilst including persons of standing), was black. My father's side was coloured, and indeed some of its members possessed skin tones and hair textures whereby they sought to pass for white.

3) The collegial ethical issues that I wrestled with have to do with scholarly interaction with my peers in the workplace. Some of them will, I am sure, read this dissertation and recognize some of their pedagogical practices of deliberate and unethical erasure and omission of knowledge about Africa and of Africans in the African Diaspora. Others, I predict, will be defensive and even patronizing in reading this dissertation, as they have been towards my public critiques of epistemological and pedagogical practices that deliver half-truths in an arena where the pursuit of truth is the primary mission. Still others will welcome this dissertation as vindication for their own ethical position on including Africa and Africans in their pedagogical practices.

In choosing to write this personal narrative, I write for my colleagues who, over the years, have often invited me, cordially, to their classes to tell my story and talk about my experiences. Most have been disappointed that my story is embedded in a sordid history of slavery and empire, and does not fit into the redemptive narrative of becoming Canadian. On those occasions I have felt diminished. I hope to put to rest, and for posterity, the painful and sometimes hypocritical collegial relationships that I have encountered, because of who I am and for what I stand.

4) The institutional ethical issues were foretold in 2000, when I wrote my term paper entitled, Does Africa have a place in the University of British Columbia's conception of the World? A case for prospective action for the Practical Ethics course. The course was a part of my program in Leadership and Policy, of which this dissertation is itself partial fulfillment, for the Doctor of Education degree. The course was primarily concerned with probing the question of how leaders, as individuals, develop first-, second-, and third-order ethical principles to guide their actions. The assignment called for us to choose a dilemma in our workplace, one for which we had to take action. The object was to determine how we

might apply personal and abstract moral principles so as to take fitting action. In analyzing the University of British Columbia's Trek 2000 educational policy, I had discovered its (to me) startling omission of Africa. My dilemma was how I, of part African descent, as an employee, student, alumnus, and beneficiary of the privileges of the institution, might confront a powerful institution possessed of great coercive power, regarding this omission. In the assignment, I came face to face with my personal history in Jamaica. I grasped how this was fundamental to my sensitivity towards the specific issues I had noted, and in general to the use and abuse of Africa and its peoples. My upbringing was grounded in Christian ethics with a strong injunction to respect the equality of persons, abhor racial injustice, and to take responsibility to act to right wrongs. Mine was the tormented voice of the repressed in my classes.

In that paper I critiqued the omission of Africa from UBC's institutional language. How could ours be a world-class research university, if it made no substantive mention of Africa? This dissertation is written in part to rebut the institutional defence of the exclusion of Africa from the geopolitics of its Trek 2000 educational policy. This defence can be briefly summarized. We have chosen to focus on three geographical regions because: 1) we have historical ties with Europe; 2) we are part of the Americas; and 3) we have important trade ties with Asia. When I heard this 'commonsense' answer to my question of why the omission of Africa, my haunting memories of growing up in Jamaica and knowledge of the service of Africa and Africans to the New World empires of Western Europe, and the conquest of North and South America, and of Africa's relationship to Asia, begged to be shouted out. Do we not also have important historical and economic ties to Africa? I assert a principle of educational policy: educational policies mediate and set directions for the distribution of symbolic values within an institution. It follows then, to be included in policy is to count for something; to be excluded is to count for nothing.

Within the institution I ride the horns of a dilemma. I work, sometimes teach, and study at the University of British Columbia. I acknowledge that loyalty to the university is expected of me; however, it cannot be unconditional, it is a critical loyalty. Uncritical loyalty would prevent me from acting in the cause of institutional truth and justice, and would run counter to the principles of scholarship. Yet in addition to all the prestige and privileges that I enjoy, I am the beneficiary of a generous professional development package, which has paid the tuition fees for my doctoral program. During my research and writing, I have

repeatedly asked myself the question: am I biting the hands that feed? In this comfortable place, can I speak uncomfortable truths?

1.3 In Lieu of My Family Tree

Unfortunately, I do not have enough information to construct a useful family tree. Instead, I introduce only members of my family whose photographs, interspersed throughout the narrative, help make the relationships clear. On my mother's side are my maternal grandfather, the Honorable Charles Archibald Reid, and his two daughters Muriel Reid and her half-sister Lucy May. Lucy May Reid is my mother.

On my father's side are the Shorters: Cyril John, my father, and his two sisters, Emily Elaine and Joyce Beatrice. Cyril John married my mother Lucy May Reid; Emily Elaine married Harold Black; and Joyce Beatrice married Harold Hylton.

My father is the eldest of three boys and three girls. My uncles did not feature in my life, while my father and two of my three aunts did. I write only of two aunts and their husbands because only they figured significantly in my life. I write of Aunt Joyce Hylton (Aunt Joyce, or My Aunt Joyce) and her husband Harold Hylton (Uncle Harold) and of Aunt Emily Black (Auntie, or Auntie Black) and her husband Harold Black (Uncle Harry, or Mr Black). Throughout the narrative, I switch from familial titles of endearment to formal titles, depending on how I view each at different times in my growth and development.

In the next Chapter, I set the imperial context for my stories. I present the context of colonial Jamaica from three vantage points: the historical, the political, and the personal.

CHAPTER II THE IMPERIAL CONTEXT

No African trade, no Negroes, no Negroes, no sugar, no sugar, no islands, no islands no continent, no continent no trade: that is to say farewell to your American Trade, your West Indian trade. Daniel Defoe 1713 in Pagden, A. (2001) Peoples and Empires. New York: The Modern Library.

In this Chapter, I seek to provide a historical and social context for the stories that follow. First, I briefly sketch the contours of Jamaican political and social history, giving the broadest outline of how Jamaica became a British colony and a slave society. I highlight significant dates and events which occurred from conquest up to the time of independence, the period immediately preceding which provides the setting for my stories. The timeline locates Jamaica in a pivotal position in the networks of the European conquest and trade, carried out by the mercantile activities among Africa, Europe, and the Americas. Figures 2.1 & 2.2 give a schematic illustration of Jamaica's location in this enterprise. Other relevant historical aspects will be incorporated into the stories at appropriate points.

For further reading on the economic, social, and political history of Jamaica, several references are included in the bibliographical resources attached. For the economic history of the plantation in Jamaica, see Curtin (1955), Higman (1988, 1995, 1998), and Sheridan (1974, 1994). Brown (1979), Sherlock and Bennett (1998), and Bryan (1991 and 2000) Nettleford (1972), Henriques (1953) and Braithwaite 1971) offer different accounts of the social and cultural history of the island. Munroe (1972) has written a political history covering the period 1944 – 1962. Olive Senior's Encyclopedia of Jamaican Culture (2003), and Cassidy and Lepage's Dictionary of Jamaican English (1985, 2nd ed.) are most helpful sources of accessibly-organised information.

Second, I describe a developing awareness of social context that propelled me to this study. After the period of the chronicle that forms its central thesis, I left Jamaica for Canada. This proved far more than a geographic journey. I travelled the colonial trails of Great Britain to sites of memory, and discovered social connections that eventually served to locate my stories and myself in the larger framework of mercantile capitalism. In this section, I explain the significant experiences in Canada and elsewhere which initiated the exploration of my earlier life, and led to a profound shift in my understanding of who and what I was. This in turn generated the need for a comprehensive examination, presented in this dissertation.

Figure 2.1 African Diaspora in the Americas (Feelings, 1995)

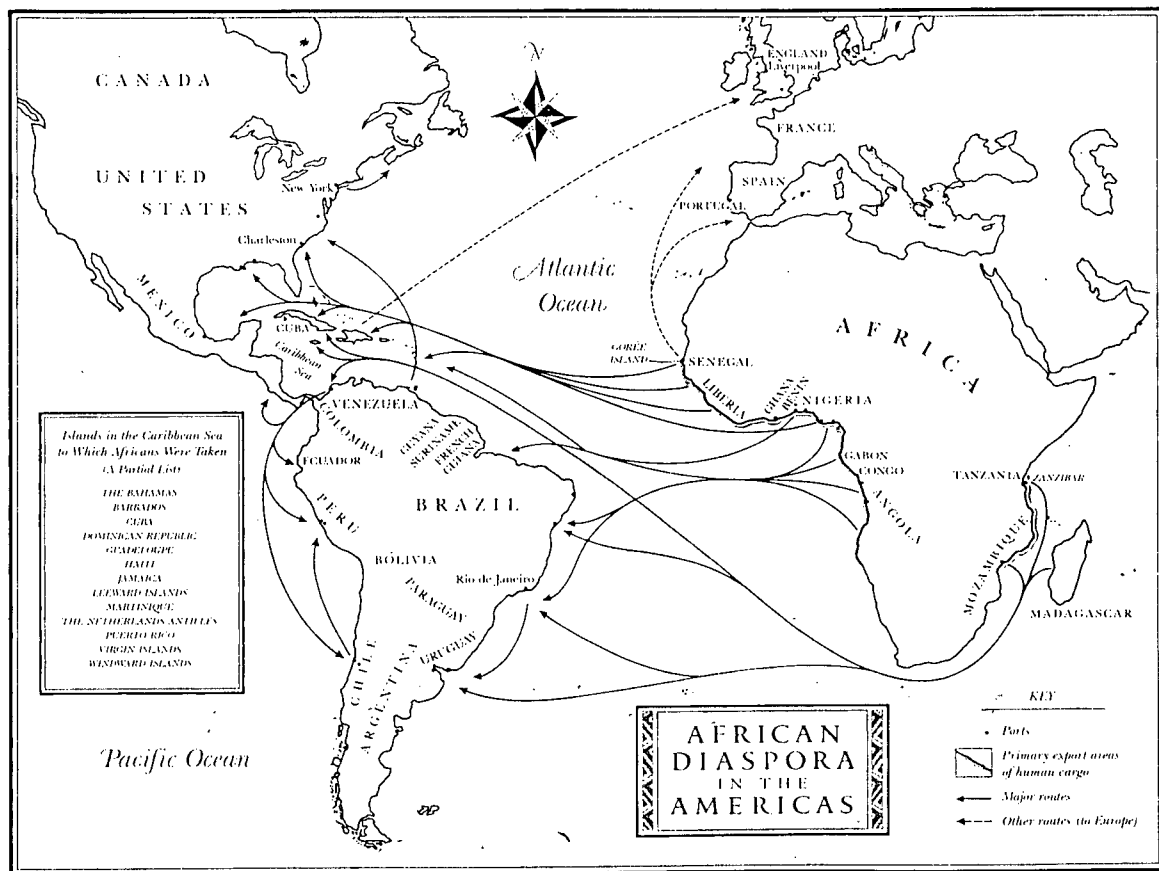
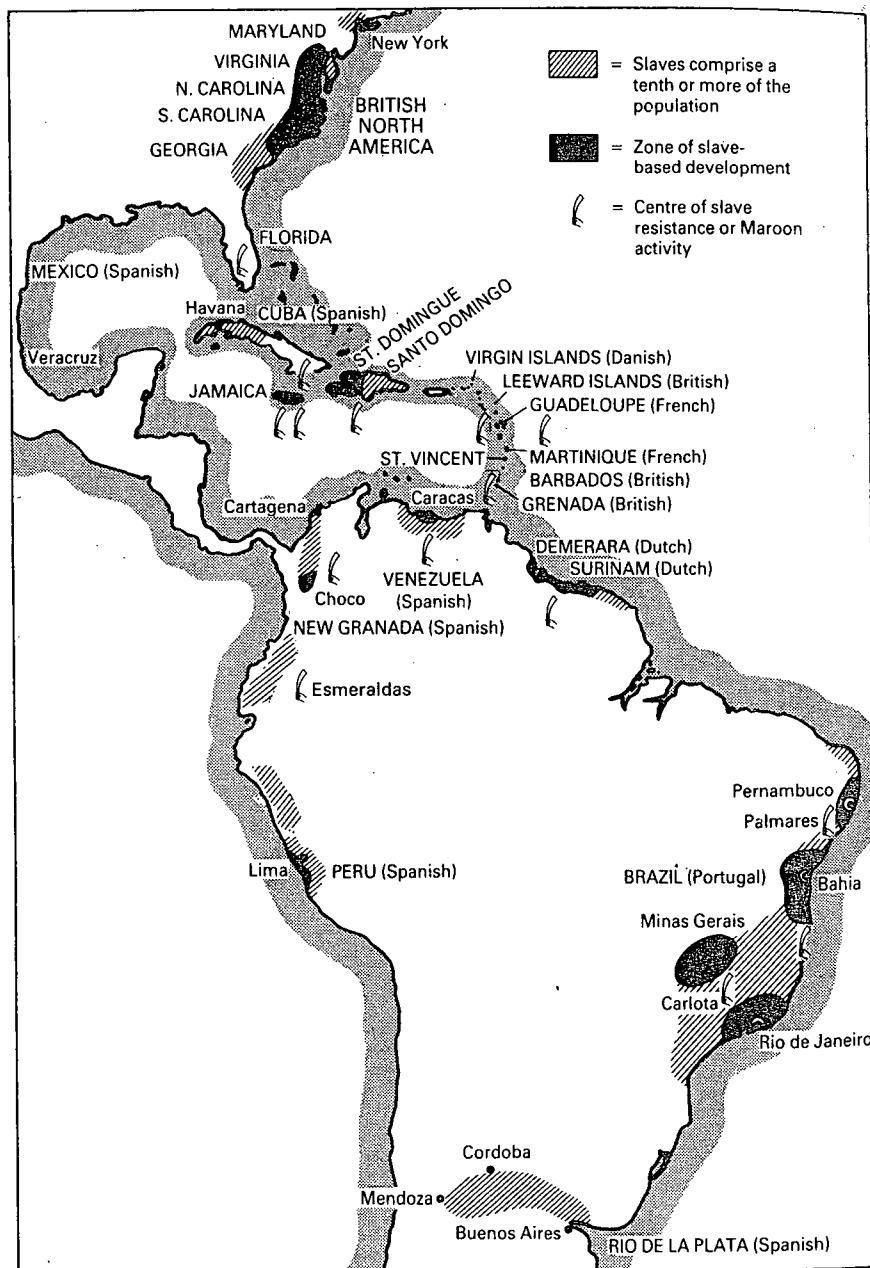


Figure 2.2 Slave colonies of the Americas & Caribbean c.1750 (Blackburn, 1997)



The Americas c. 1770

2.1 Colonial Jamaica: A Historical Perspective

In the recorded beginning, the Taino and Arawaks had been the inhabitants of the place we call Jamaica for at least hundreds of years before the Spanish conquest of the island. If anything of these people lives on in the mixed bloods of today's population, it is all but certain that their indigenous culture does not. While sufficient to doom the native presence, Spanish rule was itself relatively brief, succumbing to the expansion of British power in the region. It was in 1655, that the British captured Jamaica from the Spanish, the first colony that Britain acquired by conquest. It should be pointed out that it was not only the territory that they inherited; at that time, there were 6,000 people on the island – Spanish and African – 1,500 of whom were Africans, slave and free (Sherlock and Bennett 1998, p.77).

Jamaica became one of the richest jewels in the British imperial crown. According to Curtin (1955), the prestige of the governorship of Jamaica was third only to those of India and Canada (p. 7). In time, Jamaica became Britain's richest colony, richer indeed than the thirteen North American colonies combined (Hall 1959).

In 1661, Charles II made Jamaica a Royal colony. In trying to establish the island as a British dominion secured by settlement, the Crown made certain concessions, including a number of privileges and incentives to attract white settlers. English law would henceforth govern the colony. Land titles were bestowed on soldiers and civilians, and a 'head right' system (that is, rule by the proprietors of the land), instituted. The local representative assembly so formed, known as the 'old legislative system', prevailed until 1865 when the privilege was revoked. This was precipitated by the Morant Bay rebellion of that year, following excesses of brutality of the settlers towards the emancipated Africans. (It seems that by this point, the conduct of the dominant society of the island was sufficiently intolerable to sensibilities in Britain.)

To consolidate the imperial presence, governors, colonists, and Crown encouraged British settlement, even after Jamaica became a flourishing plantation economy employing slave labour. Governors were instructed to facilitate access of new planters. For example in 1717, Governor Lawes interceded with the British Board of Trade in order to attract a million white families to settle in the island. The Governor also urged the Board of Trade to extend credit to new settlers and to increase the supply of African labour. The possibility of owning slaves was a principal attraction for white settlers. Privileged employment for whites was

legislated, with black people not allowed to hold those occupations (Burnard 2002 in Monteith et al, p. 73).

Yet in spite of the very considerable efforts that were made between 1690 and 1740 to attract large numbers of whites, Jamaica became a black country; a land in which Europeans were heavily outnumbered, and where they retained their position only through the application of force, comprehensively exercised through social and legal institutions, and through the continuing presence of large numbers of British troops (Burnard 2002 in Monteith and Richards, p. 82). Most rapid growth in black population occurred between 1690 and 1740 – it nearly quadrupled from 32,000 to 117,900.

Cattle too, were on the increase, their pens expanding with sugar plantation. In 1684, there were 73 cattle pens recorded, and numbers had increased to over 300 by 1782 (Burnard 2002 in Monteith and Richards, p.76). There was a symbiotic relationship between cattle pens and plantations. The cattle pens naturally provided the sugar estates with draught animals, manure, milk, and beef. Just as important was their strength: cattle powered cane-juice extraction mills. To run the mills continuously during crop time required at least four teams of eight livestock, each changing every two hours (Satchel 2002 in Monteith and Richards, p.246). Owners of sugar mills therefore invested in a large number of livestock, in order both to grind the cane, and to transport the hogs-heads of sugar and rum to the coast for shipment.

The wealth in sugar in Jamaica during the 18th century made it an attractive place for Barbadian and Carolinian colonists. Wages for the freemen were high, and white services were in demand. The wealth of white Jamaicans was estimated to be ten times greater than that of the average person in the southern plantation colonies (Burnard 2002 in Monteith and Richards). During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the cultivation of sugar surpassed all other cash crops. Jamaica sugar production tripled between 1730s and the 1770s. The number of sugar mills in the island increased from 419 in 1739 to 1,061 in 1786. In St James, the number increased from 20 to 115, between 1745 and 1774 (Higman 1998, p.14).

It seems as if there was every reason for a veritable 'Jamaica Rush', yet white settlement did not take hold. In his article, Burnard gives a number of reasons why not. First of all, Jamaica was in close proximity to Spanish and French possessions and thus in constant danger of attack by privateers, or even invasion. Second, the European war of Spanish

Succession, between 1689 and 1713, brought large numbers of troops to the island, and with them came disruption of commerce and devastating epidemics.

Meanwhile the subject population was not obediently quiescent. Burnard reports that within 30 years of the formation of the colony, there were no less than three slave revolts; with that in 1760 nearly bringing the colony down. The Maroons were a special group of freedom fighters who waged guerilla warfare from the mountains of the interior. Some were Spanish runaways who were later joined by English runaways. The Maroons waged guerilla warfare for nearly 70 years against the British, eventually forcing a peace treaty giving them rights to freedom and land, in exchange for British safety – an essential condition if more Britons were to be encouraged to settle on the island. (During my own research, I came across an interesting footnote to this episode, mentioned later in this Chapter.)

In addition to guerilla warfare, there was a series of natural disasters by hurricanes and earthquakes. The 1692 earthquake was so strong that Port Royal, widely viewed as ‘the wickedest city in the world’, disappeared under the sea. Colonists also experienced frustrations with shipping losses, unreliable supplies, rats and fires in their canes. If these were commonplaces throughout North America, to them have to be added not only the especially hot climate, but what was for ‘decent’ British society an especially unattractive phenomenon: unregulated social relationships. The piratical and savage history of the island had given rise to a society quite different from the order that prevailed on the North American mainland. Some of the documented ills were grasping materialism, conspicuous consumption, inattention to religion and family, and general debauchery. Thomas Thistlewood, an overseer and planter, kept a diary showing his activities between 1750 and 1786, in which one has a glimpse of the degree of white brutality against black enslaved. The diary of Lady Nugent, wife of the Governor, also describes the excesses that she witnessed as she accompanied her husband on his tour of duty. For a ‘decent’ society, there lay an apparent psychological fear of African customs and dread of cultural Africanization.

Naturally, what made Jamaica unattractive to some, made it alluring to others who saw a number of points in its favour. The climate was equable and pleasant, provided the settler avoided an excess of the sun and liquor. Men had social freedoms unfettered by the constraints of family and religion they would have found oppressive in Britain. White men could have black mistresses with whom they were able to reproduce an unlimited supply of

their own slaves and servants, especially after the abolition of the slave trade. They could eat well, and, with brutal exploitation of slave labour, amass fortunes that allowed every manner of conspicuous indulgence.

Each plantation dominated its own extensive territory, representing a kind of isolated state, within which developed a clear perception of a defined place and its community under absolutist rule. The slave plantation has often been characterized as a total institution in which slaves' lives were completely controlled by the planter. A slave's very body was defined by the state as a piece of property. So long as they existed, the slave plantations were a symbol of the planters' overwhelming might, a power which could only be physically escaped from or destroyed. Slaves could resist the master's dominion through rebellion, marronage, suicide, or sabotage, but in circumstances of subjection, slaves had nothing, being stripped even of their culture (Higman 1998, p.1).

Higman remarks that "(p)lanters conceived property rights in absolute terms, seen through the prism of the family." Property, plantations, and chattel slaves descended through free families according to rules which gave precedence to the male line. Slave status, on the other hand, descended through the female line. If plantations belonged to a world in which wealth was concentrated in the hands of families rather than corporations, the potential existed for a variety of paternalism in which planters' wives, children, and slaves could all be seen as the co-dependents of their fathers or masters (Higman 1998, p.2).

The African women were the most valuable resource to the plantation economy. The white proprietor exploited them in every way possible. From the point of capture, sale, and bondage, they were the object of carnal desires. In the mansion, they served as house slaves and concubines. In the cane fields, they were treated like mules, worked hard in field gangs to plant, weed, cut, and carry canes.

When the abolition of the slave trade to British territories occurred in 1807 and the slave force could no longer be purchased, the white planters made every effort to turn the black women into breeders to replenish the stock. The women did not take this exploitation lightly. They reportedly (Bush 1990, pp. 137-142) kept their fertility levels low through abortions and infanticide or just plain refusal to conceive. The exhausting labour regime took its toll on the fertility rate too.

Existing slaves were emancipated in 1834, with the proviso that there should be a six-year period of apprenticeship, during which the newly 'liberated' slaves were

conjecturally to be taught how to become free wage earners. Planters were outraged by the loss of their slave labour, and an arrangement was incorporated whereby 'apprentices' were obliged to give estates to which they were attached about forty hours of unpaid labour a week. Wages were payable only for work in excess of these hours. This was manifestly slavery by a different name, and 'slaves-in-transition' were not fooled. Their reaction was to abandon the plantations as fast as possible, thereby forcing a premature end to the apprenticeship system.

Although they did not legally own their children, the women exercised whatever love and protection that they could and resisted total surrender of their maternal right. During the period of apprenticeship, children under six years of age were free, but could work with their mothers' permission. Of special significance was the women's ability to withhold their labour and that of their children. As mothers, their role as protector was very important. Planters would generally have considered young blacks as potential estate workers, had women not frustrated them. A contemporary observer described the mothers' belligerence in 1835, "A greater insult could not be offered to a mother than by asking her free child to work." (Quoted by Mathurin-Mair in Jain and Reddock 1998, p. 26.) The British House of Commons select committee on the workings of the apprenticeship system reported the evidence of one witness, that Negro mothers had been known to say, pressing their child to their bosoms, 'we would rather see them die than become apprentices'.

The determination and, within the limits open to them, the capacity to resist during this period is amply recorded. Many fiercely tormented the overseers and head slaves; indeed, Jamaica's fractious females became the subject of extensive official dispatches. They were singled out for their lack of cooperation, their ingratitude, and their insulting conduct. They were on all occasions, the most clamorous, the most troublesome, and insubordinate, the least respectful to all authority. None of their freed children have been in any recorded instance apprenticed to their former masters. Women unequivocally stood firm on this issue, and of the 39,013 slave children who were less than six years of age on August 1, 1834, only nine were released by their mothers for estate work during the four years of apprenticeship (Mathurin-Mair in Jain and Reddock (1998, pp 25-26). The apprenticeship period of six years was reduced to four because it proved unsatisfactory to both the apprentices and the planters.

2.2 Colonial Jamaica: A Political Perspective

The established political history of Jamaica began in 1670 when the island territory officially became a colony, with proprietary rule through the old legislative assembly. As has been noted, the colonists' rule continued until rescinded in 1865. Jamaica returned to Crown colony status and remained a Crown colony from 1865 to 1944 when Jamaica had its first general election based on limited adult suffrage. Suffrage was based originally on property ownership and basic literacy, and only later extended to universal adult suffrage.

Many Africans saw the apprenticeship period as a mere extension of enslavement and therefore clamoured for full freedom, sufficient to achieve complete abolition in 1838. But while the absentee planters in England received millions of pounds sterling as compensation for their lost human property, the formerly enslaved received no such recompense. A petition to Queen Victoria for land grants which might enable subsistence farming was met with the message that the newly freed were at liberty to work for wages on the plantations. The post-emancipation period was marked by confusion and economic hardships, as the former slaves struggled to establish themselves under new conditions. Various missionaries, Moravians, American Baptists, Methodists, Presbyterians, and Pentecostal sects, attempted to fill the vocational and educational void. They bought large tracts of land and subdivided and sold to ex-slaves, or established free villages. But after a further century of economic and social oppression, widespread labour unrest led to a general strike in 1938, not only in the island but throughout the British West Indies.

The Royal Commission established to inquire into the social and economic conditions of the British West Indies made recommendations for partial self-government through limited adult suffrage; with literacy and proper ownership requirements. Other reforms in social welfare and education were proposed whose implementation had significance for compulsory primary education and the transformation to mass secondary education. The stories of my schooling will give the reader some sense of how the education system evolved in Jamaica.

The 1944 election provided an administration for this partial self-government, the Crown continuing to hold powers of nomination and veto, exercised by the Governor. In 1953, however, as a result of agitation by the local elite, a new constitution was instituted for fully-representative and responsible government, under ministers and a chief minister. The

1955 election was contested with full adult suffrage free of qualification. Between 1958 and 1961, an attempt was made to federate all of the British West Indian islands into a political entity, having the equivalent status of a British Dominion. In the result, however, Jamaica seceded from the Federation and called its own general elections to move towards independence. The new government elected in 1962 was formed with a series of ministers and a prime minister, responsible to a bicameral legislature.

Figure 2.3 summarizes key dates in Jamaica's colonial history.

Figure 2.3 Significant events in Jamaica during the Imperial era

1655	British Capture of Jamaica from Spain
1661	Made a Royal Colony
1670	Officially a colony with proprietary rule under representative assembly
	<i>17th and 18th Centuries – Sugar and Slavery</i>
1807	Abolition of slave trading from Africa to British colonies
1834 – 1838	Apprenticeship (Provisional emancipation)
1838	Emancipation
1865	Morant Bay Rebellion. Territory reverted to Crown colony rule
1935	Charles Archibald Reid elected to Legislative Council
1938	General Strike. West India Royal Commission Warranted
1944	General Election for Partial Self-Government Franchise given to those with property and literacy
1953	New Constitution – a system of representative and Responsible self-government with ministries
1958 – 1961	West Indies Federation
1959	Full internal self-government constitution. Full adult suffrage without property and literacy
1962	Independence

2.3 Colonial Trails: A Personal Perspective

At the beginning of the 1940s when I was born, Jamaica had 1.2 million inhabitants. Of these, 78.1% were black descendants of 3 million African slaves who had been transported to the colony over the preceding centuries to service the sugar economy (Munroe 1972, p.1). The population of Jamaica was essentially the leftover surplus labour from the defunct sugar plantations. Unemployment in the island was high. For many generations there have been short-term and long-term migrations away from Jamaica, which included fruit-pickers to Canada and the United States, cane-cutters to Florida, and domestic servants to white households in Great Britain, Canada, and the United States of America. These migrations, which began in the forties, continue to the present day, although less so to Great Britain.

Those receiving a colonial education in Jamaica were fitted to seek economic opportunities in one of Great Britain, the United States of America, or Canada. Prior to 1969, the only way a person in my position would in fact have been able to immigrate to Canada was as a domestic servant or as a dependent female, attached to a male who qualified for immigration. Many young nurses and teachers migrated under the domestic servant schemes, served their time and very quickly moved into their professions, taking advantage of higher learning. In 1967, Canada had instituted a point system for immigration that rated formal skills and professions highly, so that by 1969, when I was ready to migrate, I was able to do so proudly as a teacher.

I hoped this was to be a new life free of racialized distinctions. In many ways, the transition was not problematic, given my familiarity with Anglo-cultural concepts, through my schooling. The reality of Canada, however, was a continuing awareness of 'race', but as distinguished by white, and non-white (yellow, red, brown, and black). Whereas in Jamaica I had had a certain position as a coloured person, as I moved through the cultural experiences of Canadian society I became aware that I was in a new position: I was non-white, and I was black. The discovery that black people held such very low status in the Canadian multi-cultural mosaic was what I was least prepared for. The benign image I had of Canada as an open society was tarnished by the shock of falsehoods revealed. I understood that now I was associated with the black underclass, people deemed unsuitable to be Canadians

(Daenzer, 1993; Foster, 1997; Shepard, 1997; Prince 2001). In fact, I had had blackness bestowed upon me.

I felt this as a growing burden. Following a period of years in the academy during which I experienced gathering alienation from the lack of knowledge about the Caribbean and about Africa, in 1997 I began to consider, through a program of self-study, writing journals, reading history and fiction, who I really was. At a certain point in this analysis, I came to an epiphany: I am a descendant of enslaved African people and their British colonists.

The course I took in African American history in 1995 provided a good foundation for this personal exploration. A conference sponsored by the Centre for the Study of Historical Consciousness held at The University of British Columbia on the theme of "Memory, Landscape, and Narrative," brought together white scholars from what seemed to be the former British Empire, and the United States of America. Among the participants were several First Nations people. I was the only Black person. I realized that yet again there were no speakers or sessions remembering Africa, the slave trade, or plantation slavery. I hastily developed and circulated a short statement with bibliography on what significant reasons there were for remembering Africa. But the uppermost sense I had was that, in the company of learned international historians and educators, there was no place for me to fit in the conversation. My body alone remembered a long and bloody history, but as yet my voice was small and insignificant: I was without narrative. This dissertation is my first comprehensive utterance in that narrative voice.

One session of the Vancouver conference sharpened the sense of alienation most acutely. We participants were invited to make personal introductions, and a visiting Maori graduate student from New Zealand began them. She explained that Maori introduce themselves by naming their river, their mountain, their clan, their family and then themselves. In listening to her, I was aghast to realize that I had no river, no mountain, no clan, no family. I had an alienated self. I resolved at that moment to find my river, my mountain, my clan, my family and myself. Thus I began a physical journey along the colonial trails in search of my landscape. Along the way, I found fragments; but even such remnants spoke powerfully to me of my hidden past.

The first leg of the trail began in June of 1997 when I attended the Canadian Society for Studies in Education (CSSE) Conference in St John's, Newfoundland. This was

a remarkable site of empire remembered. It was the year of the celebration of five hundred years since Britain established her first outpost on the continent. There was much excitement about the reenactment of John Cabot's landing, and the preparation for the quincennial celebration later in the summer at which Queen Elizabeth II would preside. Meanwhile, I was busy reliving some of my imperial geography lessons about cod fisheries off the Grand Banks, the icebergs and the Labrador Current, that I remembered from the May Pen All-Age School in the early 1950s. A lesson on the wind systems of the world came into focus. I learned that, for the merchant ships that sailed the Atlantic Ocean between the United Kingdom, Africa, the West Indian Islands, and North America, it was important to catch the northeast and southeast trade winds at the right times of year. Slavers were careful to load their human cargo along the West Coast of Africa to be in time to sail on the windward side through the Middle Passage. If their ships were caught in the Doldrums, a trip that with a fair wind would take five to six weeks, must take up to ten weeks. Being caught in the Doldrums gave captives more reason to rise up and mutiny, or commit suicide by jumping overboard. Worse yet, ship masters might run out of food and water and be obliged to dispose of some of their live cargo in order to save the rest for sale in the slave auctions of the West Indian Islands and the American Colonies. In my youth, I learned to describe my depressions as being in the doldrums; I did not then know the origins of the metaphor.

In St John's, I made the codfish connection with Jamaica. While there I heard stories of the exploitation of the Irish fishers, mingled with stories of how inferior molasses from Jamaica was exchanged for inferior dried salted codfish. For centuries, this poor quality codfish kept my enslaved African ancestors alive as they laboured on the indigo, cotton, sugarcane, coffee, and banana plantations and in the sugar factories. For Newfoundland, the molasses had particular significance. Newfoundlanders told me of 'lassy bread' that nourished their forebears in hard times. It was named for the molasses from Jamaica. The invention of Newfoundland 'screech' was equally fascinating. Tour guides informed us that Newfoundlanders originally brewed a special rum from poor-quality molasses dumped on them in exchange for equally poor-quality dried salted codfish. Jamaica still imports poor-quality codfish from Newfoundland, while Newfoundland Screech is now, in a striking reversal, manufactured in Jamaica at the Appleton Estate.

On my return from St John's, I stopped in Halifax, Nova Scotia. Here was another site of memory. I learned of the presence of black people who came from two sources.

Picking up the account of Jamaican Maroons from earlier in this Chapter, it emerges that a contingent was in fact expelled from Jamaica in 1796 by Governor Balcarres, as part of the treaty that ended the guerrilla warfare against the British. Not even the British Militia, nor the bloodhounds imported from Cuba, had rid the Jamaican planters of their human pests, who undermined the security of their crops and their slaves. Some were therefore shipped off to Halifax, under the pretext that the British were returning them to Africa. Against their will and under protest at their betrayal, they were employed at very low wages to build the Citadel, the military fort in Halifax. I further learned that within four years, most of the Maroons left Halifax for Sierra Leone, in a sort of reverse middle passage (Campbell, 1993).

The second group of black people arrived as free blacks having fought on the side of the British during the war of independence and the War of 1812 in order to earn their freedom on Canadian soil. They arrived in Canada as the Black Loyalists with the expectation of receiving free land that all who fought on the British side were promised. This promise was kept for only a few who were allegedly given scrub land. Their economic status became indistinguishable from those black people who came as chattels of white loyalists (Walker, 1992).

This last group, who arrived as part of the property and personal effects of the white loyalists, remained enslaved under the legal status of 'servants for life'. Their descendants now live in poverty-stricken areas of Preston, Cherry Hill and in Dartmouth. Also in Halifax, I was taken to the small monument that marks the site of Africville, a black community that was appropriated and demolished without proper reparation in the 1970s to make way for urban renewal (Clairmont and McGill, 1974).

With a gathering sense of the widespread scale of the slave trade and its consequences, I resolved to undertake a formal study that would explore some of these questions. The opportunity came during the summer of 1998 when I travelled to the Robert E Lee Plantation in Virginia, to a two-week residential seminar in the company of Euro- and African-Americans, focusing on the study of slavery in America. The Commonwealth University of Virginia gave the seminar to social studies teachers, in cooperation with the Friends of the Robert E Lee Plantation. It was an effort to teach the dark side of American history, in the hope of remembering and changing attitudes. As part of the seminar I had the opportunity to hear lectures by historians, archeologists, folklorists, and the African-American curator of the Williamsburg Colonial Museum. The seminar was enriched by field

trips to Fredericksburg, South Hampton Documentation Centre, the James River, the city of Richmond, and to the unmarked spot where Nat Turner, the slave rebel, was captured and beheaded. A folk historian, Mr McGhee, and his family had been keeping the site marked, and had taken visitors there to recount the tale of the Nat Turner rebellion which occurred in 1831. In his retirement years, Mr McGhee took a degree in history and learned to do historical research so he could keep Nat Turner's history alive. His was a counter-tour to that of the South Hampton Documentation Centre, which was situated amid formidable marble monuments to white confederates. While we were at the documentation centre listening to the delivery of excerpts from a PhD thesis, Mr McGhee himself entered the room, only to be humiliated and chased away – *persona non grata* to the official history of Nat Turner. I witnessed how the African Americans shared Mr McGhee's humiliation in silence. They afterwards explained to me the subordinate position the circumstances led them to play.

A visit to the James River and a sort of remembrance ceremony conducted by two African American folklorists was both heart- and gut-wrenching. With drumming and poetry we heard how slave ships were brought in to unload their human cargo at night. The screaming and torture brought tears of rage from the African Americans in the class. Some heads hung in shame. When the African American folklorists who conducted this tour asked us what role each of us would play, had we lived at that time and in that place, all the Euro-Americans kept their silence. The African-Americans spoke. I too spoke up to say that I would have been a rebellious female. The African-Americans and I openly wept.

We saw an auction block. To stand in the complex of sixteen auction blocks and the nearby holding cells undid me as powerfully as did a visit I had made to Cape Coast Castle in Ghana in 1992. I was visiting and experiencing these landscapes as sites of remembrance of the enormous maritime trade between the United Kingdom and Chesapeake Bay and Potomac River. The trade was in African human cargo, cotton, tobacco, lumber, and trade goods from Europe. The Robert E Lee Plantation was located in close proximity to Chesapeake Bay, where it meets the Potomac River. One evening, at sunset, I sat on the bank of the Potomac River at the Bay and pondered its present pristine appearance – not a ship in sight, not even a seagull. I was transported in imagination to the heyday of the slave trade, when hogsheads of tobacco and cotton were exported from the very piers that dotted the Bay. I also thought about the ancestral memories that this topography evoked for the African-Americans, who had indeed spent most of their class hours in tears. It was a summer

of painful remembrance for all. Teachers prepared lesson plans and unit plans, in a spirit of resolve that they and others were called to dispel ignorance about the slave trade and plantation slavery, and the legacy for the American nation.

When I left the seminar I went directly to Jamaica, there to join my brother in the search for my mother's people. On this trip, I began to use my newfound knowledge to view Jamaica as a former slave society in a way that I had not done before. I also began to appreciate the strategic importance that Jamaica had for Great Britain in slavery days. The connections that I made that summer between my personal history and the global trade linking Africa, Canada, the New England colonies, and England astounded me. I began to locate myself firmly within this history of enslavement, commodity exchange, and the massive movement of peoples in the service of a privileged dominion.

In 1999, I continued my exploration along the colonial trails, on this occasion back to the white mother country. I was on a study holiday in England with my elder daughter and her Japanese mother-and-daughter friends. Noriko insisted that we must visit Haworth, and the heather fields so vividly described in Jane Eyre, which she had read some forty years ago in high school in Japan. While driving through Yorkshire on our way to Leeds and Haworth, I noted familiar place names such as Halifax and Richmond, and a remarkable resemblance to some of the countryside in Jamaica: with stone fences, Leghorn and Rhode Island fowls and the chicken coops to boot. I told stories of the British in Jamaica on the way. Sensing that my daughter and her friends were by now fully satisfied with the quantity of my colonial references, I strolled the High Street on my own. Walking along I recognized more artifacts of empire in the window displays: Fry's Cocoa, Guinness Stout, washtubs, scrubbing boards, and Pears soap. I came upon a bakery, in the window of which was a most familiar sight. I saw a cake labelled "Yorkshire Parkin" about four inches in diameter and about one inch thick. I stood at the window, convinced that I was looking at a 'bullah' cake. I bought two, sneaked around the corner of the bakery, broke a piece, and bit in heartily. Make no mistake, I was eating the bullah cake of my youth, and found it tasted just as good as those of Philip Young Bakery in Jamaica, which I describe in one of my stories. I do not know which came first – Jamaica Bullah or Yorkshire Parkin. I do know that the molasses, sugar, and ginger must have come from Jamaica, just as the flour must have come from Great Britain, in the heyday of the triangular trade in sugar, molasses, rum, and slaves.

Returning to London, we met up with my Japanese friend's former Oxford professor at a pub close to Trafalgar Square. He was 'a regular guy,' as we would say in Jamaica – a man who did not wear the affectations of his class and who exuded a genuine interest in people. He told us that he was raised a Quaker in Yorkshire. At the mention of Yorkshire I asked if he knew the cake called Yorkshire Parkin. "Of cus, of cus," he replied crisply. I quizzed him about the ingredients, and heard they were exactly those of the Jamaican variety.

I enjoyed a private thought about the rivalry between Great Britain and her former New England colonies over the molasses trade from the Caribbean. So important was this waste product of the sugar manufacturing process that in 1733, Britain passed the Molasses Act to protect its trade from competition with the North American Colonies and from French colonies in the Caribbean (Sheridan 1974, p. 31; 339 –359). I found it amusing that the Royal Navy was brought out into the stormy Atlantic to give safe passage into the ports of the British Isles for the humble molasses. Apart from rum distillery in Jamaica, only poor people and cattle ate the lowly molasses. If it was humorous that the mother country would make such a fuss over molasses, it was equally so that the mother country endeavoured to outdo its prize colony in rum distillery.

Our conversation over the British Empire continued. We started exchanging common knowledge about Empire and about growing up in Empire. It turned out that we are the same age. I shared with the professor that I had just begun a personal study of slavery and the slave trade to Jamaica. He described the wonderful archive on the subject that Oxford University holds. During the course of the conversation about the growth of the various financial and insurance institutions, I mentioned that my first job was with Barclay's Bank, Dominion, and Colonial and Overseas, at which he informed me that Barclay's started as a Quaker bank founded to promote self-reliance. He was not sure how and when it became a colonial bank.

After tea we strolled in Trafalgar Square. At the moment we were expressing our appreciations and saying goodbye I noticed the overarching presence of a certain statue. My eyes followed the phallic erection up several hundred feet to the top of which stood a man dressed in military regalia. His head was covered with a crown of cooing pigeons and cascading pigeon excrement. The absurdity of this image prompted me to ask with a bit of mischief in my tone, "Who is the guy up there with the pigeons on his head? "Don't you

know?" asked the Oxford professor in that learned British accent of polite reprimand tempered with a chuckle. His look of incredulity nudged me into trying a quick face-saving move. I quickly drew on the British history that I was taught in school and said, "One of the celebrated English Sea Dogs?" He replied, "We are in Trafalgar Square! Why, that's Nelson's statue!" He proceeded to tell us that Trafalgar Square and Nelson's statue were so important to the British people that the Exchequer provides a large sum of money annually to clean off the pigeon shit.

Why did the Oxford professor expect me to remember the history of the British Empire from the victor's point of view, after empire's end? Why was my own quest along the colonial trails to sites of memory of my African ancestors eclipsed by the expectation that I should know who Admiral Nelson was? Empire still lives in all its imperial expectations of the formerly colonized. Is the knowledge structure of Empire ever decolonized? After this unsettling encounter with the Oxford professor, I spent three days in the Maritime Museum going through twenty galleries of British Maritime history. Admiral Nelson had a whole gallery dedicated to him. I had to agree that the man was a genius, but his celebrated acts of bravery had evil consequences for my ancestors. While going through his gallery, I learned of the centrality of Jamaica to the British Empire for production of sugar, rum, and molasses; and for its strategic significance in the British rivalry with Spain, France, and later the Americas. Admiral Nelson's institutionalization of the rum ration for the British Navy kept many Jamaicans labouring under slave-like conditions on plantations in Westmoreland, St Mary, St Catherine, and Clarendon until the 1970s. The imperial context is laced and larded through my life stories.

I begin my stories with my clearest recollection of a significant event that pushed me into consciousness, and perhaps marked the death of my childhood. The plot is driven by personal and family crises.

CHAPTER III EARLY CHILDHOOD MEMORIES 1947–1950

3.1 My Life with Aunt Joyce and Uncle Harold circa 1947

One day, a fateful day, sometime in the fourth year of my troubled infancy, as I was just recovering from the asthma that nearly took my life, something particularly terrible happened to My Aunt Joyce and me. The morning started out like any other. As usual, Harold's dutiful wife arose at the crack of dawn, usually after the second cocks' crow, went to the outside kitchen and lit the coal pot to make the hearty breakfast and lunch of boiled bananas, sweet potatoes, salt fish, and callaloo. The night before, she would have remembered to put the dried salted codfish to soak in a bowl of water, ridding it of the excess salt which had enabled its journey from far-off Newfoundland. Then she would come to my room, rip the cover off me, and shake my shoulders to rouse me from my deep sleep. "Yvonne! Yvonne! Get up, up!" I would groan and say: "Me wa' fe sleep, me tyad." "You too young fe tyad. Put on yuh clothes and go outside to tek in de fresh morning air."

She repeated this ritual for as long as it took to get me fully awake and out of bed. I would dress and stumble through the door, frowning and grumbling, leaving her and Harold behind in the bedroom. The morning air was cold and damp. I got goose bumps, shivered till my teeth clattered, whimpering like a puppy dog. When she determined that I'd had enough morning air, she would order me to wash my face, clean my teeth with fine salt, and gargle my throat.

A cup of hot bitter cerasee tea waited for me at the table. "Drink yuh cerasee tea. It good fe clean out yu blood." I had to drink this bitter concoction – sweetened with 'D sugar', the poorest quality but most nutritious grade – before I got my breakfast of slimy oats porridge. "Oats porridge good fe you. It mek you bones strong." All this was part of a health regime to help me shake the debilitating asthma that threatened to stunt my growth and take my life. But it was a breakfast of bitterness that made me vomit, and slime that would make me salivate volumes which I could not swallow to please her. It was a battle of wills to keep me alive. She tried beating me for not eating, to no avail. "Yu going to sit dere til yu drink dat tea and dat porridge." So I would sit there till I fell asleep with my face on the tabletop.

Later when the sun was hot enough to take the chill out of the bath pan of water that she'd set out, My Aunt Joyce gave me my daily bath, and talked to me about learning to read and count. She had taught me to count to five using five fingers, two eyes, one nose, ten fingers, and ten toes. Later she bought me an ABC book and marbles for counting. "One day I will have to send you to Sunday-School. I going to make you a nice frilly frock." I loved the baths because she talked lovingly to me about growing healthy and strong. There was a small tree growing close by, and she would coo about my growing out of the asthma just as the tree grew. Neighbours gave her many compliments on how well she was raising me. She loved it; I was a gift, the child she could not bear herself.

I would come to understand that this ritual of waking early to cook and feed her husband and send him off to work was the pattern that I was expected to follow when I too became a good Christian wife. She would dish out hefty portions of cooked food in three stacking bowls of an enamel carrier in the following order: in the largest bottom bowl she would place four fingers of boiled bananas and cover with the cooking water to keep them from hardening. In the second bowl, she would artistically arrange slices of boiled 'modder edward' sweet potatoes; and in the third, the cook-up of saltfish, coconut oil, onions, pepper, and callaloo. She would then slide each bowl carefully in the slender metal frame that strung the two-sided handles one on top of the other, put the lid on the topmost bowl and lock the metal frame. She would also pour coffee in the thermos flask that would keep it hot until lunchtime.

While Aunt Joyce was cooking, her husband performed his ablutions. I was taught that this big, tall, handsome, black man was my Uncle Harold. He would play with me sometimes. He was the first man I saw use a pen and ink. I remember hiding and using the pen and ink to write a whole page full of zig-zag marks to Fadda Christmus. Uncle Harold laughed snorting hiccups when My Aunt Joyce showed him what I had done. I kind of liked Uncle Harold.

That morning I watched Uncle Harold dress through the half-open bedroom door. He put on his clean white merino (undershirt) and long underpants. Over the top, he donned a crisply starched and ironed white, long-sleeve cotton shirt that his industrious wife had

made for the husband she did not and could not love. He was himself a reputable tailor. He had made the grey woollen trousers which completed his work ensemble. He stuffed the long shirt-tail inside his pants, then strung a leather belt through the loops, buckled the belt and patted the buckle with his super long skinny fingers. He stood with legs astride in front of the bureau mirror, bending slightly forward to see his face.

He reached for the jar of coconut oil, unscrewed the cap, stuck his right index finger in and scoop a little of the congealed oil in the palm of his left hand. He rubbed both palms together to liquefy the oil, and then rubbed the grease furiously through the mop of unruly kinks. First, he combed out the tangles with the coarse-toothed end of the comb, and then with the fine-toothed end, he raked it into place. He would finish off by brushing back along the lines of his widow's peak to reveal his flat forehead. His wife said that that a peaked hairline was a sure sign of a wicked man. She should know whereof she spoke; she had intimate knowledge of his cruelties. I saw many beatings in my short time with them as a child. As a consequence I was afraid of Uncle Harold.

Harold had to be turned out just right to meet his white and brown customers who expected him to be dressed respectably, and (at least to their faces), speak with enough deference to obtain and keep their patronage. Uncle Harold stood up straight and turned his back to the mirror while he twisted his neck to see that he looked just as good behind as in front.

He stepped off the veranda to where his Raleigh bicycle leaned against the trunk of the breadfruit tree. He pointed the bicycle toward the gate and kicked the stand upright, then pinched each tyre between his thumb and index finger to see how soft it was. He removed the pump from the upright bar, pulled out the connection tube and attached the pump to the tyre, then pumped up each until he could no longer squeeze the rubber. He would carefully replace the pump and wash his hands in the wash basin set out for his ablutions. Then he would fold his trouser-legs to taper them for riding his bicycle. These were held in place with metal clips, so that Uncle Harold would not get the chain grease on them when he pedalled to work. He hiked up his shirt-sleeves above his wrist and clipped each just above his biceps.

"Harold yuh breakfast ready." Harold would answer: "Hm hm," and move to the table. He sat at the table by himself while Joyce busied herself washing up in the kitchen. First, he cautiously sipped the hot bush tea to test its heat. If it was too hot, he alternately

blew furiously to get rid of the steam, and slurped it noisily. After a few big gulps he was bound to belch loudly, as he rubbed his belly and adjusted his bottom on the chair. Then he took the fork and crushed up everything on his plate to a messy mush. He shovelled the mush into his mouth, chewing with his mouth open and lips smacking. This lusty way of eating caused many altercations between Harold and Joyce. It would start when Joyce would holler: "Harold, chew with your mout shut. You sound like a striking hog. Yuh mek me stomach sick." To which Harold would reply, "You red kin bitch! You tink yuh betta ah me." When really furious he would throw a few plates out on the concrete veranda, shout some sexist and racist obscenities, and storm out. He would mount his bicycle and pedal furiously fast, as though he had wound-up springs in his knees.

On calmer mornings, after the usual busy rituals of making the fire and cooking a workingman's breakfast, Aunt Joyce dutifully saw her burly husband off to his tailor shop, in May Pen city centre. When Harold was ready to leave, she would hand him his carrier of food and thermos flask of coffee at the door. He would grab them and mumble "See you laata." She swiftly gave him a 'cut eye', to show her scorn, and walked into the kitchen to dish out her own working woman's breakfast.

She would join me sitting at the table, praying to the bitter cerasee tea and slimy oats porridge. I had been soundly whipped once for dumping the porridge in my lap and throwing the tea through the window. We would sit in silence, she absorbed in her own thoughts as I watched her timidly from the side of my eyes. I knew when she was really in a foul mood because one of her eyes jumped and danced, and she packed the food into her mouth without chewing. Her cheeks would bulge and when she was forced to chew to get rid of some of the food, one of her cheeks puffed up like a balloon and squeezed the dancing eye to a squint. Occasionally she would come out of her reverie and shout and threaten me. "Eat up. If yuh don't eat now yuh nat getting anyting to eat for the rest of de day." She often kept her promise. When I refused to put the mug or spoon to my mouth she said, "Yuh stubborn like a mule, yuh are de bebil pickney."

It was the custom that after Harold had mounted his bicycle and pushed off to work and she had bathed me and combed my hair, Joyce would start her day's routine. Tidying up the house was a matter of pride. This she would do herself because no maid could do it to her satisfaction. She would open all the windows and make the Simmons bed that she and Harold had fought on the night before. Then she would dust the bureau and

night table. Afterwards, she would move into the dining room where my own makeshift bed was. She made that up before moving to fold the table cloth, walk out to the veranda, and shake it clean of crumbs. The next big task was to dust the waggonette, with careful attention to the glasses and cups-and-saucers. The floor followed. First, she would sweep it with the fine bamboo floor-broom, before she wiped, waxed, and shined it with a coconut brush. After this it was time to buff the floor with an old felt hat. I watched her many mornings as she did the floors. The routines followed the same pattern. She assembled the damp cloth, the chunk of beeswax and the coconut floor brush and got down on her knees, cushioned by soft rags. First, she wiped sections of the hardwood floor clean. Then she rubbed wax over the face of the brush. Cupping the brush in the clasp of both palms and outstretched fingers, she knelt down and pushed the brush back and forth, back and forth, pausing occasionally to wipe the sweat from her forehead, and sing or hum one of her favorite hymns.

*Guide me, O Thou great Jehovah
Pilgrim through this barren land
I am weak but Thou art mighty
Hold me with Thy powerful hands
Bread of heaven, bread of heaven
Feed me now and evermore
Feed me now and evermore.*

She would simply hum the words for the stanzas she did not know. I was to see and hear her drown her sorrows in the words and melody of this hymn many times, when later I lived with her again. When the floors were as shiny as glass, she went once over with an old felt hat and giving the floor its final buff. She was now ready to bathe and get dressed, and to start her day's work.

Even though she ran her dressmaking business from home, she, like her husband, had to dress appropriately to meet and greet her customers (Figure 3.1). This day in particular, she dressed in a beautiful pink linen dress with the same colour cutwork embroidery all over the bodice. She was famous among the high-class women for this work. She would style her "good hair" to look like her favorite film star. She dipped the fine end of the comb in a little water, and twisted while she combed to get beautiful curls to form a 'V' in the front. Just like Greta Garbo, I imagine now. I watched her carefully as she used a special black cloth tube to roll the hair, and make an oval-shaped rope drape to the nape of

her neck. She held the roll in place with several hairpins. I thought my Aunt Joyce was so pretty. Her ivory skin contrasted with Harold's ebony, and my honey-coloured skin.

**Figure 3.1 Aunt Joyce & Uncle Harold
c. 1950**



When she had dressed herself to her standard of elegance, she would get the washerwoman, who arrived at work when the sun was halfway to the top of the sky, to help her move her Singer treadle machine and her cutting-table out to the verandah. When it didn't rain, she liked to work on the cooler verandah. I liked to lay spread-eagle on the cold smooth concrete floor, and roll around enjoying the cool on my skin.

On this sad day when the awful thing happened, I had been sitting contentedly at My Aunt Joyce's feet dressing my dolls with the scraps that fell from her cutting table. I became aware that something had alarmed My Aunt Joyce. She looked toward the gate, where

a grey lorry with a bright red stripe drawn across the cab pulled up to a sudden screeching halt. My aunt jumped up panic-stricken and exclaimed: "What have you come for, Cyril?" I looked around and saw a very brown figure walking toward the veranda. He was a brown-skinned man wearing cocoa-brown oxfords, cocoa-brown pants, cocoa-brown shirt, topped off with cocoa-brown felt hat. When he stepped upon the veranda and greeted my aunt in a not-so-friendly manner, I looked from him to my aunt and saw a striking resemblance that I wasn't to understand until much later.

He looked around and saw me under the sewing machine flap, walked over, bent down while he made kissing sounds and beckoned me to come to him, much as if he was calling his puppy dog. I played strange because I did not know this man. He grabbed me, took me up, and said: "I am your father. Call me daddy." I did as I was told. I did not know what father or daddy meant. I was scared of the brown man. My Aunt Joyce and the

brown man started arguing, and I heard my Aunt Joyce say: "Leave de chile alone wid me. Yu cyant look after har."

She pulled him into the bedroom and closed the door, behind which they had a big row. I stood outside listening, worried for my poor Aunt Joyce. When at last the door opened, her skin was flushed as pink as her dress. Beads of tears ran down her cheeks. Her dancing eye began to dance really fast. In a frenzy, she reached for a grip and packed all the beautiful frilly frocks she had made for me to wear to the May Pen Methodist Sunday School. The brand-new kid-leather white shoes that I was also to wear to the Sunday School were packed. I loved the smell of the new leather.

The brown man took me up in his arms, kissed me all over, and emptied his pockets of sweeties. The cigarette box in his pocket poked me in my ribs as he heaved me up and down above his head, and held me against his chest. His breath smelled of rum and tobacco. I did not like the brown man. He said: "Yu comin wid daddy." My Aunt Joyce bathed and dressed me in a pink organdy cotton dress with white polka dots. The dress had a tiny white collar and a big bow, tied at the back. I was delighted to have my hair plaited in an upsweep and tied with my big pink ribbons. When I was dressed, Aunt Joyce took me to the brown man, handed me and my grip to him, and suddenly turned away with her head hung low, before turning back and kissing me goodbye on both my cheeks. Her tears left my cheeks wet. At that moment of innocent parting, I felt half-happy that I was going for a ride with the brown man who had given me sweeties. Aunt Joyce stood alone in the doorway, dejected and forlorn, as the brown man revved up the loud engine of the lorry. She did not wave. I was torn between this brown stranger whom I did not like, and My Aunt Joyce whom I was learning to love.

I do not remember any parting interchange between My Aunt Joyce and Cyril. The brown man held me in one arm and my grip in the other and walked me to the grey lorry. He settled me on the passenger seat and put my grip on the floor in front of me. Then he drove off, kicking up dust and roaring the engine as loud as possible. He was taking me from May Pen in the parish of Clarendon, to Windsor Castle in the parish of St. Mary. I was happy to go for the drive but little did I know the wretched life that awaited me. It was not until some time in 1955 before I was reunited with My Aunt Joyce. Many difficult years would pass before then.

I often wondered what account My Aunt Joyce gave her husband of my disappearance and why I was not even allowed to say goodbye to him. I cannot imagine her getting any sympathy. This is how I imagine the scenario. After wolfing down his dinner and belching shamelessly, Harold takes a bath in the bathhouse, in the bath pan of water that Joyce had the washerwoman put out for his morning ablutions. He gets dressed in his American-style drape-pants and long dinner jacket, puts his round silver timepiece, suspended from a heavy silver chain attached to his right pant-loop, into his left fob pocket. Making concealed fobs was his specialty. He often boasted about how well he could make a fob. While he dresses, Aunt Joyce hurls obscenities at him to let him know in no uncertain terms that she thinks he is nothing but a dog. Harold laughs his fiendish hiccup laugh, mocking her impotence and underscoring his power. He returns to the business of enhancing his sartorial splendor, donning a bow-tie, and dabbing some 'Evening in Paris' perfume behind his ears. He struts out the door, snorting and grinning hiccups. Joyce is meanwhile left alone to stew in her misery. Harold will later return home, predictably drunk, and will return Joyce's verbal assaults with a lashing.

Years later, on one of my obligatory visits during summer holidays from Teachers' College, and in a rare moment of woman-to-woman intimacy, Aunt Joyce told me what had happened that day when my father took me away. By now she was no longer My Aunt Joyce; she was simply Aunt Joyce, for reasons that will become clear as the story unfolds. She related that when she protested at my father for wanting to take me from her, he replied: "People don't have dem pickney and give dem whey like chickens." As if that were not insult enough, he further told her: "If yuh want pickney, yuh have yuh big pussy, go have yuh own pickney." Almost as though she found her recollection unbelievable, she raised her right hand and called on God as her witness. She flushed and sobbed probably as much as on the day it happened.

She did not have to call on God as a witness for me to believe her. What she did not know, and what I could not tell her, is that I had despised the man my father so much for his lack of human decency and integrity that I had disowned him when I was fourteen years old. I had vowed never to see or speak to him from the day he gave Harry Black licence to work me like a slave in his grocery shop and in his household. It would have been futile to tell Aunt Joyce all this, because to my complete puzzlement, she had an everlasting love and loyalty to her brother, despite his ways. Her revelation to me only confirmed that I had done

the right thing, the admonishment of the Old Testament Commandment notwithstanding. Yet if I had told Aunt Joyce of my resolve, she would abruptly have changed her emotions and given me chapter and verse from the Bible why I would be damned in hell for doing such a thing, doubtless from the very same section that I would use equally, to justify my own position.

*Children obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.
2 Honour thy father and mother; (which is the first commandment with promise;)
3 That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on earth.
4 And, ye fathers provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. (Ephesians 6:1-4 AV)*

How might I be well? In relation to a father who truly provoked me to anger, I was the one who had to decide what this promise meant. The Bible is silent on the matter, as were all the adults who stressed unquestioned obedience to parents. It was as if parents could abuse their children with impunity, for there were no scriptural consequences for them.

I am not certain for what Aunt Joyce cried. Was she crying for what we had both lost between us, or for her inability to have children? I dared not ask. I was overwhelmed by her recollection of this part of what happened behind the closed bedroom door that day. The separation was traumatic for both of us. From the way she flushed as she sobbed, I can only imagine that she was reliving the ultimate humiliation of a childless wife in a society that lay so much store on the fertile woman and the virile man. Her husband very much played the virile man. Folk would say he was married to a mule, as he would often call her. His scorn for her childlessness was supported by Old Testament stories of God cursing women by making their womb infertile. I have no doubt now that she wept for the loss of the daughter she almost raised. And in spite of some terrible episodes involving Aunt Joyce and me later in our lives, I have wept many times during my life for the surrogate mother I almost had.

Her loving care was the closest I came to knowing the loving care of a mother. There was not another social mother in my life. I do not know how long I stayed with her but these early years of my life were deeply significant. I was a motherless child when she rescued me, nursed me to health, and showered her young maternal love on me. I remember my first Christmas. She dressed me up and carried me in her arms to Grand Market on the night before Christmas. In the market, a Horse Head mask scared me, and she cajoled me into going up and touching his long face. But when the person talked from behind the mask I remember screaming so loudly that people gathered round to see what happened to "de likkle

girl.” To appease me, she carried me again in her arms to Mr Black’s shop and bought me red, pink, and green sweets. When she took me home, she told me of a man called “Faader Christmas,” who would come through the ceiling to put gifts in the big red flannel stockings which she placed at the foot of my bed. She insisted that I had to go to sleep like a good little girl before he would come down. I tried to stay awake to see this Faader Christmas, but could not; and next morning woke up, excited to find a doll in my stocking, but very disappointed that I never saw Faader Christmas.

My Aunt Joyce had dreams and ambitions for me. She was my first teacher. She began to educate me in good manners, for which she received much praise from friends and customers. She introduced me to reading, counting and writing early. God bless her soul.

The incidents in my life that followed this fateful day attest to the sometimes-tragic consequences of my father’s deeds. He was an arrogant brown man whose brain was pickled in alcohol and tobacco smoke. He was also one of the thousands of sons born to mulatto wives and white fathers of the British planter class, reared in the attitudes and techniques for intimidation and abuse of black men, women of all shades, and their children. Sadly, from the day when my father took me away from My Aunt Joyce, I became only her niece, Cyril’s daughter by the black wench.

Yes, “the black wench” was the way both Aunt Joyce and her favourite brother referred to my mother. I have never heard that word from anyone else in Jamaica. I met the word again when I began to read fiction written about slavery in the Southern United States of America.

By my father’s actions, I had no contact with My Aunt Joyce for about eight years. During this time, all bonds of affection were severed, and she became plain Aunt Joyce. Years later when Aunt Joyce and I were re-united (I was about twelve, just before my first period at thirteen years old), the estrangement was obvious and irreparable. She now had a surrogate son whom her philandering husband Harold had sired by an Indian woman. In the Jamaican classification of color and physiognomy, this child could pass as hers. She led me to believe the same, until one of her maids told me the story. The truth was also to emerge several times over during Harold’s and Joyce’s disgraceful ‘tracing’ matches that I heard when I lived with them again between 1954 and 1959. The object of these loud and nasty public quarrels was to exchange dirty references to their racial, class, and gender attributes. With arithmetic precision each tried to cancel the other out with the nastiest put down. The

tracing match usually became physical when one of them delivered a blow to fix the insult. When first I tried to part them, Uncle Harold could put me between them and push us both against the wall. Soon enough I learned to scream for help from the neighbours rather than intervene.

Our relationship was tainted in ways that I am only now, as I write, beginning to understand. For one thing, I now think I held a grudge against My Aunt Joyce for not coming to find and rescue me from my father's brutality. For another, I was confused by her repeated negative references to my mother. Her bad temper and propensity to hit and curse terrified me. At the same time I loved her, and even sometimes liked her. I have come to see her as a proud 'white' woman who had married out of her race and class. She and her husband were locked in the deadly embrace of race, class, and gender inequalities. They lived out the curse of racialized superiority-inferiority binary. Aunt Joyce resisted the sexist subjugation that was her lot. She was a football, kicked by the blackguard and cad, in a game whose rules she did not really know. History had dealt with her cruelly – she was paying for the sins of the fathers.

3.2 Public Works and My Father

As my father and I walked towards the truck, I noticed the red stripe and 'PWD' written in big letters on both sides. I later learned that PWD stood for Public Works Department. Cyril John Shorter (as he called himself, as if to assure himself of his importance), supervised road building in the parishes of St. Catherine and St. Mary.

From what I came to know, I guess that it must have been on one of the road-building projects in St. Mary that he met Eutedra Williams, the woman to whose home he was to take me. One of the many jobs that she did was to break stones at a spot on the roadside, in front of her property. With a big iron stone hammer, she broke up big rocks that stone carriers had brought to the roadside for stonebreakers to work. She would have been seated on rags, wearing culottes that her cousin Miss Boris sent her from America, and a man's shirt. She wore her broad trash-hat to shield her face from the broiling sun. When the stone heap reached a certain height, Cyril John Shorter would drive up with two sidemen, and they'd unload the wooden cubic-yard boxes that had no bottom and no lid. With one man on each of the opposite side they would sling the box by the protruding handles upon the heap and shake it down to fill to the open top. This done they shoveled up stone to fill out

and level off the box. They repeated this measuring manoeuvre at another spot on the stone heap, until all the stone was parcelled out into discrete piles of cubic yards. Cyril John Shorter then counted the number of piles, and wrote-up the bill to have Eutedra paid.

After the sidemen had shovelled the stones onto the lorry, Cyril John Shorter would drive the truck to the next road-repair or road-building site where the stones would be dumped, then spread along the road or heaped into potholes. Marl would be trucked in from a nearby quarry and spread over the stones. Men would pour big ladles of hot asphalt they had boiled in big drums right there at the roadside. Another man driving a big two-wheel roller spread the tar over the top. When the asphalt dried, the road was smooth and very black. Children enjoyed running to school on the new road, the sound of their bare feet a pitter-patter accompaniment to the choral recitation of their times-tables. Another pleasure of the road was to sink wiggling toes into its surface, when the asphalt was softened by the hot sun.

3.3 Journey into Sugarcane

The journey from May Pen to Windsor Castle took all day. I fell asleep and awoke several times, while the smell of motor oil, gasoline, and the heat in the cabin made me nauseous. The brown man stopped at a house, and put me to sleep while he made soup. He woke me and fed me; I began to cry and he told me very sternly to stop the crying, all the while his eyes swivelling very rapidly from side to side which frightened me. This was my first experience of the monster called my father. I was to see those eyes of his move from side to side in rapid fire when he was about to give me one of the many senseless floggings that have permanently scarred my body and my psyche.

The place where we stopped must have been the Rio Magno Public Works Office, located in St Catherine, and out of which Cyril John Shorter worked for many years. He must have parked the lorry there because we boarded the Sunshine Bus at sundown and travelled till nightfall. When the bus stopped to let us off, we walked along a trail cutting through high whistling canes. A full moon seemed to follow us as we walked along. Sometimes the brown man would hoist me up on his shoulders and I could see the shimmering leaves and blossoms of the cane rippling like waves in the wind. Judging by the cool wind that caused their leaves to whistle, I think it must have been November or

December. That is when the canes, which are harvested in the new year, are already high, and when the northeast trade winds blow.

The trail led down into a gully, and then up to a knoll from which we could hear voices, and see a flickering light. We entered the yard and a boy and a girl ran to greet me. "Sister Yvonne! Sister Yvonne!" They were playing under a tree with the light from the 'kitchen- bitch' (a home-made kerosene torch made from condensed-milk tin cans, fitted with a handle and stuffed with a cloth wick). The brown man introduced me to his eldest child and my brother Trevor, and Sonia, my sister and his eldest daughter. They knew me, but I had no knowledge or memory of them. He then took me into the thatched hut and introduced me to Miss Eutedra Williams whom I should call Aunt Eu. 'Eu' was short for Eutedra. I now wonder if she was expecting my father to bring home yet another of his motherless children. It would be just like him to bring me home unannounced, and to assume no questions would be necessary.

3.4 Life with Eutedra Williams

Miss Eu's thatch hut and its furnishings were extraordinary. The hut was of the best construction. It housed her four-poster bed over which the white mosquito net was twisted, wrapped, and hung from the rafter. Opposite the foot of the bed stood the mahogany bureau with the big round mirror, and a nice washstand with the marble top. Her pretty enamelled face-basin with a painted bunch of pink roses and green stems rested in the centre. A tablet of green Palmolive or Pears bathing soap, imported straight from England, the Mother Country, poised majestically on the matching soap dish. To the right of the basin, a matching big-belly enamelled 'water goblet' stood at attention with handle akimbo. Its wide lip bearing a permanently broad smile stood ready to stick its water tongue forth with just a tip of the hand. There was a matching chamber pot and slop pail. Eutedra must have bought the toilet set from a Syrian trader on one of her trips to Kingston or Port Maria, the capital of the parish. Such a washstand and toilet set were normally only to be seen in rich white people's houses, accompanied by housemaids to wash and maintain them, and to keep the water goblet filled at all times. The housemaid would empty the wastewater from the basin, empty the slop pail and chamber pot, wash, disinfect, and replace them, ready for the missus. In Eutedra's house, there were no housemaids so these chores – hardly a surprise – were bestowed upon Sonia and me.

The hut had no windows but it had a front and back door made of bamboo wattle and daub and hung on a bamboo frame. The frame lasted only as long as the duck ants and other termites would allow. Miss Eu had need of a new house, because when it rained hard, as it often does in the parish of St Mary, the thatch roof leaked like a sieve. There were not enough buckets, wash pans, pots, and kerosene tins or pudding pans to catch the water. There were times when the trenches around the hut deposited streams of water into rather than away from the hut. After heavy rainfalls, the smell and sight of mildewed thatch and clothes were sometimes suffocating.

Miss Eu earned income from a variety of sources. Her medium-sized farm was the most diversified in the area. In fact, I think it was unique. First, she had acres of sugar cane. For this crop, she hired cane cutters to harvest the cane and carry them to her own mill, strategically located on the farm. Hired women and men continuously fed stalks of cane into the mill, operated by a yoked steer which took turns with a skittish mule and a stubborn jackass to move giant rollers round and round, squeezing out every drop of cane juice. The cane trash was dried on a heap in the broiling sun and used to stoke the greedy fire. The cane juice flowed into a big trough, from where it was siphoned into enormous copper cauldrons permanently mounted on an equally enormous concrete fireplace.

During crop time, between January and April, men worked round the clock stoking the fire which boiled down the cane juice into sugar crystals and molasses. The expert boiler and quasi-chemist would use lime, heat, and the dexterity of king-sized paddles to determine when the crystals were ripe enough to be poured into bamboo joints to make 'head sugar', or into large kerosene tins to make 'wet sugar'. Quailed banana leaves were spread over each container of wet sugar, and tied around with strips of banana bark, so that the leaf covers looked like green hats trimmed with brown ribbons. Eutedra did her own distribution of the sugar products to higglers who retailed them in quart measures, ounces, or bamboo joints in the markets of Port Maria and Oracabessa. They collected farthings, three-farthing, gill-and-quatty, penny ha'penny, and three pence. Moneyed people paid in crowns, half-crowns and in five and ten-shillings. The rich paid in pounds and guineas.

Eutedra Williams was (and still is) the most remarkable 'super-woman' I have known. Even fifty years later I have not met her equal. At first I was her shadow as she did her daily tour of duty on her farm. She even played with me and talked baby talk to me. She made me a few multi-coloured dresses because she was a casual dressmaker as well. My father made us call her Miss Eu – she was one of his many paramours. I do not know how long she tolerated him and his three children in her two-room hut. My father, really only came 'home' to sleep with her. His other reason for coming 'home' was to mete out punishment to my brother, sister, and myself when Miss Eu complained that we did not labour to her satisfaction. This she did often when she wanted to break up with Cee (as she called him when things were sweet between them). You see, Cyril had a habit of not bringing 'home' any house money on payday. Being the businesswoman that she was, she exacted our labour in direct proportion to how much my father owed her for our keep.

We had to wake at daybreak in order to make several trips down a slippery hill to the spring, from which we would fetch buckets and kerosene tins of water, enough to fill two twenty-gallon oil drums. My brother then would have to milk two cows and carry the milk cans to the gate for collection on their way to Bybrook Condensery in Bog Walk. Meanwhile, my sister made up the wood fire to cook a heavy breakfast of yams, potatoes and codfish or sardines. As time passed, I adapted to the harsh life on Eutedra's farm, grew, and became strong. We ate well. We drank the extra cows' milk from Eutedra's heifers. My father sometimes brought home cans of Libby's Bully Beef to supplement the chicken and pork from Eutedra's farm. There was also salted codfish, herring, shad, and mackerel bought from Miss Mary Lyon's shop. This assortment of dried and pickled salt fish was imported from Newfoundland, Canada, and came to the shop by truck from Kingston in great big wooden barrels. There was an abundance of ground provisions: dasheen, coco, yams, sweet potatoes, breadfruit, green bananas, plantains, tomatoes, limes, oranges, and callalo.

3.5 Parson Pickney

For a while, I was Miss Eu's pet. I followed her around as she did her daily work routine, and she usually took me with her when she went visiting her friends. One day Miss Eu was going to visit her dear friend Miss Edna. I followed much like a pup follows its owner. Miss Edna had just had a baby. As we entered the gate we startled chickens scratching for food along the pathway leading from the road to the little well kept hut. These

chickens spread their wings as if they were about to fly but were held back by their own weight. They squawked in protest at us for breaking their concentrated scratching.

Miss Edna did not have a husband, and lived alone. She came to greet her friend by herself. Her head was wrapped in a lily-white cloth, and she was wearing a printed indigo blue smock with red and yellow flowers. Miss Edna greeted her friend Eutedra and welcomed her in. She said, "Praise de lawd Jesus me deliva de byaby ahrigh. Me hab a bunununu byaby bwoy." Just then, I pushed myself from behind Miss Eu's frock tail and darted forward to see the new baby laying sound asleep in the middle of the big Simmons bed. I believe it was the first time I had seen a young baby. I exclaimed out loud, "Him look like parson." Both women broke out in gales of uncontrolled laughter. Miss Eu gave me a maternalistic pat on the shoulder, hissed through her teeth, and said, "De pickney too ripe." Miss Edna, recovering from her astonishment, added to Miss Eu's comment by saying, "Out of the mouth of babes!" The women proceeded with their womanly conversation while I sat subdued in a corner like an obedient puppy dog. Did I make it obvious that the paternity of this child could not be concealed, even from a child as young as I was?

In time I came to hear rumors about the fornication of upright ministers of religion of all denominations. Usually, the physiognomy of the illegitimate offspring carried the genetic traces that revealed sexual transgressions. The clues might have been in the skin colour, the eyes, the nose, and especially the hair. It might also have been in the twitch of the nose, the gait, the sound of the voice. The illegitimate offspring had an uncomfortable habit of being living-walking evidence of sexual immorality, against which these same ministers railed from the pulpit. In one district in which I lived later, several children in school bore the surnames of their mothers, with no father that they could declare. Yet they were mirror images of a certain parson who was known for his total ministry to his largely female congregation. A child discovers much about the realities of life by observing adult deceit and hypocrisy.

3.6 Recollections of My Infant School Years

I must have arrived at Windsor Castle in late 1947. I began school some time in 1948 at five years old. For days before the opening of school there was much talk between my father, Miss Eu and the casual farm hands about the threat of school that went something like this:

“School soon open.” This was a warning that the carefree days would be over soon. “Oonu free papa soon bun” (*Your free paper will soon burn*). This expression was a carry over from slavery days. Official papers were issued to black or brown persons who bought their freedom certifying their free status. A white person could simply burn the ‘free paper’ as the folk called these certificates, and the person would revert to the status of slave.

“Yuh gwan wid you mishavin, teacha a go fix yuh.” (You can carry on your misbehaving now because the teacher will punish you when school starts.) This was a reminder to children of the beatings that the teachers would mete out for misbehaving.

I overheard my father and Miss Eu discussing my age paper (birth certificate). My father insisted that she should send me to school without the age paper because the teacher would accept me because of who he was. In preparation, my father purchased some fabric and had my brother and sister suited out. I remember my brother’s embarrassment that my father had short pants made with braces that crossed in the back. These were not the khakis that most children wore. I still remember how odd my brother looked among his friends. I remember less about what I or my sister wore, although I do remember her getting into fist-fights defending herself when the big boys pulled her long thick plaits of hair, or when they mocked our name, Shorter. One of her eyes was noticeably smaller and she was said to have ‘cast eye’. The boys would tease her and call her “cock-eye Sonia.” Invariably, she would pounce on one of the offenders, grab his ears and scratch with her fingernails until he surrendered, screaming. In the tussles her bodice would rip from the skirt of her tunic, or frock, as girls’ dresses were called.

Going to school was an escape from the all-day drudgery of farm work into misery of another kind, although this was not so at first. On the morning that I was to start school, I was awakened some time after the second cock’s-crow and sent with my brother and sister to fetch water to fill up the two large oil drums, before leaving to walk some three-miles to school. I had to run walk to keep up with the older children. By the time I got to school the shortness of breath of the asthma returned. It was usual for me to arrive at school out of breath, hot, sweaty, and tired. Miss Montcrieffe, my first teacher at the Carron Hall Infant School would put me to sleep for the morning.

I remember Miss Montcrieffe as a dark-skinned, tall, and gentle woman. She did not instill fear in us. She was a gifted artist. The scenes from the storybooks from which she would read us stories covered the blackboard. She would tell us a selection of stories

repeatedly until we knew them by heart; so much so, that we would recite along or come in on the refrains with the actions. We loved these recitations. I huffed and puffed and blew the house of the three little pigs down so many times. My favourite Bible story was "Jonah in the Belly of the Whale." I felt happy, triumphant even, at the part of the story when Jonah escaped from the belly of the monster, of which I knew not. My favourite fairy tale was "Hansel and Gretel and the Wicked Stepmother." We learned to count with our fingers and action songs such as "Three crows sat upon a wall / And one crow accidentally fall / Two crows sat upon the wall," and so on. The nature walks were enchanting. By Jamaican standards, Carron Hall was cold and rainy, so sometimes we could not go out on nature walks. When we did, the landscape was so green and lush with wild flowers, dandelions, broom weeds, daisies, chirping birds, crawling ants' nests, and lizards. Miss Montcrieffe showed us different kinds of leaves, branches, and roots of trees, shrubs, and grasses. I can still remember her telling us about tap and main root and adventitious roots among the vegetation. We watched some of the young boys who lived at the dairy take some cows to pasture, while others milked the cows and fed the calves. On our way back from the nature walks we would dig up clumps of clay and take them back to our classroom. After lunch and our naps, we would create clay animals and scenes both from the fairy tales and from our nature walks. I loved this activity for the kneading and shaping, but I just could not get my cow to look like a cow.

I remembered the Nature Walks and the infant school programme with such vividness that I sought out and found my infant school principal, who is in her late eighties, to ask her about the philosophy behind the infant school programme, and in particular the Nature Walks. I quote from her letter:

The Nature Walks and conversations triggered by observing the wonders of plant and animal world opened a child's curiosity to take in knowledge and added to perception of his surroundings, adding pleasure to his reading about things in books. That child, mastering reading at an early age was way above the mind bogged down with the mechanics of putting thoughts into writing and intelligent speech. I may not be putting this into the language of a University graduate but I am sure you will agree that your Nature Walks enriched your vocabulary. Shy children opened up to talk about things they collected. They knew that the grass family had roots that differed from the roots of a pea or bean, which they saw growing roots in a glass jar at the school window. They watched its growth and watched the leaves unfold each day. Letter sounds were taught at 4 years. "B" – bark of a tree; "R" – root; "P" – peas; "F" – fly; etc., rough, smooth etc. It was actually learning made easy, reading skills acquired without conscious effort, and,

fun, not drudgery. If children with disabilities missed learning skills in infant school, they lost out at 'Big School'. (Personal correspondence, January 2003)

Miss Rose was another infant school teacher whom I remember fondly. She must have been a middle-aged woman. I recall thinking that when we surrounded her, she looked like mother hen in the "Mother Hen and Percy the Chick" stories she read to us. She was a Christian and holy lady who taught us to pray by kneeling and bowing our heads; taught us to sing hymns; and to learn Bible stories. Joseph's multi-coloured coat that she drew on the blackboard was so pretty, I wished that I had one like it. My best memory of Miss Rose was her teaching us the hymn "All things bright and beautiful." She taught us infant school kids all the stanzas with the aid of beautiful scenes for each stanza, which she drew on the black board. I carry the memory of the scene on the board of the purple-headed mountains with the rivers running by and the sunset in the garden that brightens up the sky. This has been my favourite hymn since, so much so, that I chose it as one of the hymns to be sung at my son's wedding, some fifty years later. As I sang with the congregation, I remembered Miss Rose and Carron Hall.

In remembering Carron Hall, I go beyond the immediate school environs to include scenes from the cane fields that spread over several hundred acres, together growing millions of sugar canes on either side of the main and parochial roads. On our way to and from school we watched and participated in the life-cycle and work regime of sugar cane. During the planting season large numbers of bare-chested black men, with beads of sweat rolling down their backs, dug cane-holes with pitchforks and machetes. Women with baskets of cane-tops on their heads, walked along the rows, dropping cane-tops beside the holes as they went. Another team of men would come along, sink the tops in the holes, and cover them up with earth. Rainwater would collect in the furrows along the cane rows. When they grew to a height of several feet, the acres of sugar-cane were weeded by women with their hoes, dressed in long skirts and straw hats. By Christmas time, the canes were very tall and in bloom. The leafy cane-tops, bearing silky white and light purple arrows, swayed in the gentle Northeast trade winds to make a soothing whistling sound. Mrs Elliott described the fields as dancing. On moonlit nights, this atmosphere was a great backdrop for children to listen to duppy (ghost) stories.

When the sugar canes were ripe, men with sharp machetes and bills cut the canes to the music and rhythm of machetes zinging in the air, the men whistling or singing work

songs. During harvesting, children delighted in volunteering to help men and women cane carriers transport bundles of sugarcane to the roadside. They were loaded in carts and trucks, and taken to Gray's Inn, the large sugar factory close to the coast in St Mary. After carrying six bundles of sugarcane we got to choose the biggest and juiciest candy stripe cane to eat on our way home. Little girls' cotton dresses dried stiff with cane juice and dirt. Legs and arms sustained small snips from the sharp edges of the cane leaves.

3.7 The People of Hazard

I cannot leave the landscape of Carron Hall and its environs without writing about the people of Hazard. The memory of the people of this place has haunted me all my life. I have returned so many times in my imagination and my nightmares to scenes of abject poverty etched in my mind. Who were those people? Where did they come from? In my readings of Jamaican history I have tried to find the answer to the condition of the people of Hazard. Now I find I write about the people and this place in order to understand their hold on me.

My encounter with Hazard begins with what happened when my sister Sonia brought our father's King James' Version of the Bible to her school. The Bible was a very expensive edition, bound with leather, and pages as thin as rice paper. The lettering was ornate, especially the red and gold calligraphy at the beginning of each book. Placed throughout were portraits of Saul, David, Jesus, and other notable characters. Finger grooves helped the reader locate passages. At the back of the volume, family births and deaths were recorded. I can only imagine now that such a Bible brought her much attention and envy. As I grew older and felt the need to show off in school, I was to do similar things.

On our way home from school that day, Sonia stopped suddenly and exclaimed that the Bible was missing from her bag. We all ran back breathlessly to search. We had to recover it, for as sure as the sun sets, our father would miss the Bible and give us a "murderation." She and Trevor speculated who might have stolen it – this person must surely live in Hazard.

The three of us had to get to this place beyond the school, in the opposite direction from home, before nightfall. We also had to give ourselves enough time to go from house to house to ask if they had seen the Bible. My sister had hoped that someone would confess and give it up, or at least a hint of who had stolen it. For my part I began to get the nervous

stomach-ache that came when I anticipated my father's wrath and his floggings. As I ran to keep up with Trevor and Sonia I could feel my heart thumping against my chest and heard it pounding in my throat. The wheezing of my asthma started up again. I began to cry like a little puppy in distress.

As we got into Hazard, the sights of the people both scared and transfixed me. It was the first and last time that I beheld such a scene in Jamaica, and it has stayed and haunted me until now. I remember clusters of thatched-roof huts with bamboo wattle and mud-daubed sides, in various degrees of decay. Small pre-school children ran round naked in front of the yards. As they ran about rather lazily, the little boys' penises and distended testicles flopped about like little tails and nuts. These jet-black skinny children had big heads covered with red hair, and protruding navels which looked very strange. From a string around their necks hung a pendant cashew nut, and a dot of indigo-blue was stamped on each of their foreheads. A few mothers sat under a shade tree nursing naked babies, while old women fanned fires under big iron pots set on three rocks. They must have been cooking their dinner.

One father who sat in the doorway of a hut smoking a pipe got up to find out what we wanted. His eyes were blood-shot and his teeth yellow. My brother told him that we were looking for our father's Bible, which had been stolen from school that day. He mumbled an answer that I could not understand, and glared at us and angrily so that we knew we had insulted him. We knew also that we must leave Hazard, or risk a beating. We never recovered the Bible and our tyrannical father, devoid of Christian charity, beat us within an inch of our lives for having lost his precious Book.

This was one among my sister's various adventures – episodes that my brother and I usually paid for with a hiding. We saw her as our common enemy, an inveterate liar who dragged us into situations that were bound to antagonize the tyrant. My father himself called her the "stiff-necked wench."

I later had a chance to visit Hazard again under different circumstances. Eutedra's brother owned a cane piece there, and I went with her to visit him. Her brother lived at the foot of a mountain, from which cascaded a waterfall. As the volumes of water rolled off the mountaintop, they sprayed big clouds of mist which came to settle into a big, beautiful, blue lagoon. Water ran off the lagoon into an awesome deep blue hole, from which people dipped up their drinking water with calabashes. The blue shimmering lagoon pulled me forward like

a magnet. The place was spooky. My head began to spin. I must have been about to fall in because someone pulled me roughly by the scruff of my neck asked "You wah fe drowned pickney?"

Over fifty years later, when I visited Mrs Elliott, my infant school principal, I asked her about these people. Our conversation went as follows.

"Mrs Elliott, who were the people of Hazard?"

"Oh! Those people were beyond the reach of the church. They cut themselves off, smoked pangola grass, and beat their drums all night."

She elaborated, "They kept us awake with their drums. We knew when it was daybreak because the drums were quiet. Very few of their children came to the infant school. When they came they spoke a language that we could not understand." She told a story of holding a little girl in her arms all day, until her older brother came to get her. He had to translate that she was saying she was alone and lonely for her brother and parents.

I asked: "What is pangola grass?"

"Pangola grass was a grass imported from the United States to feed dairy cattle and horses because it made the cows give good milk. Pangola likes the clay soils of Carron Hall and parts of Manchester."

"So what did it have to do with the people of Hazard?" I probed.

"They smoked the dry grass and hallucinated. When those people got high it took them days to come down."

I was aware that some poor black people shun the church and smoked ganja, but I had never heard of pangola grass before. I knew of Guinea grass, grown in special pastures to feed the plantation cattle in pens attached to the big plantations. When Mrs Elliott explained about the pangola grass I suddenly recalled that there was a verdant green pasture directly opposite the clusters of huts. Big fat brown cows roamed and grazed in the pastures in satiated bliss. Ticks sucked their blood while black birds perched on the broad backs of the cows and, in their turn, fed on the fat ticks.

The monetary worth of these people was no longer calculable in the plantation ledgers of old, alongside the steers, mules, ploughs, and wheelbarrows. Speculating that Carron Hall and Hazard must have been plantations, I referred to the survey of plantations in Jamaica during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries by Barry Higman (1988). Its maps and plans suggested evidence of cattle pens and pasture, with many sugarcane pieces around,

and the waterfall offering a source of energy for a waterwheel, and a supply of fresh water to people and cattle.

Small farmers ran places for ground provisions in yams, potatoes, and taro and other vegetables. The African workforce lived in kraals called Negro houses, located on the edge of the plantation. Confirmation that Hazard was indeed a plantation was found in the 1941-42 West Indies Year Book including also the Bermudas, The Bahamas, British Guiana, and British Honduras. There I found that Alfred and William Champagne owned the Hazard Estate, which was listed each year until 1946-47, when it was no longer listed as such.

In a conversation with Evadne Sherrief, a schoolmate of my brother and sister in Carron Hall, I confirmed that the Champagne brothers still owned the cattle pasture at the time I had been at school in the area. According to Higman, it was common for pastures to continue after estate owners ceased to produce sugar. The cattle were then raised for beef and milk.

The dismantling of the sugarcane crop of the plantation explains, at least in part, the poverty. Other factors were declining sugar prices, natural disasters and the need to mechanize sugar-growing operations. In the same parish, there was a move from sugar to bananas for the big banana export companies.

Who were these people who were beyond the reach of the big Presbyterian Church which dominated the area? I speculate that that they were direct descendants of the Ibo people brought from the Guinea coast to work on the sugar plantations. They had become part of the human refuse of the dismantling of the sugar estates that dominated the large tract of land encompassing Carron Hall, Donnington, Hazard and Montreal – throwaway people, left in Negro huts to rot, their children malnourished and infected with yaws and chigga, their minds numbed by pangola grass, but their souls eased at least by the frantic beat of their ancestral drums. The drums must have preserved their spiritual language, spoken their joys, their sorrows, and rage. The drumbeat must have spoken to them, and for them, calling out to their deities and their kin in the faraway Iboland, the motherland, home.

The people of Hazard were struggling against all odds to preserve their African identity and pride in an alien land. Their way of life had resisted the call of church bells, pipe organs, and triumphal hymns that hailed the greatness of European civilization. While missionaries of the Presbyterian Church rang bells, played pipes and sang hymns with their African converts, the Biblical sons of Ham beat drums to remind them of Africa,

and of forced exile. These were the holdouts, who refused communion with those who had enslaved them.

3.8 Epilogue

I look to find out more about Carron Hall and in particular, the role of the Presbyterian mission after 'emancipation', when the plantations and estates were abandoned. I am trying to understand the whole area with respect to the cane pieces and the sugar estates to which they supplied cane.

The sugar-cane pieces and cattle stand out. John Stewart, writing in 1823, advised prospective planters that the four great desiderata in setting up a sugar plantation are: (1) goodness of soil; (2) easiness of access; (3) convenience of distance to the shipping place; and (4) a stream of water running through the premises. He advised that if there was not a naturally occurring stream running through the property, one should be created from a nearby source, to send down a supply. If such cannot be obtained, a well or a pond should be sunk to draw or be collected from.

This passage helps me to sketch out more clearly my memory of a reservoir in Carron Hall as well as the Hazard falls and the lagoon below. I wonder if that deep blue hole into which the water of the lagoon ran, was man-made, or if it resulted from the natural erosion of the limestone of the area. Certainly there were many concealed sinkholes into which cattle sometimes fell.

What do the details of the ruins of the landscape of Hazard and Carron Hall invite me to remember? The works by Higman on plantation and slave economy in Jamaica, as well as his extensive study on the Mount Pellier Plantation in Jamaica, are particularly instructive in trying to piece together the memories imprinted on this landscape when I attended Carron Hall Infant School.

Several things come to mind. For one, the number of cane pieces that were being worked and through which I passed to school is indicative of small cane farmers who had to grow their cane to sell to the Grays Inn Factory to earn their livelihood. After emancipation and the wholesale desertion of unprofitable sugar estates, small farmers took up the job of raising the sugarcane to sell to the factories that continued to process the sugarcane into unrefined sugar, molasses, and rum.

Second, judging from the number of cattle that I remember roaming close to the area, after the abandonment of the large sugar estates, the motive power of cattle was no longer needed. Some estate owners abandoned the planting of sugarcane and either sold the land or let it lie fallow. Other owners converted cattle pens from raising draught-animals to raising dairy and beef cattle, for local consumption by those who could afford to buy the milk and beef. It was obvious that the people of Hazard could not afford to buy, so they seemed to have been in a state of malnutrition. Some of the cane pieces were converted into pasture of guinea and pangola grass to support a larger herd of cattle.

As Higman points out, in the heyday of sugar production cattle pens and sugar cane plantations had a symbiotic relationship. The cattle pens reared the steers and oxen for the motive power that ran the mills, and the drays and carts that transported the cane. When the plantation no longer needed the motive power of cattle, and cattle-rearing needing relatively less labour, the cane labourers were rendered redundant. The dairy where young boys were being trained, that I saw during my nature walks with the infant school, seems to have been established by the Presbyterian Church, to train some young black boys to work with cattle. In our correspondence, Mrs Elliot mentions that milk cans were collected to take to the Bybrook Condensery for the manufacture of sweetened condensed milk. Like a curse, poor mothers fed this sweetened condensed milk to their children, not knowing that they were under-nourishing their children.

Another feature that Higman points to in his Jamaica Surveyed is an area on the layout of the plantation called the Negro houses or the Negro village or the Negro kraal. I surmise that the people of Hazard were perhaps the remnants of people who lived in the Negro village adjoining the sugar plantation.

Another memory of slavery and emancipation evident in Carron Hall was the growing of a large variety of ground provisions: yams, sweet potatoes, cocoas, dasheens, coconuts, plantains, and bananas. It seems that these provision grounds were the only sphere of control for slaves, and which continued to flourish after emancipation as a way of providing sustenance and income. Those ex-slaves who could acquire land became peasant farmers. The Presbyterian Church capitalized on this abundance and hard work though the services conducted at harvest time.

As a little child attending the Carron Hall Infant School, I can remember going to the harvest services in the middle of the day. We little children had to huddle and sit quietly,

while the minister and his choir walked triumphantly into the church, and approached the church altar. The altar would be filled with the display of the best food grown by each farmer. I remember singing these words of a hymn, "Bringing in the sheaves, we shall come rejoicing, bringing in the sheaves." As they sang this hymn, I as a little infant school child, heard "bringing in the sheep." I looked expectantly to see sheep following the ministers, for there were no sheep that I ever saw in the neighbourhood. They did not bring in the sheep, and no sheep came. I understood that not everything said in church could be meant literally.

Another memory from the history of post emancipation Jamaica, which becomes evident in the Carron Hall, is of the mission schools and free village development, which came after emancipation.

The purpose of the missions was to 'rescue' souls from sin and damnation and to 'civilize' the illiterate poor. In fulfillment of these goals, the missionaries taught their flock to read the Bible, to sign their names, to manage basic arithmetic, and to learn to farm. Obedience to authority was encouraged, and courtesy and personal deportment stressed. Cleanliness was next to Godliness.

It is beyond the scope of this study to examine the role of the missionaries, for credit or debit. It is sufficient to note that, in post-emancipation Jamaica making a rapid, and even dangerous, transition from slave labour to farm and domestic labour, and requiring significant improvement in hygienic conditions, missionaries were among the few influences in a position to effect change.

In this first real-life story, I have pieced together vivid memories of my early childhood years. I have taken the reader with me to engage with my family, the landscape of sugarcane, and a marginalized community of black people. I have woven memory, history of slavery, and plantation economy in a fabric where each thread, if it ever could be unravelled, is a twisted yarn of many episodes. In the epilogue I have gone to the literature, and tried to find explanations for features of the landscape in Carron Hall and Windsor Castle.

The stories, which follow, open other dimensions of these themes.

CHAPTER IV LOUISIANA BLUES circa 1950 - 1954

4.1 Why We Moved to Louisiana

Eutedra must have grown tired of Cee's lying and bullying. She must have resented the way in which Cee brought his three children into her dwelling as if he had brought three gifts. For her purposes, the only way they could be gifts is if she could have worked them like the pickney gang of slavery days. This proved difficult because Trevor and Sonia rebelled in all ways they could. Trevor exacted pay for milking the cows and transporting the milk pans to the roadside before the crack of dawn. He did so by pointing the cow's nipple to his mouth while he squeezed each of the four teats in turn. Only when he had his belly full of raw cow's milk did he point the teats into the bucket.

It was so early in the morning that I would say that we sleep walked in the cold and dew to untie and head up at least three cows to the cowshed to milk them. The first cock would crow at approximately three and the second cock would crow at about five in the morning. As a reward for keeping his company on those early mornings, when we were awakened between the first and second cock's crow, Trevor fed me my share of milk. But he also fed me to keep his secret. Since the cowshed was located close to the drinking water spring, he just dipped up some water with the gourd that he was supposed to use to transfer the milk from the bucket to the milk pan, and poured it into the milk to replace what we had drunken. I, of course, had to swear secrecy. This was difficult to do since I had been sent to watch him.

The Bybrook Milk Condensery had been paying Eutedra Williams less than she expected. The reason given was the high percentage of water in the milk. She understood this because, after all, she had been watering the milk before Cee's children arrived and she continued to water her milk after Trevor started doing the milking. She must have gotten wise to the fact that Trevor was following her example, because she began to test the milk for water by looking at how blue the milk was. Trevor and Miss Eu sometimes had loud arguments about the weak blue milk that he was bringing home in the milk pans. Trevor too had to make adjustments to accommodate Eutedra's need to water the milk, so he drank less and put less water in the milk. In a situation such as this the folk would say, "Tief from tief God laff." (*A thief steals from a thief and God laughs.*)

Eutedra was clearly not gaining from this pickney labour. Sonia was too sickly to carry the load of dirty clothes to the river to scrub and bleach on the river rocks. She did not even have the strength to carry the produce on her head from the provision grounds. With any exertion she would have an attack of heart palpitation. When this happened she would shake all over until she was exhausted, and turn white as if her heart had pumped all her blood out of her body. My brother and I were always afraid that her heart would stop beating and she would die. Because she was so frail, she could beat up my brother and me and get away with it most of the time.

My father said she was born with a weak heart. All the bush medicine that my father had the obeah man concoct did not help her condition. Years later, with the benefit of education, I often wondered how much poison was being fed into the poor child's body. In those days, doctors were few, and folk medicines were real cures for some illnesses. Often that was all there was. Besides being sickly, Sonia was full of 'back chat' (to answer back daringly) and 'lie and story' (tell a barefaced lie and tell a story that is untrue). There were times when Miss Eu swore at Sonia saying, "One day, de obeah man ah go tun yu mout back a yu."

I was too young to be of much use beyond sweeping the yard and carrying small pans of water. As small as those pans were, they were helpful because Eutedra would not let us go off to school until we had filled three big tar drums of water for her cows and for her domestic use, while we were at school. The tar drums were perhaps the only thing she had to show from Cee. On top of that I was prone to asthma attacks and fretfulness from the heat, hard work and long walk to school. I caught 'fresh cold' from the dust and no doubt sleep deprivation. I was further debilitated by the rounds of laxatives and purgatives I had to take to get rid of intestinal worms caused by drinking stagnant rainwater or pond water when the spring had dried.

After all, Eutedra had a farm to run to make money for the independence she so loved. She did not need Cyril. Eutedra had no children of her own, and had never married up to that point in her life. Why should she put up with a violent unreliable drunkard and his three children? Although his children were of some use, two were sickly, and the third was given to acts of sabotage. Raiding the best sugar canes and eating them was a favourite prank. Trevor would cut the fattest and sweetest purple-stripe cane and leave the leaf tops propped up to appear as if the cane is still there. Until the leaves began to wilt and turn

brown, it would take days to discover that the canes were missing. Another trick of his was to make fires in the field and roast the choicest sweet potatoes and yams before he took home the basket full of ground provisions.

When I came to meet him at Eutedra's, Trevor, by age twelve, had already learned the art of loading donkeys and of carrying loads on his head. Life was hard and lacked affection and care. We lived and breathed sadness and distress. We ate far too much to earn our keep. We were about to eat this lady out of house and land. Where was our mother to protect us from a wicked father and his exploitive paramour?

Cee would not change his wicked ways. As far as Cyril John Shorter was concerned, his manhood and his brown skin were enough for any woman to whom he took a fancy. But his brown manhood was no competition for the ebony-skinned butcher who began to call on Miss Eu, bringing the choicest cuts of rump roasts. The folk called the butcher Maas Manny, for he was indeed a fine specimen of a man, who probably made Cyril John see himself for the midget that he truly was. Cyril John could no longer impress Eutedra with his empty promises and drunken railings, aimed at intimidating his children to work enough to appease her. The children had a troublesome habit of being children. Children consume more than they produce and Eutedra had no use for 'parasites'.

4.2 Louisiana Village

My father moved us to a place called Louisiana, to a very nice three-room house constructed of board, with three concrete steps leading to a wooden veranda. In every room, the house had sash windows, which opened and closed by cords sliding on a pulley. We delighted in pushing the windows up and down to open and close. We were glad to leave the thatch hut behind. The floors were maroon red from the logwood dye that stained them. (Women chipped the bark of the logwood trees that grew all around and boiled it in a special dye pot to extract this dye.) The shingle roof was a haven for the croaking-lizards, which took on the colour of the shingles and crawled across the ceiling to catch moths and other night insects. I did not like them because they walked upside down across the roof. I was always afraid of them falling on my bed. Surprisingly, they never did.

To one side of the house was a big oblong concrete barbecue, sectioned off into about eight sections. It was the kind of barbecue that had been used to dry either cocoa or coffee beans and pimento. There were very few blighted coffee and cocoa plants in the area

by the time we got there. In fact the only cocoa trees I saw were on Miss Eu's property. All around Louisiana, for acres on end, there were dwarfed, stunted sugarcane, which no one either planted or reaped. They simply grew new shoots, 'ratooned', each growing season until the roots died off and the leaves turned brown dried and rotted. Only the children and the stray cows ate the remnants of these canes. The logwood trees were planted in abundance in the area, so that logwood bark could be chipped and exported to England, converted into dye crystals, and sold back in the island for dying floors, straw, and sisal for crafts. I was seeing, and not knowing, a patchwork of failed cash crops.

Two gourd trees grew in the front yard. One stood to the left as you entered the gate and the other stood just to the right, a few feet away from the steps. My sister was always looking towards these gourd trees on moonshine nights and telling me that she just saw our mother walk by. It was a great mystery to me because I never saw anyone, and if it were a ghost of our mother, I would not know how to recognize her. I still did not know "what's a mother."

An abandoned kitchen garden lay beside the barbecue. My father chose a spot close to a stream to plant his own kitchen garden. We were grateful for this because it shortened our trips to fetch water to water the plants when there was no rain. He planted black-eyed peas, red beans, cabbage, sweet potato, callaloo, tomatoes, and corn. Trevor, Sonia and I used to raid our father's garden and pretend it was other people. We liked especially to raid the corn because he grew the corn to feed his pigs and various varieties of birds that he began to bring home. We could count on our sister Sonia to lie convincingly to allay our almighty father's suspicion.

At the back of the house was the outside kitchen with a fire hearth fitted with an iron grid set over sturdy rocks. My brother liked this fire hearth, because he could cook with more than one pot at a time. There was a wooden table and a wooden window, which was great for letting out the smoke. At some distance below the kitchen was the pit latrine, which the sanitary inspector came from time to time to inspect for cleanliness, and to determine when a new pit was to be dug.

The house was located on the top of a knoll between the main road and the parochial road. The main road was downhill at the back of the house. The part of the main road that was of importance was the stretch that leads from Windsor Castle, via Louisiana, Old Post Road, and Rio Magno, where my father's head office was. On his way to work at

Windsor Castle or Carron Hall, my father would sometimes drop off bunches of bananas at the foot of the hill on the side of the track leading up to the house. Every morning, Trevor, Sonia and I had to walk along the track leading down hill from the back of the house, passed the sour sop tree, through the scrawny little sugarcanes to get down to the main road. We crossed the road with our kerosene tins to fetch water from whichever spring had water still in it. There was a little stream in the vicinity and we would strip off our clothes and bathe, before returning with the pans of water to fill the tar drums of water.

We were spared the water-fetching chore when the rains fell heavily for days. The house had eaves troughs made of zinc mounted along the front and backs slopes of the roof and slightly tilted to one end, so that the rainwater could collect in the drums. It was fun when the rain clouds gathered and started to move in like a beaded curtain of raindrops. Sometimes thunder and lightening came too. The thunder and lightening would scare the little kids who would run and hide under the beds. Adults, mostly women would shout helter skelter from all the households in the neighbourhood, to the older children:

“Rain a come.”

“Set out de drum dem.”

“Put out de wash pan.”

“Lawd! Tek up de close dem ahfa de line. Quick! Quick! Befo rain wet dem up.”

“Shet de winda dem, ar else de rain a go blow een.”

Opposite our house was a flourishing banana walk. The folk always talked about the good quality of the Lacatan and Robusta bananas. They bore six and seven hands of up to twelve fingers. I would overhear talk about the high prices that the United Fruit Company of New Jersey paid for the bananas, if they passed the quality test when they reached Port Antonio. It was important for them to reach the port in perfect condition, or they would be rejected. Rejected bananas were sold off cheaply in the market place and the banana producer would lose profit. The bananas were therefore carefully reaped and transported. When the bananas were fit, the banana men cut the bunches and piled them carefully by the roadside. They also cut a lot of dried banana leaves before they cut down the soft trunk of the tree from which they had cut the banana bunches. Cutting the tree at this point permitted new banana plants to shoot from the roots. The dried banana leaves were laid out on the truck bed to form a soft pad. The bunches of banana were then carefully placed on the leaves, in preparation for transport to Port Antonio for sale to the big banana boats.

We children always curried favour with the banana men to see if they would give us a bunch of ripe bananas. They knew enough to be kind to us or else the big boys would simply raid the bananas at night. I remember vividly how hurricane Charlie blew the whole banana walk flat, and how the children raided the ripe bananas and the adults the green bunches. The overseers threatened prosecution for theft.

There was a cow pasture that stretched from Windsor Castle to Louisiana and reminded me of those big fat brown cows at Hazard. There were always little boys driving the cows to water and to other grazing pastures. These boys were armed with slingshots. Birds followed the cattle to pick the ticks off their back so they had a steady target of birds at which to shoot.

4.3 My Father's Birds

My father collected birds for food and sport. For food, he had a collection of Leghorn fowls and Rhode Island Reds. He claimed that they were the best laying fowls. In the mornings before he left for work, he would call up the fowls and throw out handfuls of corn or chopped up coconut. The fowl's beaks would all converge on the grains in one mass of clucking feathers. My father would swoop down and catch a laying hen. Then he held the hen in the left hand and inserted the middle finger of his right hand up the hen's anus. The chicken struggled and squawked out loud and then my father would let her go. He repeated this feed, catch, feel-up-and-let-go routine with every laying hen. He then announced to my brother and sister that he expected them to collect a set number of eggs, say ten eggs. This meant that they had to follow the fowls stealthily when they ran around looking for a place to drop their eggs, or they would have to go around after school looking in all the likely places that the fowls would scratch out a nest to lay.

Sometimes the dogs found the eggs first, leaving the empty shells to show that a fowl had laid her eggs. When my father built a fowl coop it was easier, because most of the hens would lay in the nests in the coop. I remember helping to collect the soft eggs warm from the chicken's body. We would watch the shells harden in our hands. We had to outsmart the dogs, which had the same idea as we did about eating the eggs. When my father got home, one of the things he would check in military fashion was the number of eggs we had collected. We paid with our hides if we collected noticeably fewer than our father expected.

Like the dogs, we liked eating the eggs too. Invariably the chickens laid more than their quota and my brother had a system of hiding the surplus until he had enough for a feast of eggs. It was my brother's job to cook the pigs' feed after dinner. He would boil the eggs at night with the pigs' feed. The feed consisted of corn and other leftover peelings cooked in salted water in a kerosene pan over a big wood fire. Trevor would put the eggs on the top of the pig feed, submerged enough to boil evenly. When they were boiled, he would fish them out with a large spoon. One night my sister discovered my brother's ploy. They made a deal to share the spoils and Sonia would not tell on my brother. But Trevor had no intention of sharing equally, and the two fought over dishing out their fair share. Two of the eggs got shoved to the bottom of the pigs' feed.

When my father went to feed the pigs in the morning, he upended the kerosene tin of food into the pigs' trough. Out rolled the hardboiled eggs. Sonia and Trevor swore to my father that they did not know how the eggs got into the pan. My father asked, "Are you telling me that the fowls laid the eggs in the hot boiling tin at night after they had gone to roost?" At these times my father spoke perfect lawyer English. They of course had no answer, and my father then descended on them with his belt, speedily pulled out of his pant loops.

Sonia pushed my brother in front to take the licks and took off to a neighbour's house for the night, leaving my father to curse and swear till he literally fell asleep. When he cursed her he called her the little wench. When really vexed with her, he would call her the "little black wench." It was difficult to cheat after this, because my father would brook no error in count, even when the chickens did not lay. This chicken and egg game was expanded to include ducks, game hens, and pigeons.

For sport, my father brought home barble-doves and baldpates. Once, he even brought home an ostrich egg and buried it in sand to wait for it to hatch. It never did and he was so disappointed and embarrassed that his bright idea had failed. The gamecocks had to suffer my father clipping their wings, beaks, and spurs. When he took his cocks to fight he would come home drunk and bloodied just like his cocks. Behind his back we would laugh hard at his misfortune. We knew full well if he caught us mocking him he would have no difficulty clipping our wings as he did his birds. Between the maintenance of the pigs and the ducks we had to carry a lot of water before we went school in the mornings. When the sun was hot and water was scarce, the ducks would wander away to find streams of water.

There was a Mr Peart who lived in the neighbourhood, and who owned seven of the fiercest pit bulls. He could not afford to feed these dogs properly. He had them tied up most of the time, and they would bark and hound from hunger. They were so ferocious that children dared not tease them. We came home from school one day when we did not have a maid and found that Mr Peart's dogs had eaten all the ducks and drakes. There were duck feathers and blood everywhere.

My father blamed us for this, refusing to believe that all his ducks had been eaten. He speculated that they had followed the stream that they sometimes escaped to. It was about this time my brother ran away from home, leaving my sister and me to cope with my father's wrath. Sonia and I searched for days and could not find the eaten ducks. Shortly after that incident my sister ran away too. I was left alone in the house for I do not know how long. It seemed that my father had not shown up for some days. I walked back to find Miss Eu who took me in as essentially her pickney field hand to help drop the cane tops for planting. I was about eleven years old by then. I did not go back to school for what must have been months.

4.4 My Father the House Inspector

In my father's room was a double Simmons spring bed with a coir mattress, that is, a mattress stuffed with coconut fibre. I liked the nice mahogany vanity with the big round mirror and a stool. I was fascinated by the mirror and would play with my image appearing and disappearing until I got ferocious headaches and then I would fall asleep. In the big drawers of the vanity were some elegant woman's blouses and skirts and a very special black vest. This ladies' vest had beautiful cloth loops and buttons spaced close together. My sister and I would dress up and play in the clothes and put them back neatly before our father staggered home to do military inspection of our housekeeping.

The inspections were terrifying occasions because he was bound to find dust in some remote place, or declare that the mats were laid at some angle that mattered only to him. Then he would proceed to examine the table, which we had set for his food. We had to be up to serve him when and at whatever time of night he chose to come home. The maids had usually gone home by the time he arrived. Again, some implement or dish would be found to be out of place. He would then start to question us about why this and why that. I would remain quiet trembling from fear, ready to relieve my bladder or bowels. My sister

Sonia would talk back to daddy. She was “a bare face pickney.” He would take her backchat as an affront and an outrage, and some scene like this invariably followed.

Daddy: Why is the fork placed like that?

Sonia: Because you moved it daddy.

Daddy: Are you calling me a liar?

Sonia: But daddy I saw you when you moved the fork.

Daddy: Girl, don't but me. I said, are you calling me a liar?

Sonia: No daddy, but...

Daddy starts flushing red like a tomato. His eyes begin to swivel from side to side in rapid fire as he grabs Sonia by the arm with his left hand while his right hand begins to remove the heavy leather belt from his waist. All the while, daddy is unable to stand up straight and Sonia takes advantage of his drunken state with impunity. Sonia will try to get away by dragging daddy along as he staggers to stay on his feet. His breathing speeds up, exhaling strong fumes of Captain Morgan rum, his favorite. He manages to drop a few licks over Sonia's back. They are too light to appease his rage. Besides, Sonia always dresses every night for bed in several layers of clothing to protect her skin from the blows. Daddy, knowing this, comes down as hard as his drunken aim allows. He grits his teeth as he looks at her with the fire of hatred in his eye. Sonia and daddy struggle for the upper hand.

His intention is to beat the daylights out of her, while hers is to get free and humiliate him. It is a battle between sober and drunken wills. On cue, I cry out, “Daddy, daddy, don't lick her.” My sensitive brother Trevor stands by, calculating his own escape when Sonia has cornered daddy strategically, giving Trevor time to grab me and run. Sonia breaks loose and runs, hollering to me “Come Yvonne!”

Thus defeated and humiliated, daddy hurls obscenities at my sister and warns my brother of the “murderation” (severe beating) that awaits him when he's caught. “You little black wench. You are “facety” (feisty) just like you black mumma.” “You Mister Trevor, wait until I catch you; I am going to bus' your ass.” Even when we are safely at a distance, we can hear him cursing and swearing. Meanwhile we three have to plan which neighbour we will have to ask to let us sleep for the night. The neighbours were usually accommodating because they were powerless to interfere directly in my father's abuse. Somehow they expected better of this red skin man. Some of the mothers would cup their palms to their

chin and mutter, "Missa Shaata gaan mad." Others would say, "Him a tek disadvantage a de poor dead ooman pickney dem."

In saying this, the folk were acknowledging a profound truth about Jamaican mothers. They would not stand by and tolerate anyone abusing their children – not even their father. Another truth is that the worst fate that could befall children in Jamaica is for their mothers to die before they 'pass the worst', meaning the point when children were old enough to take care of themselves. Taking care of themselves meant having not only economic independence but also the ability to take care of their integrity enough not to let anyone violate it. Our mother died before we had passed the worst.

4.5 My Father's Morning Routine

Daddy had his morning routine. He would rise just after the second cockcrow, dress himself, then wash his face in the face basin that the maid set up for him the night before. He made lather from a special tablet of shaving soap, spread it all over his chin and then scraped off the foam with a Gillette razor blade. Then he would shake some salt from the salt jar in his palm, dip his index finger in the salt and rub his teeth and gums. He gulped a mouthful of water from the full glass sitting beside the water goblet, and held his head up to gargle his throat, swished the water around in his mouth, and spat in the basin. He would repeat this several times. Then it was time to comb his hair. He used Palmolive Brilliantine, which was a green paste in a squat jar. He scooped some out with his index finger of his right hand, placed it into the palm of his left hand and rubbed the palms together before spreading evenly over his mop of curly hair. By the time he finished combing with the fine-tooth end of the comb his hair was one flat shiny skin drawn over his scalp. At one time I loved my father's hair. That was when he thought I was cute and harmless and he used to tickle me and throw me up above his head and look at me with love in his eye. Then he allowed me to play in his hair and to even twist it into what I thought were plaits. They were not anything but great knots that he had to get out before he went to work next morning.

As soon as I could talk back and ask questions that showed that I was becoming 'too ripe', everything changed. I had become "the stiff-necked child," which was to say I started to ask questions and demonstrate my ability to think logically and truthfully. This meant he had to either beat things into or out of me, as was the same for my brother and sister too. For a short while, when we lived with Miss Eu my father became my daddy.

This relationship of daddy versus the brown man was never fixed or stable. It was like a seesaw. At roughly age fourteen years I disowned him, so that I could take charge of my life and destiny.

On another night of terror it would be Trevor's turn to be picked on to explain some silly detail about the care of the stinking pigs in the pig sty and whether their feed had been boiled and set aside. It was always his turn after Sonia's sassing, struggle, and escape. Sonia was always there to attack and defend her brother against the tyrant.

When he got up, my father usually woke up my brother, so that he could make the fire and set the water to boil, and help feed the pigs. By the time daddy finished his ablutions, his coffee was boiled and ready to be filtered and strained through a cone-shaped coffee bag made of flannelette. When the coffee had boiled to the proper strength, daddy would select a fire stick burned to charcoal and stick it into the pan of coffee to settle the coffee grounds, he said. Then he would pour through the coffee bag to get a clear brew. This strong black coffee is all he would have before he fed the pigs and left for work.

As soon as daddy boarded the bus for work, shortly after the second cockcrow, we started to do our chores of feeding the pigs, if daddy had not done so, fetching water, and cooking our breakfast and lunch for school. The maid, when we had one, would come in after we left for school to wash and iron our clothes and to cook the evening meal. For a time we still attended Carron Hall School while we lived in Louisiana. When we moved to Louisiana the distance to walk to Carron Hall School was much farther. To be there in time, we had to watch the position of the sun as it moved east across the sky like a clock. When we trotted to school in the hot morning sun we were constantly watching our shadow to see its length. As the shadow shortened the time got closer to midday. If Trevor and Sonia were late for the big school, the head teacher would be waiting to drop licks for being late.

4.6 The Grey Tin Case

The most intriguing thing in my father's room was a grey tin case, stored under his Simmons bed. Every day I would pull it out and spend time exploring its contents. In this tin case were my favorite things. There were exercise books with double and single lines, children's storybooks, yellow lead pencils with rubbers on one end, purple indelible pencils, ABC books and other papers. I would play for hours with the magic of the pencils and the rubber. I discovered the meaning of indelible by trying to erase my scrawling done with the

indelible pencil. When I could not rub it out with the rubber I applied my finger with my spit and discovered the pencil marks produced a purple inky mark. In time, the dye on my finger and tongue would let my father know that I was playing in the tin case. I cannot remember that it was ever cause for his anger.

My brother read me a story called Dick Whittington and his Cat, and he also showed me how to write my ABC in the single-lined exercise books. As I learned to read, I read some of what was written in the exercise books. When I was studying to become a teacher, I had a flashback in which I recalled reading in one of the books lesson plans, with sections underlined, and headings such as 'aims and apparatus', 'introduction', 'development', 'drill'. I longed to return to the contents of this grey tin case to learn more, most of all to learn to whom this case belonged.

Living at Louisiana were times of great terror from my father. The event that marked the date of our arrival at Louisiana was Hurricane Charlie, which blew through in August 1951. I remember the hurricane very well. The sky turned black and red, the thunder rolled and clapped, the lightning flashed in rapid succession and the rain clouds burst. The howling winds were, it seems, travelling some fifty to a hundred miles an hour. Branches of trees broke off and sailed into windows and smashing them. We were both excited and afraid. My father came home in a rush and covered the bureau mirrors and boarded up the windows. The sheets of zinc flew off the roof of our neighbours' houses and travelled like spinning plates through space. As the storm became fiercer, my father knelt down and prayed hard and begged God to save his house. I cannot remember him praying for us kids. He may very well have. On this occasion, he promised God solemnly that if He spared his life he would surrender his soul to Jesus. His life was indeed spared, but he never kept his promise to God. In fact, we never saw him pray again. For years afterward, however, we three had a wonderful time acting out our father's dramatic show of reverence, and laughing at him cowering in the storm.

4.7 Louisiana Blues

When we were at Louisiana, my brother, sister and I got the blues often and big. At those times my brother and sister would talk about Mamma, a person who still had no meaning for me. Trevor and Sonia then would break out singing popular songs. One of my

brother's favorites was Nat King Cole's melody whose lyrics went, "Show me the river, take me across, wash all my troubles away, For the lucky old sun has nothing to do but roll around heaven all day." This must have been for him the lament of lost childhood whose life revolved around work, not play. Another of my brother's favourite was "Those far away places I have been reading about in a book that I took from my shelf." The three of us loved to sing Patty Page's "Cross Over the Bridge" and "How Much is that Doggie in the Window." We knew nearly all of Nat King Cole's and Patty Page's songs. In his good mood my father would sing to himself, "South of the border, down Mexico way" and "We were waltzing together in a dreamy melody." He too must have had his longings and his sorrows. My father, my brother, and my sister knew my mother and could be conscious of that loss. I felt the loss too, but I did not know who or what I had lost.

Now, when I recall these times I have to ask where did we hear these songs when we had no radio, no concerts, and no choirs? The messenger was none other than Bernice, the smooth-ebony-skinned good-looking, young woman who used to live with and work for Mr Stewart. Mr Stewart was a very proud upright black man, who owned a house and property. He was what Jamaicans call a 'respectable black man'. He had a provision ground with lots of fruit trees: avocado pears, ackees, mangoes, soursop, yellow-heart breadfruit tree, limes, oranges, and pimento. He planted an equally wide variety of ground provisions: yams, cocoa and dasheens and greens, and had enough to sell to his neighbours. There was no market place close by, so he must have set up his own way of generating an income from his provision ground. I remember that my father would buy breadfruit and avocado pears from him. Bernice was neither Mr Stewart's wife nor his servant, nor was she any relative of his. It seemed a unique relationship, wherein Bernice came and went as she pleased. I loved Bernice. I would cuddle up to her at every opportunity and stroke her skin and admire her thick eyebrows and solid white teeth.

Bernice was an adventurer. She met Babsy and Clara, two "boasy" (boastful) young black women who visited the yellow-skinned man named Eric in his little two-room house from time to time. Every one called him Eeric. Babsy and Clara boasted to Bernice about life in Kingston working at the Myrtle Bank Hotel. Because I loved Bernice, so much I would follow her like a puppy dog and listen to all the conversations that were not whispered or communicated in gestures I did not yet understand. Babsy and Clara regaled Bernice and all who would listen to their tales of bright lights, rich white sailors, lots of

money, and fun with the sailors who just loved black girls. Poor yellow Eeric had a big sore foot and a heavy bandage that smelled high as the folk would say. He seemed to have resented their boastful talk and when they got on his nerves, he would call them harlots, whores, and Jezebels. In turn, they would tell him to go and mind his syphilis. There was a time, during slavery days and for some time after, when these women would be called wenches and would be expected to kowtow to the likes of Eeric, or risk a flogging with a cowhide or a tamarind whip. At least they would get a swift box in the mouth or on the jaw. Now, they could insult him with impunity and he could do nothing about it.

Bernice must have seen great prospects for herself in these stories that Clara and Babsy told her, because one day we found out that Bernice had packed her grip and left for Kingston. When she returned months later, she made a grand entrance as she disembarked from the Sunshine bus that plied the route from Carron Hall to Kingston. She was dressed in a lime green taffeta circular skirt with a see-through white nylon blouse revealing her bra and her slip. This outfit raised eyebrows and set tongues wagging among the older Christian moral women. I am uncertain of the effect on the young teenage boys like my brother and his friends Barry and Eucal. The taffeta skirt tail swung with Bernice's gyrating hips and went swish, swish, swish, as she strutted on her high heel shoes and the skirt went left right, left right, to the rhythm of her walk. She wore bangles and necklaces and her hair was straightened and styled in an upsweep. Bernice had returned to the village as a glamour gal, as the folks would say.

My brother Trevor, my sister Sonia and I loved the good times we had when Bernice came back from Kingston because she brought back the latest songs and the latest dances. This one time I remember she brought back an exercise book in which she pasted all the lyrics to the songs, which she had cut out from the Star newspaper. She must have rehearsed them thoroughly, because by the time she arrived back in Louisiana, she knew both the words and the tunes by heart. My brother especially loved this song, "Up in the morning, out on the job, work like the devil for my pay but the lucky old sun has nothing to do but roll around heaven all day." Bernice also taught us dances such as 'the yank'.

She would bring fancy cigarettes such as Du Maurier, Winston, or Royal Blend, for Eeric. She would also bring him fancy liquors such as Johnny Walker whisky, or Captain Morgan rum. These gifts gave Eeric something to boast about after Babsy and Clara left again for Kingston. Eeric would boast that he is the only man in the district who could afford

to smoke "dem kinda cigarette" and drink Johnny Walker whisky. I remember looking at the bottle and at the man on the label in the red pants, white shirt and top hat, and thought that that must be Johnny Walker.

While the girls stayed with Eeric, he would try to be fresh with them, and they would take turns to 'trace' him. In slavery days when some people had uncertain lineage, especially on the father's side, given the prevalence of rape and concubinage on the estates, some people delighted in telling others that they were So and So's bastard pickneys. As such they were nobody and came from nowhere. In retort, the persons so traced would attempt to describe their lineage to show that they had better pedigree than their aggressors; the argument would thus go back and forth, in an attempt to reduce each other to nonentities. This kind of quarrel could last for hours, or even days.

I remember some of the things they said to Eeric: "Go wash yuh stinking sore foot." "Clear aaf wid yu syphilis." "Yu too stink feh anybody feh want yu." These insults were sure to make Eeric hopping mad. He would flail his arms up and down, right and left, as he chopped them into pieces with special Jamaica expletives and sexist put-downs such as harlot, whore, Jezebels, Delilah. He would spit in the dust, or spit at them, catch his breath, and start the insults all over again, reminding them of parts of their body which he said stank more than his sore foot.

How do I make sense of the relationship that Eeric, Babsy, Clara, and Bernice had? My guess is that Eeric was perhaps a pimp for Babsy and Clara at the Myrtle Bank Hotel before he contracted syphilis. Since there was no prospect of a good life for Bernice in the district of Louisiana, she must have joined Babsy and Clara in Kingston to become a prostitute herself.

The Myrtle Bank Hotel up to the '60s was a big hotel on the wharf in Kingston. It was the hotel for the rich and famous who landed in the island by boat. Kingston and Port Royal, since the heyday of the buccaneers and the slave and sugar trades, were entrepôts for trade with Britain and the mainland North and South America. During the First and Second World Wars, Jamaica was of strategic military importance to America. The hotel must have been one of the places where the American sailors and European businessmen came to stay.

Besides my adoration for Bernice, I will always remember her for the gift of three plastic bowls, as I recall in yellow, green, and blue, that she brought for us on one of her visits. They were so beautiful, and she told us that she bought them especially for us to drink

our porridge from. We made a big pot of cornmeal porridge, nicely spiced with brown sugar and nutmeg. When we dished out the porridge in the bowls, right before our very eyes, the bowls flattened out like pancakes. We were at first horrified because our good porridge by this time could not be drunk. It was mixed with plastic, which smelled strange. After we got over the shock, we howled with laughter. I have told this story over and over about how the hot porridge melted the beautiful plastic bowls. I was never to see plastic again until the 1960s when melmac and melamine plastic plates, bowls, cups, and saucers appeared on the scene. These were hard, could withstand heat and only melted if they were placed in open fire. Bernice and Eeric live on in my memory.

It was not only people in Louisiana who stood out in my memory but also the antics of what the folk call “country pickney” – children who would perhaps have never seen a city or whose life was circumscribed by the cycle of the cash crops – pimento, coffee, cocoa, and especially sugar canes.

4.8 Hop a Truck and Pull a Cane

Country children went to school in gangs, much like the pickney gangs of slavery days went to the cane fields. Then, the pickney gang was comprised of children ages six to fourteen who worked in the cane fields to weed and carry canes on their heads. Aggerly Brown (1979) speaks of these children as going from the cane fields to the classrooms. It is interesting that the schools they went to were for only that age-group.

The pickney gang on their way to Mango Walk School would listen for the groaning engine of overloaded cane trucks and wait in ambush at the foot of the hill, ready to hop a truck and pull a cane. On approaching a hill, the driver of the British Leyland or Fargo engine would gear up and accelerate to take the hill with a force to overcome the gravity of the load as it ascended the hill. The sugarcane were laid horizontally on the truck bed and tightly packed some eight feet high and perhaps as wide. I estimate that the truck bed was some ten to twelve feet long. As soon as the truck began to labour on the hill, one boy would shout, “Hap aan.” Another would command, “Pull a cane.” Then dozens of little ‘wooligans’, as the folk would say, would descend on the ascending truck whizzing and sputtering and firing to clear the hill with its sugary load intact. The first one to pull would aim for a cane or two in the dead centre and pull and run out of the way. In pulling the cane, it would loosen the tight pack and before long, the sugarcane on the ascending truck would

come cascading down the hill. The rest of the wooligans would descend like vultures onto dead meat, grab the fattest sugarcanes and skitter away faster than the mongoose. Thus relieved of his load of sugarcane, the driver would glide up hill fast, park the truck, get out, hands flailing and mouth uttering a trail of Jamaican expletives. Along with those would come insults about "dem wutliss mumma" and the worst put down of all to be called "no-good black naygas."

Without knowing it, the school picknies had taken their revenge on sugarcane. It was for that sweet crop that their foremothers and fathers tasted the bitterness of exile and slavery on the sugar plantations. In the bush their incisors peeled the canes and their molars did just as good a job as the sugar mills in grinding out the juice. By the time these boys got to school, their teeth were shining and their thirst was quenched. They had enough sugar in their blood to keep them energetic for hours.

Any driver who had the 'wooligans' hop his truck and pull his canes was in deep trouble. The sugar factory to which he was carrying the canes had an insatiable appetite for grinding the canes round the clock. The sugar factories depended on the small farmers to grow the canes and provide a constant supply of canes to meet their manufacturing quota. Both the farmer and the driver had the responsibility to deliver several hundredweight of sugarcanes. Arriving at the sugar factory with a load lighter than intended would be sure to raise the wrath of the 'busha', the white man in charge of productivity at the sugar factory. At the top of the hill, many drivers would draw their brakes, get out of the trucks, and curse "de lickle thief dem." They would surely "pap dem neck if dem couda catch dem. But dem gaan like de bloody rat dem."

Sometimes there were disastrous consequences for the little 'wooligans' when the cane fell too fast and pinned some of them under the weight. There were other times when the driver expecting the ambush would accelerate as soon as he saw them through his rearview mirror. This sudden speed would sometimes shake the little boys off and their heads would hit the asphalt as they fell. There were a few times when little boys fell to their death. Such was the life of 'poor country pickney'. This is a scene from crop time. County children walked through cane pieces to school. Their lives were dominated by the cycles of sugarcane planting, weeding, manuring, cutting, loading, and transportation to the sugar mills.

4.9 Memories of Mango Walk School

In 1951, after Hurricane Charlie, my father registered Trevor, Sonia and me at the Mango Walk All-Age School. Virgil Bullock was the headmaster of Mango Walk All-Age School. He had a reputation that preceded him. The people said he was a good disciplinarian. Many respectable parents felt good in handing over their children to his discipline. My father had full confidence in him. They were friends of sort.

Mango Walk School was situated on a hill on the bank of a major river, right in the fork where a tributary joined the mainstream of the river on the other side. The landscape in the area was terraced, and at this spot there were three terraces rising from the riverbank to arrest soil erosion during the heavy rains. The playground was on the terrace closest to the river, along with the school garden plots. The schoolhouse was located on the second terrace, and on the topmost terrace was the teacher's cottage, where the head teacher and his wife lived. Each of these locations has special memories, which both delight and haunt me.

The playground was like a brown plateau of clay and sand. Dancing and skipping feet of boys and girls ground the earth into dust. The wind blew this dust into our eyes, on our books and into the classrooms. The dust turned to mud when it rained. The big boys and girls played complicated quadrille clapping games with up to sixteen squares. I remember watching through clapping, singing, and changing places, how a couple could end up at the opposite end of where they started and back. I loved to watch the grace and precision of the dancers. I especially loved the ring game "Jane and Louisa will soon come into this beautiful garden." This singing and clapping ring game was like a mating ritual. Troublesome little boys and girls would watch the dance to figure out which big boy liked which big girl. We would giggle with delight that we had figured out their secrets. The big boys and big girls played this game at morning and evening recess as long as the dry season lasted.

The little boys would stake out a corner to play "marble and ta" or "marble and cashew." They would have loud arguments about who "tief de game," or who could play "real bad", meaning skillfully. The pockets in their khaki short pants were always weighted down with lots of glass marbles and a few of the coveted expensive steel marbles, called steelies. Winning steelies in the game of marbles was prestige personified. "Me win de mos steelies mon" was the victory cry at the end of the game, when the cussed bell rang.

Little boys lived to play marbles, and to run their wheels to school (Figure 3.2). The wheels were either tubeless old bicycle wheels or barrel hoops pushed from behind with a long-handled wire hoop shaped somewhat like a tennis racket and bent back to cradle the arc of the wheel. The barrel hoops were more common, because the boys could get them from the shopkeepers after they had sold all the pickled mackerel, shad, and red herrings that were shipped in from Newfoundland and New Brunswick. Old bicycle wheels were really hard to come by. The bicycle had not yet replaced the humble shanks pony or the donkey as transportation. The idea was to push this wheel continuously while increasing the running speed. It was a pleasure to push the wheel over “nylon road”, the smooth road of new asphalt. Gravel roads such as the short cuts were a nuisance. To get around bumps and potholes slowed the speed and interrupted concentration.

Figure 4.1 Running a hoop to school
(photo: Bob Krist, International Magazine 1989)



While little boys played their marbles, the little girls would occupy another corner to jump rope, commonly called skipping. They cut large withies from the big overhanging branches of some big flowering trees growing nearby. The trees could have been the beloved Poinciana. These withies were nature's rope. They grew in many widths and lengths. I loved the old man's beard and the love-bushes, which also hung alongside the withes. These hung like tinsels on a giant Christmas tree. At Infant School I learned that these were adventitious roots. I delighted in the way this big word used up all my mouth to pronounce.

We skipped alone or in twos or in groups. The group skipping was the most fun. We skipped over large withies swung by two strong girls. It was fun to have a group of twenty girls running and jostling to skip in and out of the swinging rope. We played such games as “Room for rent apply within, When I

run out you run in.” This was a great game of turn-taking requiring agile strength and skills in high jump to “jump over the moon” on the upward swing of the withie without being caught in the rope. If the rope caught you, besides getting a bruise from its blow, you annoyed those whose rhythm you broke and those waiting with concentrated aim to jump in before the bell rang. Those waiting their turn would shout “Pepper!” With this command, the rope swingers would swing so fast that the unwary would be tripped and pushed out. A fresh lot would crowd in quickly before the rope started swinging again. All the little bodies would tune into each other in order to establish and keep the rhythm unbroken for as long as they could.

The really aggressive girls would not take their leave without a fight. The fight would start like this. One girl, usually older than most, would put on an ugly scowl, stand astride the rope with her arms folded tightly, and declare, “Me nah go no whey. If anybody “tink dem bad, dem cyaan come tek me out.” This would spoil the game for everyone and invariably she would meet her match by another virago, who would haul her out by her frock waist. One day this ritual took an embarrassing turn when one of the bullies insisted on jumping in out of turn. She waited until the rope was about to clear its maximum height on the upward swing and she jumped with all her might, cleared the rope and landed in time. Everyone gasped, and shouted in unison, “Lawd gad, Hortense baggie drop offa har!” While we all howled with laughter, Hortense stepped out of her baggies (underwear), picked them up and ran to the toilet with them in hand. A bunch of us ran behind Hortense to the toilet. We had to see if she was wearing elastic or string baggies. No self-respecting girl of a certain age wanted to wear open-leg calico baggies tied at the waist with a string. Every girl boasted that she wore the new style, jersey, elastic-waist panties, whether she was wearing them or not. It became a game to creep up stealthily behind a boastful girl, and quickly lift up her dress to show everyone what kind of baggies she was wearing. The boys would join in this embarrassing game too.

At the next round of skipping we would be fighting, jostling and quarrelling about who should go first this time and whose turn to swing the rope. I was too puny and short to be a swinger. This was the only yard game that I was welcome to play. I was no good at soft-ball or at catch-ball.

On the same level as the playground, some way upriver, were the garden plots assigned to each class. Each class in this school had to cultivate a garden plot. Instead of

going for nature walks as I did at Infant School, I was taught to be a farm labourer in the school gardens. When I was in 'A' Class, I learned to dig holes, plant red beans at the correct distances apart, fetch water from the river to water them, watch the beans grow and harvest them at the right time. All this was done under the teacher's supervision.

On the next terrace going further up the hill from the playground was the schoolhouse. Somewhere between the back of the schoolhouse and the garden plot were the boys' and girls' pit latrines and a zinc lean-to urinal for the boys. After one of Virgil Bulloch's "murderations" (a very violent beating, within an inch of one's life) of the big boys, they would go behind the lean-to and peel off the bloodied shirts which stuck to their backs and compare weals, black and blue blotches, and lacerations. My brother Trevor was among the big boys who showed the contusions and lacerations.

I would only go to the latrines when my bladder was about to burst or if I had to empty my bowels without delay. The stench of urine and faeces made me feel nauseous, but I could hold my nose for this or hold my breath long enough to get my business done. It was the smiling lizards with the multi-coloured bulbous jowls crawling stealthily on the toilet seat and walls that kept me holding my belly and doing a dance outside the door, until they were out of sight. When the lizards were out of the way, I had to face the brown cockroaches seen running around when I looked into the pit. On top of this I was scared of falling into the pit in trying to crouch on the seats. One never sat on those seats. When flush toilets came to my home in the fifties I thought they were the best invention. I am still scared of pit latrines, even in campsites.

In the front of the schoolyard was a gravel playground that skinned many knees of baseball runners and catch-ball players. On the concrete steps leading into each division, girls played jacks. These were not the commercial jacks sets. We made our own, composed of ten pebbles and a lime scalded in hot water to make it bounce like the rubber jacks ball. In the front yard facing the main-road boys and girls played baseball with coconut-frond bats and hard rubber balls.

There were a few shade trees under which some classes were kept during the dry hot weather. Reading and singing lessons for the junior grades were often conducted under the shade of a tree. When classes were held under the trees, some boys had to transport the blackboard and easel, and the teacher's chair. The girls would take along the box of chalk and the duster. The teacher would take along her book and her tamarind or guava switch or

leather strap. Children in lower division would carry their slates and pencils and reading books. The middle-division classes would take their Caribbean Readers, Book One, Two, or Three, along with their double-lined exercise books and lead pencils. The Nesfield's Grammar book was the standard grammar text for all teachers' reference.

At the very top of the hill was the teacher's cottage, where the head teacher and his wife lived. On the surrounding hillside spread lots of Guinea grass, which was grown in abundance for feeding cattle. When the Guinea grass grew to maturity, it hid the cottage from sight of the school. Part of our learning to labour was to pull up these grasses when they dried. On the selected afternoons, the whole school was let out like the "pickney gang" of slavery to root up and bundle the grass. I never knew whose horse or cow they were reaped for. I do remember rooting up these grasses, which were much taller than I was. They were so deeply rooted that it took two or three little ones pulling together down hill with the full weight of our little bodies. Usually we would be sent rolling down the hill with the clump of grass when we managed to uproot it. At those times we were indecently exposed because we had no hands free to keep our skirts down. When our sweat mixed with the grass on our skin we itched, and scratched so hard that the skin on our arms and legs bled.

Just past the front of the school was a ford over which motor vehicles could cross the river during the dry season. A wooden footbridge built some distance from the ford allowed pedestrian crossing at all times unless there was a flood that washed out the bridge. When the heavy rains came and the river was in spate, the water would rise like sea tides up the terrace. We would be dismissed early at the sign of the river rising. During the rainy season we sometimes stayed away for days until the river subsided. Virgil Bullock would issue a stern warning to stay away from the river when it rained. One day he had to haul a boy who had disobeyed his orders out of the swift turbulent flood. Virgil Bullock did not let the boy free until he flogged him over his back in his wet shirt. I daresay the boy may have wished that he had been left to drown.

As I come to enter the schoolhouse to recall some of the teaching that went on there, I hesitate. The memory of it brings back some of the fear that we children were subjected to. Just picture the physical layout of the school. It was one big open room divided into three equal spaces each separated by a step. At the lower end was the lower division where children in A, B and C class were. The next step up was the middle division where first, second and third class sat. From there the next step up took you to the upper

division where the fourth, fifth and sixth class were. Virgil Bullock's desk was placed on a dais in the centre of the upper division from where he could overlook everything. He was in charge of standard six and his sweet wife was in charge of standard five.

The founders probably named the school for the abundance and variety of mangoes grown in the surrounding villages. Children loved the mango season. The higglers brought hampers full loaded on donkeys to sell at recess and lunch-time. There were many varieties of mangoes: number eleven, milly, black mango, hairy mango, kidney mango, and Julie mango to name just a few. I now wonder if this place was an experimental station for mangoes brought from Mauritius to Jamaica in 1782, when Lord Rodney stole them from a French ship taking seedlings to the French West Indies.

The children played tricks with the vendors. We would eat half of a really good mango, then take the black node of the stem and sink it in the flesh and return the mango half-eaten claiming that it had worms. The vendors were glad to give us fresh mangoes to replace the 'wormy ones' until they got wise to our tricks. When they caught us, they would punish us by limiting our choice to the puniest fruit.

Those children who were given lunch money bought their lunch at the gates or went out to Post Road village centre to buy from the shops. The 'flaa-flaa' (codfish fritters) sellers came with their glass case full of annatto-coloured salt-fish fritters and fried dumplings. For sweets, they sold grater cake and drops. These were not as good as Mrs Phipps's Jackass Corn (hard coconut biscuits). The Jackass Corn which Mrs Phipps made were so hard they were a challenge to chew and could dislocate jaws or shake teeth loose.

Virgil Bullock and my father shared many beliefs about child-rearing. In this respect I had two fathers. They believed that they could get children to learn by beating things into and out of them. Children should be made to fear them. Like the patriarchs of the Old Testament, they did not believe in sparing the rod and spoiling the child. I was beaten a lot and I learned to fear both Virgil Bullock and my father equally. The good book admonished parents in these words, "Train the child in the way he should grow and when he is old he will not depart from it." When I was old enough, I departed from much of this brutal upbringing. They also believed that children were twigs to be bent because as the adage says, "As the twig is bent so the tree inclines." They must have been unmindful of trees, such as the guava tree, that would not incline as their twigs were bent. I was as obstinate and resilient to bend as the guava tree limbs that I tried to bend to get the sweetest

guavas at the top of the tree. "Children must be seen and not heard." "Children must only speak when they are spoken to." "Children must be kept occupied and useful; the devil finds work for idle hands." I learned to be useful in whatever way garnered praise and spared me the wrath of the adults who raised me.

Under this child-rearing regime, I learned to fear male adults and stern females in authority. I looked and listened hard because I should be seen and not heard. As a consequence, I believe I became an acute observer of human behaviour. With my father, this keen observation sometimes saved me from a licking because I was able to observe the subtle changes in his mood and facial muscles and predict his behaviour. With this sixth sense, I could anticipate what was coming, and was sometimes able to disarm his hostility.

I often wondered how the female teachers could be so docile. I could not tell what these teachers thought about Virgil Bullock. He seemed to have bullied them into silence and submission. Only his wife's face gave her feeling away. She always had a merciful look for any child being victimized and a 'cut-eye' for her husband when he was not looking, to show her disdain. I came to learn that adults did not betray each other by criticizing people in authority in front of children. They closed ranks to uphold blind obedience to authority figures like head teachers, parents, elders, and parsons. They would even uphold and imitate cruel and unfair treatment of their children by the Virgil Bullocks of the community. The folk held Virgil Bullock in such high esteem. So much so, that when he died they gave him a hero's funeral and eulogized him as a man of upstanding character and an outstanding teacher. In their words, "The community has lost a strong disciplinarian." I must have been in teachers' college when he died. For my part, God had answered my prayers and taken the tormentor of children away.

As a child, I understood a disciplinarian to be like my father, someone who instilled fear. A disciplinarian was someone who could make your heart beat in your throat in his presence; someone who made you want to empty your bladder and bowel when you hear his voice coming; someone who made your knees knock as you trembled with fear; someone who caused your palm to sweat, and your skin to go cold and clammy.

This is how I remember Virgil Bullock. At school, he was the lone raging-bull in a pasture of calves and heifers. Instead of horns, this two-legged bull charged with canes, straps, and switches. The silver-tipped cane and leather straps were part of the educational equipment that the Department of Education supplied to all headmasters, together with

regulations on how to strap and cane. The folk alleged that some power-crazed head teachers augmented the regulation width of the strap with their own made-to-order lengths and widths. These were designed to meet the challenges of any big boy who they believed needed to be shown who was the boss man. Certain big boys were designated to maintain the supply of tamarind switches, which teachers and head teachers used or kept on their desks to deter the chatterboxes and the sky larkers. There were no plantation pen keepers to tame the bull or to put a ring in his nose and lead him to a bullpen.

As if his arsenal were not enough, Virgil Bullock never hesitated to box someone from cheek to cheek with either the back of his hand or his open palm. His sole reason for being in that school seemed to be to bully the female teachers and pupils, and to bust the flesh and 'wale' the children's backs. The big boys most feared the silver-tipped grey cane. They would go to great lengths to destroy it. The most well known sabotage was to break into Virgil Bullock's desk and use a sharp knife to score invisible rings at regular intervals. When he dropped licks, as the boys would say, the cane would break in many places and lose its tensile strength to deliver a painful blow.

One day, I witnessed an episode that is etched in my memory, even fifty years later, for its abominable cruelty. Virgil Bullock called a boy from the middle division up to his desk one afternoon because he saw this boy talking, or more likely moving his lips, after he had commanded silence from the whole school. This speech act was a very big challenge to his authority. For when Virgil Bullock banged the cane on his desk to get everyone's attention, and bellowed "Silence!", no one talked until called upon to answer one of his general knowledge questions, or worse yet, to give the answer to one of his mental arithmetic sums. Sometimes after ordering silence, he would cast a roving eye throughout the school to see that no one was speaking. Woe unto the child he saw even moving his lips. It was on one such occasion that he caught the boy either talking or just moving his lips. Children coped with the threat of a beating for errors by whispering the answers to each other. In so doing they reduced the incidents of terror and anguish. They saved their skins, literally.

The boy-victim was wearing short pants, as was the custom for boys under twelve, I believe. As soon as the boy came up to him trembling, Virgil Bullock grabbed him by his pant waist and heaved him up off the ground. So tight were his pants drawn up that the seam sharply divided and exposed his two buttocks just the way Virgil Bullock liked to prepare them for the blows.

I can only imagine the pain that this “draping up” caused to the boy’s seed (genitals) and what damage may have been done. As Virgil Bullock took the cane in hand the boy struggled to get away begging, “Doe teacha no lick me. Me na do it again.” Virgil Bullock was deaf to the child’s plea and apparently unsympathetic to the pain he was already inflicting with the draped up pants. He must have known he was causing great pain; after all, they both shared a similar anatomy. As he raised his arm to strike the child, the boy let out a blood-curdling scream in anticipation of the sting on his bottom. Virgil Bullock snorted and struck down hard. The cane crackled to pieces as it hit the boy’s buttocks. We held our breath, torn between horror and comedy. Without missing a beat, and still gripping the boy in the pant waist, Virgil Bullock pulled the boy along as he reached into his desk drawer for the skinniest strap. He pelted the boy harder with every scream. The big boys alleged that the skinny strap was soaked in urine to increase its weight to deliver the worst sting. Virgil Bullock let go of the boy when his face turned red like a big tomato and he began to pant like a tired bull. His sweat gathered in beads of water on his forehead. He grabbed his handkerchief out of his trousers pocket and mopped up the sweat. By this time, his big fat bull neck, with veins bulging and throbbing, ballooned over his white shirt collar and necktie. The amazing thing is that the whole school sat in an uneasy silence and watched the spectacle of this raging bull “murdering” a child.

After such episodes of “murderation,” the big boys and big girls would hold a verbal post mortem, a palaver, out of Virgil Bullock’s earshot. It would be time “fe tek bad tings mek laff.” They would improvise a drama, which I now see would follow three acts. The First Act would recreate “How Big Boy late de teacha man.” In this act the big boys would enact how they believed big boy broke into the school, picked the lock on teacher’s desk, took out the cane and screwed it. The careful way in which the cane would be laid down, just as it was found, would be done with great finesse. At which the audience would laugh and clap while exclaiming, “Yes mon, de bwoy dem late teacha, good good.”

Act Two would begin when the role-play turned to the draping up and beating. There were no shortages of volunteer actors willing to play the bull and the bull-bucking scenes with frightening accuracy but with a difference. No one would actually drape up any boy only pretend to do so. To the mock screams and pleas for mercy, there would begin hissing of teeth, and shaking of heads and looks of recognition when someone said, “Teacha tek disadvantage of de likkle bway.” Someone would shout, “Teacher so bex im beat de

bwoy til im neckstring naly bus.” Another would follow with, “Ah how come de teacha man so wicked?” This comment would herald a change of mood from humour to outrage.

The need for retribution and revenge could only be expressed in words. The powerless children could only imagine what they would have done to address this brutality. Act Three would follow when different child-actors began to shout: “If ah coulda, ah would ah jump up an grab teacha by im seed and drag im aafa de platfaam.” Another child would pipe up, “Me woulda jump back ah im an lick im in ah im neck back.” Then another, “Ah woulda give ‘im a tump ina ‘him sola plexus.” Still another, “Ah would ah throw a rock stone in ah im winda.”

After this palaver, the children would scatter in all directions to return home to their humble abodes to ponder in silent loneliness all the brutality that they had experienced. If some of them dared to tell parents who had blind obedience to authority, their parents would turn on them and beat them, saying that the head teacher was right. Sometimes though, a fiercely protective mother had been known to go to the school to confront the head teacher. She would go to the door closest to the head teacher’s desk and call him out. He and the whole school would rather try to ignore her presence than go out to address her. The head teacher certainly knew better. If he did, he ran the risk of being pulled out the door and draped up by the virago. She would trace him loudly and ignominiously until she was tired. To top it off, before she departed, she would stick her head in the door mouth and make two promises. She would either set obeah on him, or ambush him and return the beating if he set foot in her village.

In reenacting this episode the children had come to realize the trauma of gratuitous violence. Although they were powerless to do anything at the time, in their imagination they had verbalized what they would have done if they could. I cannot help but recall victimized powerless folk in the village calculating opportunities for revenge and wishing for divine retribution on the mighty. I wonder now what that little boy and others like him grew up to be. Have they drowned their repressed anger and pain in rum? Do they live in a state of displaced rage? Have they become abusive husbands and fathers? Have they become disciplinarians like Virgil Bullock who taught them so well by example? Judging by the men in my family I can answer yes to all those questions.

Sadly, my brother whom I expected not to repeat the sins of his father grew up to physically abuse his children. I too am guilty of repeating the pattern. When I became a mom and started to beat my children, I flashed back to the agony of my childhood and relived the pain in my body and saw the horror in my children's faces. It devastated me to realize that I was beginning to do the very thing I vowed not to do my children. I locked myself in the bathroom and cried my heart out at the horrible spectre. I obtained counseling with the help of my family doctor. I broke the cycle.

Virgil Bullock did not spare the girls. I was one of the victims of one of his mass beatings. It was not unusual for Virgil Bullock to line up a whole class, or even the whole school and beat every single child. Indeed I had a doomsday of my own, one that I shall describe shortly.

Sanitary conditions at Mango Walk School were deplorable. It must surely have been one of the condemned school buildings described in the West India Royal Commission Report (1945). The report was a result of an inquiry into the social conditions in the British West Indies – also called the Moyne Report. The sanitary conditions were very bad. I caught head lice, worms, chigger, and yaws, while I attended that school. My father had to de-lice my sister, brother and me with dirty black engine oil. When he combed the engine oil through our hair, the lice would fall out by the dozens. The white nits or eggs stood out and were destroyed by squeezing them between the two thumbnails. Picking head lice was a ritual shared between women and children. In school I remember watching lice crawl along the collar of girls sitting in front of me. When the lice bit me on my scalp I would sometimes scratch and catch some lice between my fingers and place them between the pages of my reading book. I would wait for them to crawl out from between the pages.

One day as I was watching the lice crawl out and not paying attention, the teacher came over and whacked me across my back several times with a tamarind switch. I both feared and hated that teacher. I think her name was Miss Lewis. She is the one who put me in front of her, with my left side toward her lap and looking away from her, and got me to read aloud from my Caribbean Reader. I remember that I was reading fluently until I came across the word "imagine." I sounded it out as "imagain." The word was barely out of my mouth when I felt the pelting on my calves. She shouted "Imagine!" while she beat it in my calves.

Worms of all sorts were common, picked up from contaminated water and mud. Intestinal worms came from drinking impure water. Of these, the Guinea worm or 'negro worm', was serious. It manifested itself on the scalp in rings the size of a six-pence. It was also the hardest to get rid of. Medicine to get rid of intestinal worms was regularly given both at home and by public health nurses at special clinics in the districts. Hookworms would enter the soles and between the toes when we walked in the mud after the rains and caused ground itch. Hoofed animals also got the ground itch from the mud during the rainy season. The surface of the toes and between the toes would itch so badly we would scratch until the toes bled. Hot poultices were used to treat the feet in the hope that the worms would fall out. I remember how badly my toes would itch and how I would scream when the hot poultice was applied. With this home remedy, it was believed the hotter the better.

Chigger or jigger was transported to Jamaica with the enslaved Africans. It was an insect infestation of people who walked barefooted. The shoes that I brought with me from my Aunt Joyce were well worn. Everything was done to extend their life. The shoe toes were cut with a razor blade so that my toes could hang out. The backs were also cut to accommodate the protruding heels. The rock stones of the gravel roads bored holes in the soles. When there was no way of extending the life of the shoes I went to school barefooted just like all the other children. Our soles developed thick calluses that had the appearance of the inside of a grater from walking on gravel. Most poor children went to school without shoes and therefore caught chigger. Chigger flies lay their eggs in the soles, between the toes and especially around the nails. It is said to have caused the most general of Negro infirmities during slavery days. Infestations could cause deformity of toes and foot. Children who were badly infected walked on their heels or hopped on the side of their feet.

My father was good at picking chigga from my toes with needles that he sterilized with a burning match. The chiggers appeared to me like a tiny head of garlic encased in a thin transparent sack that took on the colour of the soles and white skin between and the bottom of the toes. Only the tiny black head helped to identify where the chigger was located. My father said he had to dig out the sack whole. According to him if the sack burst the chigger would grow again. To be sure he got it all he would squeeze the infected areas until bleeding occurred. Then he would disinfect the areas with Jeyes' fluid. The pain was inflicted relentlessly. When I squirmed and whimpered he told me if I did not stop my crying he would give me something to cry about. By this he meant he would either box my face or

remove his belt and strap me. At times like these my father may just as well have cut my vocal cords. He would not have to hear my screams and he could inflict as much pain as he liked.

When my father was not de-licing our hair, or picking chiggers, he was breaking the blisters and washing the sores caused by yaws. All I can say about my father's treatment of the yaws sores was that he used the methods of a plantation veterinarian, until he had no choice but to arrange for me to go to the drugstore some ten miles away to get injections in my hip. It took five such painful injections to cure. Although the sores dried up, traces are still in my blood. I cannot donate blood to the blood bank, even after a second set of antibiotics, which I took when I was in college. During routine medical tests I had to take before entering college, the nurse got my blood test back and thought I had something more terrible than yaws.

According to Richard Dunn in his book, Sugar and Slaves, (1997) "*Yaws, clinically similar to syphilis, was a common affliction among the slaves on the English islands. The repulsive skin ulcers characteristic of yaws could develop into bone lesions and destroy or deform the nose, lips, hands, and feet.*" No wonder the college nurse was so alarmed and concerned about my blood test results. Luckily my doctor had studied tropical medicine and ascertained that I had yaws when I was a child. Besides the trace of yaws that still exists in my blood, I have a three-inch square scar below my left ankle. This lesion caused me to walk on my toes until the five injections cured the yaws. Thankfully, the blisters on my face and body left no scars.

In addition to these maladies, there was pink eye and the perennial fresh cold, which we contracted from the heat and dust. When the cold ripened and we had to blow our nose the girls used their dress tails for handkerchiefs in which to blow the awful green goop that tickled our throats and tied up our chests.

Rat bats lived in the roof of the school. When the children arrived in the mornings, the rat bats flew away to come back when the children left in the afternoons. Hurricane Charlie must have done damage to the building too. Some time around 1953 or 1954, construction for a new school began some distance away from the old school. The children who lived close to the construction came to school one morning to describe in fantastic terms how a caterpillar was just knocking trees down and uprooting them with just a touch. Now there was only one caterpillar that I knew. That was the one we put in the bottle

at Infant School and watched turn into a butterfly. So you see, I had to go and see how a caterpillar could do this great magical thing. My head was filled with the magic of fairytales. At Carron Hall Infant School I learned and loved such tales as The Wicked Step Mother, Hansel and Gretel, Billy Goat Gruff, The Three little Pigs, Little Red Riding Hood. I loved the world of fantasy. With such a miserable childhood I could imagine families that I wished to live in. In my fantasies I could love, hate, laugh, grieve, and control the forces of oppression, which were incomprehensible to me.

To our amazement this was not the caterpillar we were expecting. It turned out to be a bulldozer that felled the trees and with its great big jaws picked them up and moved them to the side. A large number of us forgot time; we were so intrigued. When someone looked around and saw his shadow lengthen in the afternoon sun he hollered, "Lawd Gad we late." With that realization we picked up our feet and ran as fast as we could to get back to school. We wished we could erase our shadow. When we arrived, Virgil Bullock had all the doors locked, except the front door before which he had all the latecomers lined up to beat. The line was long; Virgil Bullock was shouting and dropping licks while he watched our every move lest any one of us tried to escape. If we escaped that day we would have got the licking the next day because the attendance was taken mornings and afternoons. Those missing in the afternoon would surely be called up in the morning to get their dose of punishment.

I thought that I could use my smallness to outsmart Virgil Bullock, by crawling swiftly on my hands and knees past him while he was busy dropping licks. I managed to get under the long desk, which ten to twelve children shared. I wormed my way to my space on the overcrowded long bench. My seatmates shifted their little bottoms to keep me out. If they let me into my seat then one person who came early would not have a seat for the rest of the afternoon. In the pushing and shoving to secure a space to shuffle into, my seatmates laughed out loud. This drew Virgil Bullock's attention and he paused to look at what was happening. Just as I raised my head to see if it was all clear to slip into my seat our eyes met.

His response was like a bull running at a red flag. "Come here Shorter girl: You think you are smart. I am going to show you who is smart." With that said, he grabbed me by the hand and dragged me out over top of the bodies of my seatmates, landed me to the ground at the same time that he struck me several times in quick succession across my back. I can still feel the stings on my back and the sensation of warm water running between legs.

When I looked down, I was standing in a pool of my own urine rising between my toes. By this time I went to school barefooted, since I had worn out the shoes that I brought with me from My Aunt Joyce. My flesh stung all over. My cotton baggies were cold and uncomfortable to sit on the bench for the afternoon. When I got up a wet mark showed on the wooden bench. The wet baggie chafed my skin by the time I walked the three miles home. On the walk home the children jeered and called me "the pissing tail gal." The teasing and name-calling stuck for as long as I attended that school, much to my lifelong humiliation. The new wales across my back just added to the old ones, which my father had delivered perhaps the night before to vent his drunken rage.

I stayed away from school for days. Instead of going to school when I left home in the mornings, I took unsupervised nature walks by myself along the secondary road leading to the school. I hung out in the mango and rose apple trees watching the big tree lizards blow up their bright orange and yellow balloons to attract the smaller lizards which they pounced on, grabbed and wrapped themselves around. Later in life I learned that this was the mating ritual of lizards. I always felt sorry for the little lizards because I thought they were being beaten up. I most feared the green lizards with the saws on their backs. They were as green as the leaves among which they lived and caught their prey. I was so fascinated with lizards that I would spend a day following their movement in the trees and on the ground. I was so excited when I found out that lizards laid eggs. They did not build nests like the chickens but burrowed into the sandy soil and laid their eggs there. As I did with chicken eggs, I broke some of the eggs to let out baby lizards. Bird's nests were another fascination. I would watch the mother bird feed her young and raid the nests and take the baby birds home. The mother bird never failed to find her babies and demand them back. Some birds were so fierce that they would pick at me with their beaks. When my shadow told me it was afternoon I walked home as if I had come from school. I had no mother to check on me.

School life at Mango Walk School was hell. It was in direct contrast to Carron Hall. After lunch was the most terrifying time in the school. This was the time when Virgil Bullock either led the whole school in Singing or in General Knowledge, important subjects in the curriculum.

I cannot recall any musical instrument, not even the piano, which seemed to be in all schools. We practised a lot of "doh-ray- me-fah-soh-lah-tee-doh" before we were taught a

song. Of course I saw no relation between these endless scales and the lyrics to be sung. Having us sing rounds was interesting to me. A regular one was:

*Kookaburra sits on the old gum tree.
Merry, merry King of the woods is he.
Laugh Kookaburra, laugh Kookaburra laugh
King of the woods is he.*

Virgil Bullock would count to three, after which the lower division would start. At the end of the first line, he would bring in the middle division with a wave of the hand and finally the upper division would come in with the first line. When the whole school had sung this round in perfect harmony, Virgil Bullock would bring the singing to a sudden halt.

4.10 Queen Elizabeth's Coronation

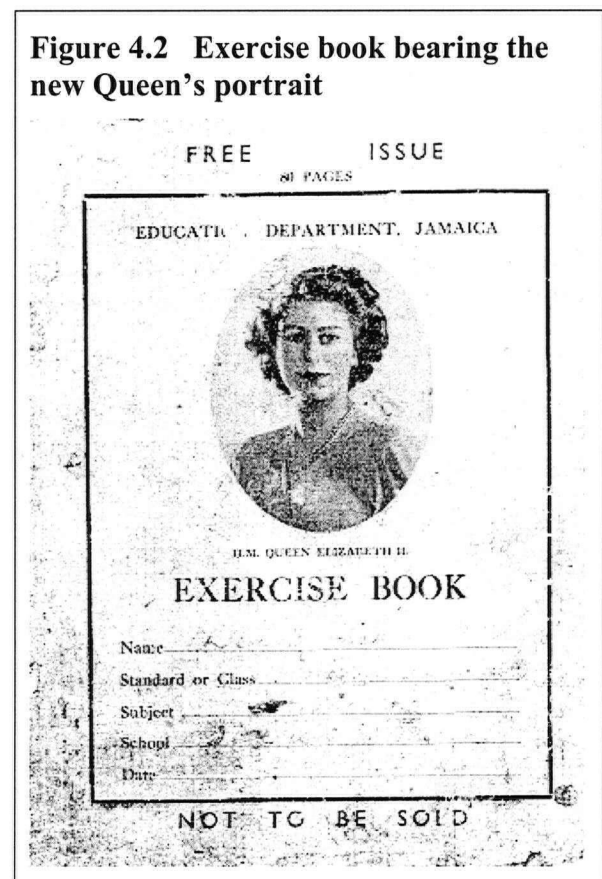
The year was 1952. The telegram man had arrived at the school and rang his bicycle bell at the gate. The telegram man always brought news of death, from afar. Teacher Bullock went out and came back with an envelope. He brought the whole school to a solemn quiet. He told us that he just had very sad news. We were told that King George VI had died. He pointed to the picture of this white man that hung on the wall of the upper division looking down on all of us. Virgil Bullock told us that we had been the King's subjects, and now that he was dead we were henceforth his daughter's subjects. His daughter's name was Elizabeth and since there was a Queen Elizabeth the first, this queen would be Elizabeth the second. He then introduced the whole school to the Latin word Regnum. It meant reign and that the Queen's title will be EIIR. This then turned into one of his famous General Knowledge sessions. Virgil Bullock asked the whole school to tell what EIIR meant. There was a long pause – no one put a hand up. He went strutting from division to division piercing our brains with clues to get the right answers. In a rare moment of generosity Virgil Bullock parsed the E, then the II, and then the R, imagining that we would be able to put it together. This parsing and cajoling for the recognition of this royal title must have gone on forever. He finally had to capitulate and tell us what EIIR meant. It meant, he said, Elizabeth the Second reigns. Thereafter the whole school plunged into the preparation for the Queen's coronation the following year. I remember the whole school practising "I vow to thee my country" and "Rule Britannia" for Queen Elizabeth the Second's coronation in 1953.

Some children, including my sister, went on an outing to the coronation to join in the mass choir of school children from all over the island that sang these anthems at Sabina Park, in Kingston. The rest of us got to go to Carron Hall for a local ceremony where we lined up in military fashion and sang both these songs and joined in the “Hip hip hoorah” to the Queen. “God save our gracious Queen” replaced “God save our King.” After this ceremony in the hot noon day sun, we drank lemonade, and all the people and children were given a little aluminum cup, in pink or green, with the Queen’s face on one side and EIIR on the other, her insignia we were told. From that day forth, the symbols of the King began to be replaced by the Queen’s.

The new free issue exercise books, which children in the All-Age schools got, bore the Queen’s portrait on the front cover (Figure 4.2) and the tables of imperial measures on the back cover. The official government stationery said “On Her Majesty’s Service” instead of “On His Majesty’s Service.” Some time soon after the Queen and Prince Philip replaced the King’s portrait. That portrait was to stare at me in every school I attended, until independence in 1962 when these symbols of Empire were replaced by the local governor general and prime ministers.

At ten years old, this whole fuss about the Queen left me puzzled and worried about my sister who had gone off to the coronation on the school outing without my father’s permission. I had to carry the horrible burden of knowing about the scheme to deceive my father. My sister plotted every step with precision. She asked permission to go to the coronation. My father flatly refused, and so my sister ignored him and resolved to go without his permission. She knew that she needed a new dress and shoes and socks to go. She also needed a packed lunch and pocket money to buy aerated water and snowball. That shaved ice and syrup was a must in the heat of Sabina Park, Kingston. She waited until my father’s payday when he would come home drunk and

Figure 4.2 Exercise book bearing the new Queen’s portrait



with his pocket empty of money or he would not know how much money he had. When he was sound asleep she took down his pants hanging on a nail on the door and took out most of the money.

She performed this routine several times during the year of preparation so that she could acquire all she needed including the truck fare. She bought some light blue rayon fabric and red rickrack braid to make her dress herself. She was then thirteen years old, had passed her first Jamaica Local Examination and had the reputation of being "bright." She was also, in my opinion, very talented. She learnt to sew at the Friday classes at the Practical Training Centre when she attended Carron Hall All-Age School. She learned all the techniques of hand sewing because there were no sewing machines and girls were being taught to be useful with the hands. I saw my sister lay out the fabric on the floor and cut out the dress with my father's razor blades. She backstitched the whole dress together, and trimmed the frock tail and sleeves with the red rickrack braid. She also bought herself a pair of shoes.

On the morning of the coronation my sister got up at the first cock's crow and quietly sneaked out of the house before my father knew what happened. He thought she had diligently gone to fetch water as we were supposed to be doing so early in the morning. By the second cock's crow he would be getting up to ready himself for work. My father only realised when he came home from work and could not find her. I think either my brother or I confessed the secret we had known for months. I remember distinctly asking my sister what she would do when Daddy found out. Her answer was, "I will just take the licking."

That I could not comprehend because Daddy's beating for being outsmarted was a "murderation." In her indomitable style she would reply, "What no cost life, no cost nuttin." (What does not cost life does not cost anything.) I remember these lines to this day at times when I am feeling cowardly. This attitude of courage in the face of danger is one of the many gifts from my sister, even though this is the very attitude that eventually cost her life.

After the Coronation was over we began the preparation for the opening of the new school, which would be ready in some months. We had to practice "Bless this house oh lord we pray/ make it safe by night and day/ bless the roof and benches all/ let thy peace lie overall..." for the opening. I was not around when this finally happened.

4.11 How I Found My Way Back to May Pen

There were turbulent times at home and my schooling was interrupted for I do not know how long. As I mentioned earlier, both my brother and sister ran away from Louisiana leaving me alone to face complete abandonment. I knew the way to Miss Eu so I went to her. She really had no space or time for me in her life. She had scaled down her farming and was getting ready to marry a Mr Ellis who had just bought a big house on Spanish Town Road. This place was so big that I think it was a tavern and lodging. It had a sign, which read "Western Sports Park Tavern and Lodging." A Chinese family with about six grown daughters lived upstairs, and an older Chinese man kept a grocery store down stairs. When she moved from Windsor Castle to her new residence on Spanish Town Road Miss Eu carried me along. She suited me out with some new clothes. I attended her wedding, which was held in the tavern.

I was so unhappy and lonesome there. The scenes in front of the tavern kept my senses alive. I would stand by the windows facing the busy Spanish Town Road. On one side, I watched the motor vehicle examination depot where learner drivers knocked over the drums during their test drive. On the other side of the examination depot was a grass yard and open-air market. This market sold mostly charcoal and ground provisions. The market trucks, which came in on Thursday nights loaded down with produce, heralded three days of hustle and bustle among mostly black people who were loud in their hawking and selling. The fisher woman with her pushcart filled with fresh fish on ice would push along crying with a nasal pitch, "Feesh, fresh feesh. Dacta fish. Buy yuh dacta feesh, parat feesh an goat feesh. Buy yuh feesh, me wih scale it feh yuh." She had a hand scale and knife ready. The sea was nearby this spot. Handcart drivers snaked around speeding trucks and cars, while the drays loaded down with the grass plodded along oblivious to the dangers around. The drivers of the city and country busses sped by, depending on their horns to avoid knocking jaywalkers down. School children dressed in a rainbow of colours of uniforms milled around in the morning to wait for buses to take them to school. Donkey milk carts and bread trucks were part of this pedestrian, quadruped and motor traffic spewing exhaust and smoke.

Huge flatbed trucks carrying stainless cylinders roared by with such power that all vehicular traffic gave them right of way. On the sides of the cylinders were lettered, "J.Wray & Nephew Ltd, Distillers and Blenders since 1825, Monymusk Limited." Only many years later I learn that these cylinders were filled with rum from the Monymusk, Clarendon and

Frome, Westmoreland distilleries. They were bound for the ships at the Kingston wharf. From there they would be shipped to England to supply the British Navy. This rum trade between Britain and Jamaica was to last for some three hundred years. The trade came to an end only in the 1970s with the decline of the British Navy, and the ending of the sailors' rum ration.

Other scenes at this busy intersection of Spanish Town Road and Waltham Park Road remind me that there must have been a significant Chinese presence in this area. I have already mentioned that the tavern, when Miss Eu and her husband bought it, had Chinese people living in it. Behind the tavern on the Waltham Park Road side was a shop and dwelling in which a Chinese family of three lived. The son who was about my age went to a private school. Every morning he joined the long line of little uniformed Chinese children lined up waiting for the "chi-chi" buses to go to school somewhere in Kingston. On Saturday mornings this same group lined up to catch the bus to Chinese school. A few times my curiosity drew me to follow the elaborate Chinese funeral motorcades to the Chinese Cemetery located some distance up on Waltham Park. White, gold, and red colours on the ornate and grand tombstones stand out in my memory.

Nailed to the wall of every house and business in this area was a redifusion box that was never turned off while Radio Jamaica and Redifusion (RJR) network went on and off the air. I spent a lot of time close to this box trying to figure out the mystery of the voices in it. At first when I heard the voices I tried to talk back and was quite puzzled that voices could be so near and not talk back to me. I was so fascinated that I tried to pry the box off the wall to find the people in the box. I was caught before I could accomplish the task. RJR played the latest American tunes; broadcast British radio dramas such as Doctor Paul, and Life can be Beautiful. A voice would say, "It is twelve o'clock and it is time for Doctor Paul." There would be an endless stream of jingles advertising detergents, washing soaps, toilet soaps, alcoholic beverages, aerated water, and travel dates of passenger boats leaving for Southampton England. These jingles were brought to listeners courtesy of such names as Unilever Limited, Proctor and Gamble, and Canada Dry.

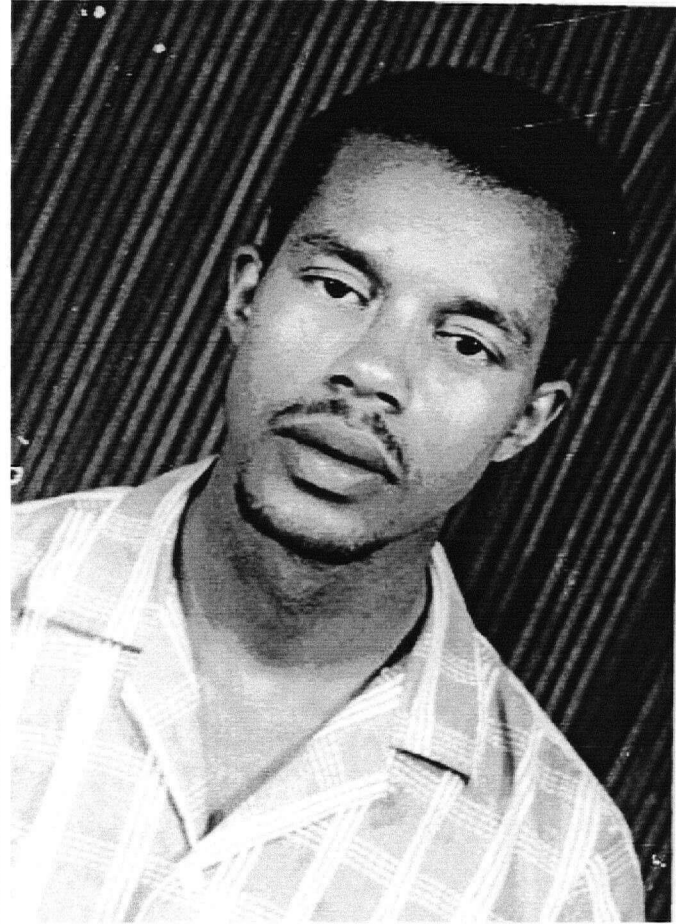
Miss Eu enrolled me at Greenwich Town Elementary School, which was located just behind the examination depot. I missed my brother and sister so much that I think I almost went mad. At school I discovered a girl around my age having the same last name who lived at 2A East Avenue, the address to which my brother Trevor had run away and left

my sister, and me. He used to write to my sister from this address. In time, I discovered that indeed my brother lived with her family. Her father Uncle Tom was my father's first cousin. This would make this girl and me second cousins. I do not remember her name now. I followed my second cousin to her home to visit my brother.

Trevor (Figure 4.3) and I were both so surprised to see each other again. He was living with Uncle Tom and learning the carpenter and cabinet-making trade as a kind of apprentice. I wanted to stay with my brother. There was not room enough at Uncle Tom's and he telephoned my Aunt Emily to come and take me back to May Pen. Yes, Uncle Tom actually 'phoned. It was the first time I had seen anyone talking through a mouthpiece and a wire. Uncle Tom was a contractor and carpenter, a real businessman. Mr Black, Aunt Emily's husband, my uncle-in-law picked me up from Uncle Tom's. He was quite friendly to me. I sort of liked him because he dressed well, drove a car,

and spoke to me politely. I grew to like him some as he praised me for being such useful child. Yes, by the time I was twelve I had learned to labour. The year was early 1955.

Figure 4.3 Yvonne's beloved brother Trevor



CHAPTER V LIFE AND SCHOOLING IN MAY PEN circa 1955 - 1962

5.1 A Familiar Place

I came back to May Pen in 1955, some eight years after that unhappy day when my father snatched me away. Some of the old places remained, some were new, and others were gone. I recognized several buildings instantly. These were places that my Aunt Joyce would have taken me to or were subjects of overheard conversations. I recognized the May Pen Market, Shagoury's Haberdashery and Hardware Store and Mr Black's grocery store. Mr Levine's Dry Goods Store, which had been next to Mr Black's, was gone. I missed seeing Mr. Levine again; he used to give me sweets and talked to me when I was little and accompanied my Aunt on her outings to buy cloth, trimmings and notions for her dressmaking.

5.2 The Supermarket

Philip Young's Supermarket was new. This Chinese merchant family also had a cloth shop on Main Street. On his premises he made the finest bullah cakes. At lunchtime, those of us who did not spend our lunch money in the soup kitchen went to the supermarket to buy bullah and cheese. My friends and I used to sneak behind and watched the bare-chested black men, skin glistening with sweat, mix and knead together the big bags of flour, baking soda, ginger, sugar, and molasses. We would gasp and exclaim that we would never eat Philip Young's bullah cakes, when we saw the men wipe the sweat from their forehead with their index finger and shake it in the dough. Of course during the avocado pear season we forgot about this and bought the bullahs because they were the best tasting to eat with the avocado pear for lunch. When pear was out of season bullah cake and New Zealand cheddar cheese stood in. This lowly bullah cake was sold for about a penny. It was about the diameter of old-style singles record, about one inch thick and looked and tasted more like ginger bread.

I watched Mr Black quarrel about how Philip Young was squeezing him out of business. His Supermarket was glamorous and the prices were cheaper than Mr Black's. Shoppers could help themselves and not wait to be served as they had to when shopping in Mr Black's shop. At the supermarket, some shoppers thought they could literally help themselves and not pay. Mr Black, who allowed his customers credit, was left with unpaid

debts as many of his customers switched to buying with cash from Philip Young's Supermarket that did not carry credit. There was a section of the Supermarket that carried such items as foreign dolls, cameras, fancy hairbrush and comb sets and small mirrors. Although Mr Black struggled to stay in the grocery business until the mid sixties, he was among the last of the small grocers. His heyday was in the late forties and early fifties when the market people could buy their salt provision, sugar, condensed milk, and milo after they had sold their ground provision in the market. In those days people bought groceries on credit.

5.3 Toyland

Storks De Roux's Hardware seemed to have catered to the wealthy few. At Christmas time, he created a Toyland in his store. The wind-up trucks and cars intrigued the boys while the girls loved the blonde and auburn-haired dolls with their pretty clothes. Toyland brought toys from a white world far away in England and or America. I always wondered who bought those toys because none of my friends' parents could afford to buy them. They were simply unaffordable. We assumed that Mr DeRoux, a white man, must have sold the toys to the other rich white families who lived and worked on the nearby sugar estates of Sevens, Yarmouth, and Monymusk and those who worked for the Sharp Citrus Company. At lunchtime we children would literally swarm the Toyland to play with all the toys. Mr DeRoux would get mad and call us little thieves and chase us out disgracefully. We took to going in fewer at a time and made less noise as we wound up fewer toys.

In terms of hardware sales, the Shagoury Hardware store that was almost next-door drew more customers. I think these Syrian owners were better sales people who mixed with the folk and bargained with them. I believe they even sold on credit to trustworthy folk. The DeRoux's were aloof and hoity toity; and never seen mingling with the folk.

Lubsey's Drug Store on Main Street was new and trendy, carrying a wider assortment of drugs and toiletries than the old drugstore on Baugh Street. This drug store carried cosmetics and all sorts of feminine products. Lubsey's Drug Store was where the moneyed people shopped. Poor people stood outside and looked in at the attractive displays.

5.4 The Picture Shows

Places that would have been there when I first lived there as a babe were the two banks – Barclay's Bank, Dominion, Colonial and Overseas and the Bank of Nova Scotia –

the Police Station and jailhouse, the May Pen Theatre, and the Texaco and Esso gas stations. I remembered things about the May Pen Theatre. My Aunt Joyce used to go to “picchas” and talk about the film stars. The most troubling memory I have of the May Pen Theatre is of a neighbour named Allan who loved to go to see the moving pictures of ‘Cowboys & Indians’, but who would invariably get an epileptic fit while watching. Someone would bring him home, frothing at the mouth with his tongue all mangled. The next day everyone would be down on him to stop going to “de piccha show.”

I ask myself now why there should have been a movie house in this city during the forties. My best guess is that there was a movie-going population drawn from an American army base in Vernam Field located about twenty miles to the south, not far from the West Indies Sugar Company. May Pen was and is the capital of the parish of Clarendon, where all the institutions that serve the many sugar estates were located. The May Pen Theatre became a place of enchantment for my sister. She dragged me along to see such epics as *The Ten Commandments*, *Ben Hur*, *The Robe*, *South Pacific*, *Samson and Delilah* and *Seven Brides for Seven Brothers*.

Boys would watch the Westerns and re-enact scenes of gun battles between cowboys and Indians. They also collected cards with pictures of their favourite film stars. I would overhear the boys discuss the acting abilities of actors such as Howard Keel, Richard Niven, Charlton Heston and Yul Brynner. Some time around 1960, the new Capri Theatre opened and the old theatre was demolished. When I worked in the bank, on paydays I would go to see movies at the Capri Theatre with friends. We would sit and neck in the open-air balcony.

5.5 The May Pen Market

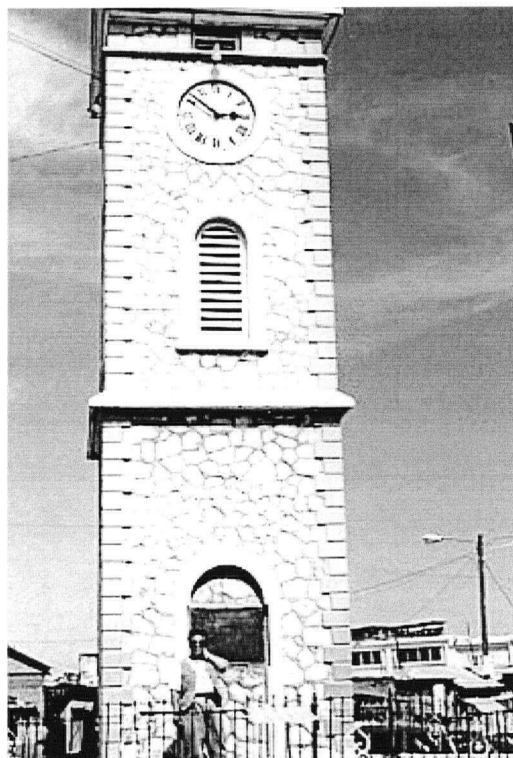
Of all the old places, the May Pen Market and the associated grass yard held particular fascination for me. When I was a babe in May Pen, I was not taken to the market. I lived cloistered behind the grass yard commons. I returned to find the market was still there as the centre of petty trading from Thursday evening until Saturday night. It was situated on a triangular plot of land bounded by three roads. The market was huge. On one side of the triangle was Main Street, which runs east to Kingston and west to Montego Bay. May Pen is situated on the banks of the Rio Minho, the middle point of the route from Kingston to

Montego Bay. It is said to have been a resting place for horse and buggy traffic in the early days of settlement.

According to Olive Senior in her Encyclopedia of Jamaican Heritage (2003), May Pen was once a sugar estate named for its owner the Reverend William May who was rector of Kingston Parish church for some thirty-two years. The 'Pen' part of the name indicates a cattle pen was attached to the estate. Because cattle were a necessary part of the sugar production, cattle pens were as important as the cane fields and the sugar mill. Cattle were used for transportation, to turn the sugar mills, to provide manure and meat.

May Pen became the capital of Clarendon, the largest parish in the island, where a large number of sugar estates are located. Here are a few of the names I remember: The West Indies Sugar Company, Monymusk Limited (WISCO); Yarmouth; Halse Hall; Sevens Sugar Estate; Longville; Suttons and Danks, It was the commercial centre for all of these sugar companies as well as the Sharp Citrus Company.

Figure 5.1 Yvonne visiting May Pen Clocktower



In front of the main gate of the market, was a wide parking lot where the buses and trucks stopped on their way to and from Kingston and other places. On the other side of the triangle, traveling north to south, Sevens Road forked from Main Street leading to the Sevens Sugar Estate. Muir Park Road joined Sevens Road due east at the corner that divided the Elementary School from the market along Sevens Road. Muir Park Road ran like an arc around the north east side of the market rather than a straight line of the triangle.

The clock tower (Figure 5.1), one of the many symbols of Empire, built from the finest stone masonry, rose above every other structure and stood like a sentinel watching over all, from four faces. Each of the four round white faces was etched with the Roman

numerals, one to twelve, in black. The clock struck on the hour, the exact number of strikes to indicate the hour of the day or night. It struck only once on the half hour. A little park surrounded the clock tower in the fork of Main Street and Sevens Road.

The folk from up country cared not a bit about clock time. They could not read the Roman numerals anyway, and even if they could count the number of strikes it did not matter to them. Their day began with the first cock-crow at about 3:00 am followed by the second cock-crow at about 5:00 am followed by dawn and sunrise. They have been telling the time of day for as long as the sun has risen in the east and moved across the sky to set in the west. They have worked in “backra” (white man’s) cane fields and in their provision grounds from sun up to sun down. They can tell the time in the morning and in the afternoon by the length of their shadows. In the morning, the shadows shorten as noon approaches and lengthen again in the afternoons. The lengthening and shortening of shadows before noon and after noon determined when children went to school and returned home. Country folk lit their lamps or went to bed when the chickens came home to roost.

On Miss Eu’s farm in St Mary, I often heard talk about planting certain crops in relation to the phases of the moon. Full moon and dark night were two phases that I enjoyed. The full moon was for playing out at night with my shadows and the shadows of trees and leaves. The dark nights were enchanting for the ghost stories that some elderly people told us kids and for the light of the “peeny wallies” (fireflies) among the leaves and the night sounds of frogs and crickets. Some old women predicted imminent deaths, with spooky accuracy from listening to dogs howling during dark nights. On moonshine nights, the barks and fights of mongrel bulldogs over the bitches in heat kept many mortals awake. Tomcats moaned like babies, before a spat.

I loved the market place. The market people were different from the people I met at school and at church. Emasculated men and masculinized women, made equals in labour in the field gangs on the sugar plantation, continued to be equals in the market place. Higglers hired handcart men to transport their goods from the trucks to their stalls. If the men tried to put one over them they were capable of pushing them aside and heaving the loads onto their heads and transporting their loads themselves. I saw women in various states of emotions, hardships, and friendships. They spoke the patois unabashedly. The Jamaican labrish (gossip) abounded with pithy repartees about sex, religion, politics, cunning, bakra (white man’s) business, lie and story, misery, tragedy, and divine retribution. Satire, irony,

and pathos abounded and still abound in the market places where the elements of drama were performed in the theatre of the absurd with the best acts of improvisation (**Figure 5.2**). I saw men and women making a living from nothing.

Figure 5.2 Caribbean Market Scene (photo: Bob Krist, International Magazine 1989)



The market was so interesting that I would run away from school on Friday afternoons to walk through the hustle, bustle, and hawking of the ground provisions and haberdasheries. Among the haberdashery that customers could find were cloth by the pound or by the yard, rubber tyre sandals, ready-made dresses, men's shirts, blouses, and underwear. There were also enamel and aluminum kitchenware, and iron pots.

The ground provision depended on what was in season; such as breadfruit, yam, cassava, bananas, dasheen, calaloo, oranges, mangoes and much more. I remember gleefully how I would abscond from school frequently on Friday afternoons with friends to buy our favourite collection of fruits, and repair to the logwood walk to sit under a logwood tree. We gorged ourselves, told lies and stories, and laughed uproariously. We would then collect five sixpence pieces so that we could punch five tunes in the jukebox at Mr Morant's Restaurant and Dance Hall. I can still hear the tunes of Fats Domino's "Blueberry Hill," Elvis Presley's "Blue Suede Shoes," "I'm All Shook Up," and Chubby Checker's "Hey, Let's

Twist.” We twisted for hours until we were sweaty and exhausted, then we dispersed and ran home to make up for the illicit time we had spent in the market and dance hall.

5.6 The Butchers

Toward the back of the market near Muir Park gate were the butcher stalls. The butchers wore long white aprons. Here carcasses of cows, goats and pigs hung, both for display to customers and for the food inspector. The butchers had to set aside the liver and light from the freshly-butchered animal for the food inspector to test before any of the meat was sold. The inspectors stamped the carcasses with purple or red ink after inspection. The inspectors of course had their first and prime cuts of meats before even the Custos Rotulorum of the parish. As Her Majesty’s head of the local government, the Custos had the power to order all of the butchers’ stock if he wished to. I had even overheard butchers tell painful stories about how “bakra tek de meat an doh pay far it.”

When I was old enough and the maids were unavailable, or my Aunt did not want to be seen in the market rubbing shoulders with the higglers, she would send me with a list to a special butcher to get so many pounds of round and sirloin cuts. As I stood in the crowd waiting and watching, I saw poor people haggling with the butcher to put a piece of meat onto the bones and cartilage that they could afford to buy, to stretch and make soup or stew. They were buying such cheap cuts as gooseneck to make pumpkin soup, and the brisket for stew. The middle class housewives who dared to come to the butcher themselves would point to the choicest cuts of meats hanging on hooks. Whereupon, the butcher would walk up to the hindquarter of the cow, give it a bear hug and heave off the hook onto the counter. He would cut off a piece of flesh, saw some bones, slice a piece of suet, and put it on the scale to make the weight. If the woman dared protest, the butcher would look to the next in line and say, “De meat married to de bone. With that said, they understood that they could either take it or leave it. Very often they took it grumbling because there were always more customers than meat to sell, and even if they went to another stall the principle of sale was the same, “de meat married to de bone.”

The poor people would buy the cow-foot, cow-tail and cow-head to “make up” with dry broad or lima beans or green Congo peas for their Sunday dinner. The rich only ate these dishes as an economy measure, not out of necessity. Also available to poor people was the washed and scalded tripe, which in my cookery class was called offal.

All sorts and conditions of humanity mixed and mingled in the market on market days. In 1992 I was able to visit the Macola Market in Accra, Ghana, and the Onisha Market in Nigeria, and found remarkable similarities to the May Pen Market of my childhood.

5.7 Remembering the Market People

In the market place, the smells of life and decay rose and diffused in the hot air that blanketed the spaces between the market and the grass-yard. The broiling heat of the sun released odours, fragrances, and smells that both attracted and repelled. The fragrance of mangoes, jackfruit, oranges, and ripe bananas drew my friends and me like flies. After leaving the butcher, the women methodically followed the aroma of the thyme, onions, hot peppers, and garlic, obeying the unwritten law of Jamaican cooking that meats must have seasonings.

The human odours ranged from the agreeable smell of the clean and healthy to the foul smell of the dirty unwashed. I could distinguish between the beads of fresh sweat that rolled off the backs and brows of men pushing loaded carts and the putrid smell of menstruating women sweating out their time sitting or walking around to hawk their wares. Those who were verbally offensive to their fellow peddlers or customers would sometimes be told with great vitriol that “yuh smellin high” or, worst, “yuh smell like seven day cabbage wata.” Nursing mothers who had to leave their babies for two or three days to come to the market to sell their produce to earn the money they needed to buy condensed milk, milo or ovaltine, salt fish, sugar and bar soap, would groan in pain as the milk hardened in their engorged breasts. I would hover around certain women between customers to eavesdrop on their woman talk. I learned that they often had no alternative; there were likely other children and aging parents at home depending on their labour and income. They carried the yoke so that their family could be fed, clothed, sheltered and that their children should have a better future life. There were no conveniences to take care of their needs for washing or bathing over the three market days.

On Sunday the women would rise early to make breakfast and usher their children and men-folk to their churches: Moravian, Pentecostal, Baptist, Methodist – but certainly not the Anglican Churches – dressed in their Sunday best to offer thanks to their Lord and personal Saviour. The folk clapped and sang to unburden their cares onto Jesus, the only person whom their Christian missionaries told them cared about their lot of misery and

suffering. He alone (their pastors and elders preached to their fold), could soothe their pain if they carried their burdens and laid them down unto Jesus. Jesus, they were told, was nailed on the cross to atone for their suffering and shame. He died for their redemption. When the folk sang, "Nobody knows the trouble I bear, nobody knows but Jesus," they believed this from the bottom of their hearts.

When the reading from the New Testament was taken from Matthew 6: 25–34 telling them how important their faith in the Lord as provider should be, they renewed their faith in a just God and a place of heavenly rest. The parson in his care to comfort his weary ones would emphasize these verses in a confident soothing well-intonated baritone or bass voice:

Therefore I say unto you, take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body more than raiment? Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?

As if to exhort his flock to believe the incredible he would remind with words from Hebrews 11:1, "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." Invariably the parson would end by exhorting his weary souls to believe in miracles. And so they did.

In the expression of strong faith in their Redeemer, the folks poured out their sorrows in their tears. Their hot salty tears mingled with their sweat from the heat of the broiling sun on zinc roofs without ceilings. Some let their tears flow freely, others concealed them by looking up to Jesus while others just wiped their tears away unashamedly with their white cotton handkerchiefs. Some released the inward pressure of pain and suffering of the hard life into spontaneous shivers and groans that echoed among the believers. This was called getting the spirit or getting into the spirit. People of the Established Churches mocked these ways of worshipping God. But Established Churches had no relevance to the lives of these folk. Believing in Him as their redeemer from suffering and pain helped them carry on under the weight of slavery and its aftermath, of making a life after emancipation without reparations.

5.8 The Grass Yard

The grass yard was a place of intrigue and curiosity for me, when I first lived with Aunt Joyce as a little girl before my father apprehended me. It was located on Sevens Road opposite the Sevens Road side of the marketplace. I could only have observed the activities from a protected perch on Aunt Joyce's verandah. The grass yard was gone by 1955 when I returned to live with Uncle Harry and Auntie. I saw many sights in the grass yard then that I would like to bring back to life, both as a chronicle of a way of life long gone, and as a tribute the capacity of my archival memory to yield so much information about a past I had lived unselfconsciously.

In 1947, the year I remember as the year which adults around me talked about at the time, the grass yard was an open commons that provided the place to park the drays and carts and for the horses, mules, and donkeys to be tied out and fed. On Thursday nights, dozens of horse-drawn drays and carts rolled into town with produce and grass from near and far. Traders from as far away as Sevens, Kellits, Mocho, Porus, and Four Paths brought their produce in market trucks. In the backs of these trucks men, women, children, live pigs, and chickens mingled together with ground provisions on their way to market. Some women higglers also brought their produce in hampers (basket paniers) loaded onto a harness saddled on the backs of donkeys or mules. Most often the women took turns riding the loaded donkey or walked beside it, beating it with a tamarind or guava switch to speed up its canter. The beating was part cruelty to the beast of burden and part expediency to get to market before their produce ripened and spoiled, losing its saleable value. I saw donkeys' legs buckle under the heavy loads and shed tears from the pain of the beatings. At different times in my childhood I felt deep pity for the donkeys and the mules. People called them beasts of burden and seemed to think that they had no feelings.

This open commons had several Poinciana trees whose bloom of bright red flowers provided beauty to the festive Christmas season. The wide leafy crowns shaded animals and people alike from the hot broiling sun, and from the heavy rains during the rainy season. The draught animals were either tied to the tree trunks or to stakes driven into the ground. I would be kept awake by the braying donkeys and ninnying horses. Looking back now it seemed as if the animals were talking to each other out of utter boredom and hunger, which their captive state permitted. Sometimes two animals would pine after each other and finally get away to mate and play. I was particularly fascinated with the tube of dark purple

flesh, which seemed to distend from the belly of the male horses and donkeys. When I stared at it and asked what it was I would be shooed away with the words, “You are getting too ripe for your age.” With age I did figure it all out.

On one corner of the commons along the roadside was a busy blacksmith shop, with a furnace of red-hot coals fanned by manually pumped bellows. The blacksmith and his apprentices made horseshoes, cart wheels, spokes and repaired all of these items too.

One day I remember a big noisy crowd gathered swiftly under one of the trees. Aunt Joyce went to investigate and told the neighbours that a man was found dead under the tree. He would be taken to the almshouse morgue to be buried, because no one claimed to know him. I did not know then what dead meant. Later in life I learned about the significance of the almshouse and what it meant to be buried by the almshouse or to end up in the poorhouse. The May Pen Almshouse was located off the main road at the high point of Railway Hill. When I had to walk from Palmers Cross to May Pen School I would observe the dirty water from the Almshouse running down the roadside gutters. On part of the open commons where the grass yard was located a big new post office building was located. Right across from the post office was May Pen School.

5.9 How Life Started in May Pen

I was enrolled in May Pen All-Age school in 1955 shortly upon arrival in May Pen, after Uncle Harry had picked me up at Uncle Tom’s. I was happy that my prayers for deliverance from my wicked father had been answered and that I was now with Auntie Black (Figure 5.3).

Auntie Black was very special to me then and has remained so all my life. In the family, she followed my father,

Figure 5.3 Uncle Harry & Auntie Black c. 1961



who was the oldest of six siblings, three boys and three girls. At the time of my writing this story she is ninety-three. She reluctantly helps me make sense of what seems the mystery of my mother's life and death

I have fragments of recollection of Auntie being very kind to me as a baby. My first vague recollection of her is of her bathing me and talking to me.

She combed my nappy hair with the gentlest tug of the comb while she talked to me. She then fed me my "din din" (dinner) which must have been served in an enamel plate because I remember banging the spoon on the plate to hear the sound and she kept on saying, "Eat your din din." From the stories I heard from the family gossip, this must have been at a time when my mother was very ill and in the asylum, or she may already have died. The story is told that when she died, I was a babe in arms and was terribly neglected because there was no one to take care of us children. My Aunt May said she was told to come and get me because I was crawling around and eating dirt. It was during the War, when petrol was scarce and travel difficult. She tells the story of coming to rescue me on a bicycle. I have heard about my mother's situation with regards to my father's brutality; and the illness of her own dearly-beloved father's shortly after my birth.

Mr Lampart, the head teacher of May Pen All-Age School, played such a pivotal role in determining my future. A memorable episode occurred in Mr Harry Black's shop where I had to work for my keep after school and on weekends. Mr Lampart would come on some Saturday nights for conversation with Harry and Millie, my aunt. I gathered that he and Millie knew each other in their youth. Only Mr Lampart and Mr Black called my aunt 'Millie', short for Emily. Properly, my aunt goes by Elaine. Sometimes Mr Lampart would pick up typing that Auntie had done for him, or sheet music that she had purchased for the church choir, to which both of them belonged. At the end of their conversation, Mr Lampart would invariably purchase a small tin of Nestle's or Betty condensed milk for Muffet, his baby daughter. She was so beloved she had a pet name – one of the special ways that parents demonstrated their special love. Oh, how I envied his children for the mother and father they had and the cultured life they led.

One Saturday night, on one of these visits to Mr Black's shop, Mr Lampart asked a defining question, within my earshot: "Harry and Millie, what are you doing about Yvonne's education?" I can only imagine that a very intense discussion followed. I knew to obey the commandment to be seen and not heard when adults were talking.

But to hear this question was to my mind the beginning of my liberation through education. Mr Black had always said that the best thing for me in life was to be a helper in his grocery shop. He no doubt believed that he could make me a servant for life, as white people could do during slavery days with a motherless black or brown child. I was totally vulnerable to abuse, and Mr Black felt able to take this kind of liberty with my future because my mother was dead, and my father refused to support me. I heard my father tell Mr Black, in that same shop: "Why are you asking me for support for her? You have her working in the shop!" My father regarded me as his slave child. He was giving Mr Black license to turn me into domestic labour. That was the day on which I disowned my father.

Auntie always supported bright young people of all walks of life in their aspirations to higher education, her nieces and nephews among them. She had already fought the battle for Sonia, my older sister, but she seemed to be losing the fight for me. As a motherless child in this situation I walked the invisible tight rope between Mr Black's expectations for me as a laborer and my Aunt's desire for me to have secondary education and a better station in life.

I have always known that Auntie respected my mother. She told me so many times, when I was a very sad child, to lift my spirits and to encourage me. I learned recently from her of the profound debt of gratitude she owes my mother's father, the Honorable Charles Archibald Reid, for the chances he gave to her in the civil service, from which she retired. I only learned of this in 1996 when I began to investigate the truth of generous things that people had said to me as a child about a Maas Charlie Reid, who was supposed to be my grandfather but about whom no one in my father's family talked. I was never allowed to meet any one from my mother's side of the family. I still have not been able to find out why.

To get me started on secondary education, Auntie seemed to need a hook, a lifeline to save me from servitude. In asking that question of both of them, Mr Lampart had given Auntie and me the lifeline we needed. I worked in Mr Black's shop, and I also worked with the servants at home to compensate for my upkeep, to make peace at home, and to be allowed to go to secondary school. Mr Black had quite a different attitude towards my ten cousins who had their mother and father to protect them and support them. Mr Black must have wanted to avoid the expense of sending another child to secondary school. He therefore decided that I could not live in his house any longer; it was too much for him to have both

my sister and me, so I was sent back to Aunt Joyce. This seemed fair enough, since I started out with her and had had a relationship with her eight years before.

5.10 I Move Back with Aunt Joyce 1957 – 1959

The decision to send me to Aunt Joyce occurred at precisely the time I was admitted to the May Pen Comprehensive School. Aunt Joyce and her husband were reluctant to have me move in with them. Only this time it was she who wanted to make a servant out of me. It was her husband who intervened to give me the twenty-six shillings needed to purchase the textbooks I needed for the first year at the Comprehensive School. I had to lie and steal money from her shop till to get the money for the books for the other years. I could not read a book in her sight. I had to resort to using a flashlight under my covers to study when all had gone to bed. She would have ironing, and cooking for me to do after school and she would have me scrub the floors to three rooms before I got out to walk three miles to the May Pen Comprehensive school. I was often late for school. I was so very tired by the time I arrived in school and embarrassed that I had not been able to do my homework. I would often steal time right after school to do my homework before I took the three-mile trek back home. Often she said in a fit of rage, “You getting to be just like you black mumma (the derogatory form of mother) who thought she was better than me.”

When I first came back to live with Aunt Joyce and Uncle Harold, in Palmers Cross, where they now had their own property, she was still doing her dressmaking trade at home. Uncle Harold would ride his bicycle to his tailor shop in May Pen city, some three miles away. A couple of years later, they built a variety shop, with an adjoining tailor’s shop for Uncle Harold. Being out of the city centre, Aunt Joyce had fewer customers and turned increasingly to being a shopkeeper. However, she still kept her sewing going, and insisted that I be her sewing apprentice during the summer holidays. When I grumbled about other children having the summer to visit friends and family in the country or to go to the seaside, and that all I did was work, she would give me a few swift boxes across my face as she said, “Every woman should have a trade, and one day you will thank me for this.”

I later appreciated the wisdom in her words but to this day I resent her method and motivation for trying to teach me her trade. I was to be a dressmaker and not a scholar. Now I have become both.

"You always have you head in a bloody book," she would say. It seems that Aunt Joyce must have resented the fact that my mother had had a higher level of education than she had. One of the conditions of slavery was to deny the enslaved any access to literacy and schooling. As soon as the missionaries brought formal schooling to the island, black people took to education just as the thirsty takes to water. After emancipation, as many black people as could afford to, sought and obtained an English education, through missionary schools or by going to England. By means of education, black people addressed and refuted the subhuman qualities attributed to their intellect and personhood during slavery. With the power of knowledge that they acquired from the knowledge regimes of the oppressors, black people asserted their intelligence. They could stand shoulder to shoulder with any white or brown person in argument, speech, writing, political action, and in the acquisition of the trades and professions formerly denied them.

Some black people acquired much higher levels of education than many white people in the island. The tables turned once educated proud black people could return the scorn of illiteracy on those who had denied them during slavery. The moment of the truth of equality came when educated and wealthy black people sought and achieved legal equality of status. In time, the less educated white and brown sectors of the population resented the power, pride, dignity, and distinction of the growing sector of educated and relatively wealthy black people. This segment of the population was termed respectable. My mother's family was among the respectable blacks. This change in socio-economic status after the emancipation of slavery, I have come to call the ascendancy of black over white in the island.

The turbulent situation at home made studying a challenge. Aunt Joyce did not value my education. Other children's parents valued secondary educational opportunities and provided them with unencumbered time from chores for them to study for the various exams that we had to pass. At school, to save face and pretend that I was among the loved and cherished, I smiled a lot to cover up my misery and then sobbed in my private moments. Mr Lampart said, one morning, when I flashed my grief-covering smile at him: "Yvonne, you have such a sunny disposition. Your smile is like sunshine, lighting up my day." Little did he or anyone know of the oppressive home life I was experiencing.

By contrast, my cousins's parents saw to their proper schooling and preparation for the common entrance examination that determined one's future prestige. Most parents tried everything within their means to give their children the best schooling that they could. Only

the really poor people's children were left in the All-Age Schools to leave at age fifteen to take their place among the literate labourers. Auntie got my sister into Clarendon College after she passed her third Jamaica Local Examination while she was attending the May Pen All-Age School. I was languishing around the All-Age School rudderless until one day some of my friends said, "Come mek we go tek de tes" (Let's go and take the test). I did not know what the test was for but I went in and wrote the papers. When the test results came out, I placed first.

I learned from reading Ruby King (1979) during this research that this was the test that was given to children who were too old for the Common Entrance Examination but who would be given an overage scholarship. I had missed the opportunity for the Eleven-plus scholarship, as my father did not care about my secondary education. Again, my mother was not around to champion her child. I remember Mr Lampart going to the Ministry of Education to get permission for me to attend the May Pen Comprehensive School Experiment, which was about to take in its last cohort. I was too acutely aware of the difference in my family between my cousins and me. They had responsible and caring parents; I had none. I was also very disturbed by the inexplicable absence of my mother and the shame and resentment I felt towards my father, the inveterate drunkard and abuser that he was. I truly felt the pain of parental neglect and lack of care in my life. To this day I feel the effects of my disturbed childhood.

To say that I was neglected, is in no way to be ungrateful to my aunts. Auntie especially did her best. I recognize that each aunt tried within the constraints of her own life imperatives in taking on the unexpected responsibilities of raising my father's lawful children. Yes, my father had many illegitimate children whom he did not maintain either. This was a very bad time of my life because I was old enough to reason things out. I contemplated suicide many times. When the Rio Minho River was in spate, after a heavy downpour, I thought of jumping over the bridge into the river, on my way to school. This was a common means of suicide.

It was Mr L S C Lampart and the teachers at May Pen who gave me reasons to live. I can still hear the voices of my teachers, especially that of Mr Lampart, principal of the All-Age School and the Comprehensive School Experiment which I attended until I was age sixteen. He had studied in England, whence he returned to give back to his country. Each morning at the school assembly he expounded on a "Thought for the Day." He selected from

the Biblical text as well as from the best of western literature. As an exemplary educator, he showed many hundreds of poor children of illiterate parents their way to a worthwhile life through education.

Mr Lampart and his teaching staff encouraged and inspired us children to believe in ourselves and strive for a pride of place in our society. He often reminded us that we were to be the leaders of tomorrow. His inspiring words and ways comforted and fired my ambitions. His exhortations continue to speak to me when I need to renew my belief in my self-worth and my abilities. These thoughts have carried me through trials and tribulations. I excavate my memory to bring to the reader some of the aphorisms and thoughts that have sustained me through life.

Man! Study to know thyself. Knowledge is power.

Education is to cultivate a sound mind in a sound body.

Silver and gold may vanish away but a good education can never decay.

You are privileged to be given the gift of literacy; read to discover the world's great literatures.

In being given an education, you will be the leaders of tomorrow.

To whom much is given, from them much is expected.

You are expected to use your education for the betterment of society and mankind.

Love truth and justice

To thine ownself be true, and it must follow as the night follows the day, thou can'st not then be false to any man.

Education is an antidote to poverty of the mind, spirit and material existence.

Do not hide your talent under a bushel.

To be an educated person is to be well mannered, having a sense of decorum, deportment and respectability and being able to walk with prince and paupers and not lose your grace.

The pen is mightier than the sword.

He has showed you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and love kindness and to walk humbly with your God? (Micah 6:8)

Lives of great men all remind us that we can live our lives sublime and departing leave behind us footprints on the sands of time.

*The heights of great men reached and kept/Were not attained by sudden flight/But,
they while their companion slept/Were toiling upward through the night.*

God could not be everywhere at the same time, so he made mothers.

I spent five years at school in May Pen: two years at the May Pen All-Age School and three years at the May Pen Comprehensive School Experiment. This time was highly important for me. I matured in my consciousness, and was old enough to begin to assert my independence and to try out different ways of being. Here I take time to paint a picture of schooling for me, in that significant time and place; and look back at how I navigated my way to independence.

5.11 School Layout of the All-Age School

The school compound was located on Sevens Road opposite the market. The All-Age school was housed in three buildings, plus buildings for the housecraft centre, the soup kitchen and the manual training center. In a far corner of the school compound were the pit latrines with boy's and girl's stalls on opposite sides back to back. Close to the rundown school garden was a concrete water fountain, with four or five taps along two rows. A girl had to wrap her skirt tail and tuck it between her thighs while she bent her head to drink at the fountain or else the boys or the wind would carry it over her head. One day I witnessed a horrible fight at the fountain, when some boys attacked Enid Johnson, the prized girl warrior, and tried to pull her skirt over her head. They succeeded but in swift fashion Enid landed a blow to the head of one unsuspecting 'wooligan' with the sharp edge of her wooden pencil box. He let out a scream and held his head forward from which blood flowed. A crowd gathered around. A teacher took him to the doctor nearby and he received several stitches. Revenge was brought to Enid on the last day of school, when in a "last day fight" some children brought bottles, sticks and stones to erupt in a big fight if a vendetta were owed, or at the least provocation. Enid was prepared, and put up a memorable defence with her teeth, fists, and trusty pencil box.

Lower division comprised A, B, and C classes. The zinc-roofed oblong building had classrooms that were open on the two long sides. The teachers' desks and a movable blackboard on easels divided the classes. The solid wall on either end of the long oblong building had a blackboard permanently mounted on each wall. Middle Division comprised Standards 1, 2, and 3. The building and layout were similar to the lower division.

Upper Division comprised Standards 4, 5, and 6, a classroom for students taking the 3rd Jamaica local examination, appointed with cupboards for storing school supplies, and the principal's office. The building was enclosed with doors and windows having locks and keys. Break-ins were a problem. The classroom spaces within the building were for the most part open, and divided by teachers' desks and black board and easels similar to the lower and middle divisions. The housecraft building and the manual training center had lock and keys on the door. Nonetheless, these rooms were frequently broken into.

Private lessons for the Jamaica Local Examinations were held in the upper division building, and given outside the regular school program. There were syllabuses for 1st, 2nd and 3rd years. Students who passed the 3rd Jamaica local could start teaching with the title of 'pupil teacher'. The school rated highly for the number of passes in these exams. However good this level of education was, it was not seen as a lever of social mobility for the working class children who attended, but only intended as a means of increasing the efficiency of prospective farm and domestic labour.

It was not unusual for parents of children who passed the Jamaica locals, to sacrifice to send them to grammar school for at least two years to prepare for the Cambridge 'O' and 'A' levels. Attendance at a grammar school and obtaining the requisite Cambridge 'O' and 'A' levels offered some measure of economic advancement by providing entrance to civil service jobs and entry to higher Education. Auntie sacrificed to send my sister Sonia to Clarendon College after she had passed the third Jamaica local examinations at the May Pen All-Age School. There was no provision made in the family for my secondary education. I was passed the age for common entrance, and so I was

Figure 5.4 Yvonne, Education Week 1958



to remain in the All-Age School until I graduated. It was explicit policy that those schools prepared literate labourers: the girls would normally become servants, and the boys would become the yard-boys. My fate would have been to become a domestic servant, had not Mr Lampart intervened, and help to place me among the last cohort of the Comprehensive School Experiment. I felt ready (Figure 5.4).

5.12 The Comprehensive School Experiment

In 1954, the newly formed Ministry of Education, in its attempt to increase the availability of secondary education, cheaply, amended the code of regulations to permit the experimentation of teaching secondary subjects in All-Age Schools. Three sites were selected – Kingston Senior School, and Central Branch School in Kingston, and May Pen School in Clarendon. The May Pen experiment took in three cohorts – 1955, '56, and '57. Here children took the first three years of a five-year grammar school program. The headmaster of the All-Age school was also responsible for the Comprehensive School. Selected teachers, usually those pursuing higher education, from the All-Age school taught the subjects using the same textbooks that were used in the grammar schools. Children from both schools shared in the same morning devotions, cultural, social, and athletic events. The Comprehensive School Experiment became the model for the Junior Secondary Schools, which proliferated in the island during the 1960s.

The May Pen Comprehensive School Experiment was housed in a two-room prefabricated structure made of heavy-gauge zinc mounted on a concrete base. I remember the heat in the all-zinc structure was like the heat in a convection oven. We sometimes had to go outside to have classes under a tree to be relieved of the searing temperature. The school was located in the eastern corner of the All-Age School compound, close to the Methodist Church and close to Sevens Road. We could hear the traffic of the sugarcane trucks carrying canes along Sevens Road to the Sevens Sugar Estate mills, during crop time. The majority of children who attended May Pen All-Age School lived in the Sevens Sugar Estate settlement. This meant that their parents either worked on the sugar estate or in the cane pieces adjoining the sugar mills. The children at the Comprehensive School sometimes reaped the benefits of canes, which the 'wooligans' from the All-Age School pulled from the passing trucks. The Comprehensive School children would not be seen pulling canes from a passing truck – we were expected to behave respectably.

This experiment offered the first three years of grammar school, the equivalent to 1st, 2nd and 3rd forms in the grammar school. The May Pen Comprehensive School was the feeder to Clarendon College. Students who attended did not have to pay school fees, as did their counterparts in the grammar school. My recollection of the curricula of both the All-Age and Comprehensive Schools will show the difference in knowledge imparted in each school. Of further note is the relatively small number of children being given opportunity for advancement through education.

5.13 Curricula of the All-Age School

The curricula for the All-Age-Schools were designed to make literate labourers and domestic servants. The following subjects were taught: English grammar and composition; Reading; Writing; Spelling; Recitation and choral speaking; Scripture; Arithmetic or sums, mental arithmetic; General Knowledge; Manual Training (Drawing and Carpentry); School Garden; Arts and Craft (potato printing, drawing, sisal weaving); Needlecraft (embroidery and sewing). There were three subjects that have left vivid memories: Singing, Geography, and History. Singing of rounds, solos, quartets, choir with base, tenor, alto and soprano to music of the piano or from the “doh rah me fah so lah teh doh” of the teacher’s voice. In Geography, we drew maps showing the wind systems of the world, the physical geography of the world, waterways, lakes, rivers, and mountain ranges. Our maps also showed the cash crops of Empire such as rubber, tea, coffee, cattle, wheat, sugar, cotton, and lumber. We made beautiful papier-mache relief maps of the world, and Jamaica and painted in the mountains, valley, lakes, and waterways. We were also taught some civics, hygiene, and of course, the history of the Empire.

I was always curious about the history that the students in the Third Jamaica Local private classes learned. I would hang around the big boys and big girls while they were studying, to learn what they were learning, in the hope that one day I too would take the third Jamaica Local examination. I did overhear my sister and her peers studying lots of history and literature of Empire. In history they studied aloud the Magna Carta; the Middle Passage and the wind systems of the world; the trade winds and the doldrums; the British seadogs: Nelson, Raleigh, Hawkins, Morgan; the Spanish Armada; the abolitionists: Clarkson, Wilberforce, and Buxton. Important among the calculations they learned of were longitude, latitude and Greenwich Mean Time, and how ships travelled around the globe.

In literature, they talked a lot about imagery in poetry, Jane Austen's Pride And Prejudice, Thomas Hardy's novel Far From The Madding Crowd, Shakespeare's Measure For Measure, the Taming of the Shrew, and As You Like It.

5.14 Curricula of the Comprehensive School

The curricula of the Comprehensive School were based on the first three years of the grammar school. A grammar school education prepared us for civil service and clerical jobs after 'O' levels. After 'A' levels we could enter university to study for degrees in arts, science, or the professions such as in law and medicine. When we entered high school we were expected to pick up at form four and be ready to take our Cambridge examinations at the end of form five. Those who could afford it would stay for two additional years for sixth form, at the end of which we would write the Cambridge Advance level in various subjects. The curriculum was comprised of the following subjects:

Bible Knowledge was taught by Mrs McLean who was herself studying this subject at an advanced level through some form of extra mural studies or external university such as Cambridge or London. I remember learning about the role of the prophets *Amos*, *Micah*, *Hosea*, *Isaiah*, and *Jeremiah* in a way that was different from learning about them in church and Sunday school. The study of the prophets in school had a resonant familiarity. Some children heard their folk reading the words of the prophets, and discussing the meaning of the prophecies in their life. The folk drew on the books of the prophets and the *Psalms* to inspire them and guide their way, especially in times of great distress. The twenty third Psalms, which begins, "The lord is my shepherd I shall not want...", is a favourite among the folk and gentry alike.

In this curriculum, we learned about the Maccabees and the books of the Apocrypha. We were introduced to the Hellenistic influences on the Bible. We had to study the Acts of the Apostles in great detail. Through the study of St Paul's various letters to the apostles we were taught about the Church as the Body of Christ, and the right behaviour of men and women in that church. Without it being said directly, we understood that we were being given ethical principles by which to live.

Mathematics was mostly algebra and geometry with Mrs Harrison. This lady ran herself ragged drumming in theorems and proofs (QED), parallelograms, rhomboids and triangles, cylinders, squares, angles. Our pencils were never sharp enough to draw the angles.

and arcs that our protractors had to measure with scientific precision. Solving simple equations and quadratic equations really set apart those who were and were not arithmetically acute. I was definitely among the less favoured here.

It is interesting now to realize that I was using geometrical knowledge in dressmaking, but did not know it then. In those days a dressmaker drew her own patterns. All of the shapes we studied in geometry were embedded in the drawings. The properties of the circle were inherent in the drawings of necklines, armholes and in circular skirts. Angles, perpendicular and parallel lines were all part of designing a garment. In geometry the examples we used were about bridges, steeples, and cardinal points – all to do with the masculine world of conquest and expansion.

Latin was with Mr Lampart and then Mr Griffiths, the only other male teacher I remember at May Pen, apart from Mr Brown, the woodwork teacher who was there for a short time. Oh, Latin! This was the dead language that we had to learn. We were made to believe that all learned and erudite people know Latin because it was the root of the Romance languages such as Spanish and French. Declensions of nouns, which were said to have many cases such as ablative, dative, nominative, numerative, accusative and genitive all going with certain prepositions, affixes, and suffixes. We learned to conjugate regular and irregular verbs. The construction of the proper Latin sentences with all the appropriate parts of speech was of mathematical precision. And there was some attribute called the subjunctive mood, which I do not remember what now. It was vital to know the masculine, feminine, and neutral forms of nouns and pronouns. The test of mastery of all this linguistic knowledge of Latin came when we had to translate the unseen passages from the *Odyssey* or the *Aeneid*, or from the famous accounts of the Trojan or Gallic wars. There were chariots and horses decorated with magnificent regalia, celebrated heroes, and brave soldiers. The names, invariably of men, ended in ‘-us’; Flaccus, Brutus, Augustus, Aurelius.

Spanish with Mrs Lampart was easy compared with Latin. We loved Spanish because the grammar seemed straightforward. In contrast to Latin it was a living language spoken by our neighbours just ninety miles south. Furthermore, basic Spanish lessons were published daily in one of the newspapers. I believe it was the Star because the pages were smaller than the broad sheet of The Daily Gleaner. We made a scrapbook of these lessons to complement our red and green covered textbook and class drills. We even tuned in to Radio Havana and listened to the trilling ‘Rs’ which we imitated for each other’s amusement.

Jamaica is only ninety miles south of Cuba and their radio waves came in very easily. We listened for the perfect Spanish phraseology of speech. We had our Spanish orals to prepare for, in which this and the use of appropriate idiomatic expressions were key. Now I think of it, we must have been hearing important news about the political life in Cuba, but Jamaica being anti-communist, we must have learned not to try to make sense of what was going on in Cuba in the 1950s.

English grammar and literature was with Miss Reid, Miss Broomfield, and Miss Miller at different times throughout the three years. All these teachers also taught in the All-Age School. Miss Reid spoke Queen's English perfectly, but without the English accent or pretensions. She drilled us in every grammatical rule in sentence structures, punctuation, vocabulary – especially antonyms and synonyms – spelling, and figures of speech. We practiced summarizing passages of varying complexities to one quarter or one-third their original length. Dictation of poetry and prose tested our spelling and comprehension. Miss Reid made known to us that she was already preparing us for the Cambridge examinations, which were some years away. Practice makes perfect was her adage when she sensed that we were tired of the drills. Miss Reid abhorred verbosity and sloppy expression.

We were introduced to English drama. Shakespeare, the greatest playwright was the model of all plays. Shakespeare's language was so difficult for us; we hated the great effort that we had to put out to understand that far-off world. Our deliverance came when we found a book, in the May Pen Public Library, which was called Lamb's Tales from Shakespeare. The author had written the plays in plain prose language. We were able to construct the story line as we studied the plays. The tests were based on being given certain passages that we had to memorize from the plays and asked to say which character spoke those lines and under what circumstances. Further, we had to expound on the meaning. I remember studying The Merchant of Venice. We had to memorize "The quality of mercy" speech from this play, and Lady Macbeth's speech from Macbeth. We had to learn certain of Shakespeare's sonnets by heart and parsed for all the conventions of the form. We studied The Rivals by Brindsley Sheridan. In this play we revelled in the idea of Malapropisms, the closest thing to 'speeky-spokey' in which our unschooled folk tried to speak Standard English. We could identify with the ridicule that Mrs Malaprop received in the play, the same kind of ridicule that folk who could not master the standard English language nor cared to, received from the literate. In addition to the study of English drama we studied poems by

Keats, Byron, and Milton. A group of us sat for days under the Bourganvillea bush and memorized all sixteen stanzas of the Destruction of Senacharib by Lord Byron, just for the fun of poetry and choral speaking. As far as prose went, I can only remember George Eliot's novel, Silas Marner.

Around this time, in the mid 50s, a new public library was built to serve the city of May Pen. It was located close to the school in the direction where I walked to get home to Palmers Cross. I often stopped to borrow a book, and stole a secluded read at a special spot by the railroad tracks, before I got home to the work that awaited me. Most of us signed up for membership in the library, and took great pride in being frequent borrowers. Through the library we discovered Hardy Boys and Nancy Drew young adult fiction. We enjoyed books by Enid Blyton and many more authors whom I now forget. The boys read many books about the explorers and talked with great excitement about the adventures of such men as Amerigo Vespucci, Pizzaro, John Hawkins, and Admiral Nelson. We girls read biographies of Florence Nightingale and Joan of Arc.

Stories about swashbucklers and buccaneers and their adventures in Port Royal, Jamaica, the world's wickedest city in the seventeenth century fascinated us, for reasons we did not understand then. After reading entries on Panama, Port Royal, and Piracy in the Encyclopedia of Jamaican Heritage by Olive Senior, I now understand that Port Royal was the strategic location from which the British plundered and disposed of the booty robbed from Spanish fleets and from settlements in the Americas and Caribbean Sea. From here the booty was shipped to England. Henry Morgan was the most famous buccaneer of the time, notorious for sacking Panama City in 1671. When the English state ceased licensing privateers such as Henry Morgan to carry out their piracy, Morgan was knighted and given the Lieutenant Governor position in Jamaica. In 1766 Jamaica was made a free port and the centre for trade with the Spanish American Colonies. Kingston replaced Port Royal after the 1692 earthquake, which sent ninety percent of the city under the ocean. The folk used to say that God sent the earthquake and massive tidal waves of that year to destroy the city and to vanquish sinners. Nine tenths of Port Royal was lost forever. In recent times, in fact since the fifties, marine archeologists have been excavating the area and retrieving artifacts.

I was to borrow and read four books from the public library that influenced me profoundly. The first one was called Freedom From Fear, the author of which I do not remember. Through reading that book I came to understand how much my life was governed

by fear and what I could do to relieve myself of fear to release my potential. Part of the book dealt with fear and dreams. The kind of fear I experienced manifested itself in dreams in which I found myself naked in public places such as schools, churches and on the street. Another nightmare I had was that all my teeth would fall out mysteriously just before I was to speak, or that I had taken flight so high that I was afraid of being lost in the sky or breaking into pieces when I landed. A recurring dream about crossing muddy waters and being caught in quicksand was particularly terrifying. So was a dream about bulls chasing me up hill, or being entwined by giant lizards. Reading Freedom From Fear helped me understand how I could interpret my dreams to figure out what was causing the fears. Afterwards I experienced a distinct shift of consciousness, in which I began to experiment with my autonomy, and acting as my own person. The other three books were by Dale Carnegie: Public Speaking, Debating, and How to Win Friends and Influence People.

Then was born my love of reading to brood about myself and expand my world. Through reading, I created a rich imaginative world to carry me through the hardships. Even while I did the chores I could imagine a better life. The life of the mind has always been important to me ever since I could read. I spent so much time alone that I would have gone quite mad if I could not escape through reading and thinking. I wish only that I had understood the value of writing; I would have kept a diary.

Biology with Mrs Murray introduced us to the perfect order of living things. Botany was not nearly as interesting as topics of zoology. We learned about vertebrates and invertebrates, skeletal systems, systems of locomotion in vertebrates and invertebrates. The various adaptations of feathers and fins to aid locomotion of birds and fish through air and water respectively fascinate me to this day. We marvelled at the anatomy and physiology of the human body and various systems such as the circulatory and reproductive systems. It was at this time I discovered in Auntie's home medical encyclopedia and saw the baby coiled up in its mother's body. I manipulated the colourful transparent overlays so often that they began to fall out of the book. We found a green book in the May Pen public library that we called Wyeth's Biology for short and I practically devoured its contents. This book and our own initiative sparked by our interest in biology increased our knowledge of our bodies far beyond what was taught in class. We learned biology solely from texts, drawings, and pictures. We had no laboratories, not even a hand lens. Mrs Murray copied the diagrams from the books to the blackboard and labelled them as she taught us the anatomy and

physiology of each plant or animal. We took notes, or copied Mrs Murray's own copy of the text on the board.

Cookery with Mrs Murray was interesting because she was taking an in-service education course in Kingston to upgrade her teaching certificate, and she taught us many English dishes such as white sauces, cream soups and casseroles, and one-pot dishes she was learning in her course. We never cooked these things at home. We only cooked them for exams just as Mrs Murray had to do. I did make cakes at home with Auntie Black, so the information on cake-making reinforced what Auntie Black taught me. Most of the children with whom I went to the All-Age and Comprehensive School Experiment did not have the type of range to bake, in the ways that we were taught. In 4-H club we were taught how to bake a cake in a Dutch pot with coals at the bottom and on a zinc sheet on top – the cake tin was set in the pot sandwiched between the two sources of heat. Later, we learned to construct a homemade oven from a discarded coconut oil tin and wires. This oven had a door and a shelf on which to place the cake tins. The oven itself was placed on a coal pot of heated coals. I made one of these ovens and baked cakes for Aunt Joyce who did not have a range as Auntie did.

Needlework and Sewing with Miss Kentish was a bore for me. Beside the fact that Miss Kentish could not sew, she had a vitriolic tongue and the most acid disposition. She must have thoroughly disliked children. I was already able to construct garments by the time I was thirteen years old, and could teach sewing better than Miss Kentish could. I was not at all interested in learning to patch and darn and to make samples. The lady could not even make a decent hand-sewn buttonhole. I had no respect whatsoever for her teaching skills. She detested me as much as I detested her. Her class was on Friday afternoons and I always did my work quickly and helped my friends so that we could abscond at recess time to go to the market, a much more interesting place than Miss Kentish's class.

Manual Training was for boys only. The manual training centre had board and tools such as planes, saws, and mitre boxes. Mr Linton Brown left shortly, and the boys had the time free when we girls had to go to sewing classes on Fridays. They did not miss much in terms of the curriculum at Clarendon College because woodwork was not one of the subjects there. The boys had to catch up on Agricultural Science when they went to Clarendon College.

I do not remember learning much general history at the Comprehensive School. I just remember Miss Broomfield engaging us with General Knowledge about what was happening in the island and beyond. I remember us studying the progress of the West Indies Federation through daily reading of The Daily Gleaner. She read the published speeches about the West Indies Federation. Miss Broomfield was passionate about good speech and excited about the prospect of a West Indies Federation.

Athletic and Sports Programs: Both schools came together in athletics and sports. We belonged to the same houses. The big boys played Cricket. Volleyball was played by co-ed teams or by the big boys alone. Mr Lampart took an active part here after school. I can still see him in his white shorts and tennis shoes. An official coach named Mr Anderson (affectionately called Mr Andy), taught Track and Field, including such sports as pole vault, discus, relays, the mile race, 400, and 800 yards. I was mainly a spectator in the athletics and sports program. I remember a lone Indian boy, named Herman Williams, who attended May Pen All-Age School, and was the best runner. He seemed to sail around the track as if he had no body weight. He won all the races one year. He got a lot of respect for his athletic ability. Besides the colourful parade onto the sports ground under our house banner, part of the fun of sports day was for girls to dress up in short shorts and go parading around the sports field to be seen. Boys whistled at the girls and flirted and teased them. At the end of the sports day after all the prizes were awarded, the houses lined up again in winning order and marched out of the sports grounds.

Children's Free Play: Girl children skipped individually and in groups. When we skipped in groups we took turns to the chant of "room for rent; inquire within; when you run out I run in." We played segregated and co-ed ring games and square danced. Boys played marbles and 'tah' (cashew nuts). Girls entertained with colorful hoola-hoops. Boys rode the seesaw. Girls bounced rubber balls through a hoop made by holding up their 'skirt tails' with their left, and bouncing the ball continuously while passing it in and out intricately and creatively through the hoop. Onlookers cheered and sang the tune of "1, 2, 3, 4, O'Leary, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, post man pass." The single ball changed to another player when the ball failed to go through the hoop and stopped bouncing. Girls invented games such as "Mother Hen and her Chicks" to ward off the hawks. I remember that girls played in multi-aged groups. Young girls looked up to older girls who would sometimes be like sisters. I

had the affection and care of several older girls who protected me from those who picked on short people. Cultural events provided fun and joy where the formal curriculum did not.

Cultural Events: There were many cultural events, in which our teachers tried to engage us. We were consciously being groomed to appreciate culture beyond the mundane daily grind. The influence of the missionaries and agriculture were foundational to our cultural activities.

School choirs: Mr Lampart and several female teachers coached choirs. Just about every class had a choir. I especially remember Mr Lampart teaching us a Latin song entitled "Gaudeamus igitur" which translates as "Let us now in youth rejoice, none can wrongly blame us." I loved this song and wish that I could now recall the words. Christmas time came alive with various carols and nativity plays. The words to "Good King Wenceslas" required some imagination to make meaning of the words such as, "There the snow laid round about, deep and crisp and even." There was no equivalent scene in tropical Jamaica where we had the rainy season and the dry, and where the temperature was ninety-nine degrees Fahrenheit most of the year. The northeast trade wind blows over the island from November to February when Jamaicans swear that it is cool, with just a few degrees drop in the temperature. Equally strange was singing, "The holly and the ivy when they are both full grown, of all the trees in the woods the holly bears the crown." Even stranger was the song, "I dream of Jeannie with the light brown hair borne like a zephyr on a summer's air." The teachers were doing their job of teaching us English culture to the best of their abilities, if much, even most, of it did not make sense. We children learned everything eagerly because we were told that we were being cultured. Of course we wanted to be cultured. We were striving for the British polish. After all, at that time we were citizens of Great Britain and Colonies.

Daily religious observances: Throughout the school day children had to go through several religious observances. We began the school day with morning devotions comprising a hymn such as "All things bright and beautiful," followed by a scripture reading, often done by a senior student or a teacher. Afterwards the principal would make a commentary complemented by a thought for the day or a 'golden text' from the scripture reading. Prayers followed this. The whole division said grace before dismissal for lunch. I remember the grace: "For health and strength and daily food we give thee thanks O Lord." A song such as: "The day thou gavest Lord is ended" ended the day. The ritual ringing of a

large copper-coloured bell marked all these moments in the day. A big boy usually had the important task of ringing the bell on time.

Inter-school visitations became a regular annual event. For example, a group of us visited Mr Griffith's School when he set up his school for which he was appointed head teacher when he left May Pen. If my memory serves me right, the first education week in Jamaica was held in 1958. On that occasion a group of us from the Comprehensive School Experiment went to visit the Mocho All-Age School north of May Pen up in the mountains. This visit was memorable because I think it was the first official education week announced with great fanfare by the Honorable Edwin Allen, then minister of education. I came into my own as an effective speaker and leader during this trip. This visit gave me a significant view of myself, as I represented the Comprehensive School on this visit. The teachers at Mocho complimented me on my spoken English. They thought me a very courteous child. I enjoyed the classroom displays and the social activities and food.

School concerts took place sometimes, especially at Christmas and at the Comprehensive School graduations. I remember the dance Mr Lampart choreographed to the tune of "Lavender Blue" for my Comprehensive Graduation ceremony, and I was the valedictorian. We prepared and sang "Gaudeamus igitur" in Latin for the occasion. I still remember the great honour and the equally great expectations of me. Mr Lampart had this way of making memorable rituals and ceremonies out of life in school.

House competitions were a regular feature of school life. We had house captains and secretaries and competed in sports, clubs, and schoolwork. The house bore the names of prominent wealthy white and brown persons such as Sharp House, named for the owner of the Citrus Company in May Pen, and Terrier a wealthy landowner. The house system brought children of different age groups, talents, and interests together.

School outings were something special. Most of us did not have parents or guardians able to take us on outings. Mr Lampart rented a market truck and took a truck full of us to a trade fair in Kingston, around 1959. I believe American manufacturers and exporters put this fair on. The animation of the little Pillsbury flour mascot intrigued me. We stood transfixed watching the operation of machines and assembly line techniques of the industrial mass production of bottled and canned goods. The Lanaman's Confectionary put on a fine demonstration of candy-making that I remember to this day. Sweeties (candy) were made into an art form. We kids would drool as we stared at the beautiful coloured red, pink

and green sweeties wrapped in cellophane paper stored in very large glass jars. Some were flavoured with mint and ginger, and some were made from molasses. These sweeties were sold by the dozen. We had very little pocket money and could not afford to treat ourselves to any of these sweeties. We bought them later when we saw them in shops in May Pen.

4-H Clubs were introduced into the island from the United States and took root in rural farming areas. The four Hs represented the head, heart, hand, and health. 4-H members had to apply the pledge as a way of life. We repeated the pledge at every meeting.

*I pledge
My head to clearer thinking
My heart to greater loyalty
My hands to larger service and
My health to better living
For my club, my community, my country and my world.*

Once per year all active clubs in the whole island assembled for a week of competition at the All-Island 4-H Show, held at the Denbigh Agricultural Show Grounds. During the year, members practised various farm skills such as raising small animals such as pigs, chickens, goats, and rabbits. Some even raised calves and were taught to judge cattle. As farmers-to-be, male members had to be able to identify various grasses and animal feeds. Those who specialized in crops had to know the qualities of soils and the art and science of cultivation. The female members specialized in various cooking, sewing and embroidery projects. The schools that could afford the canning jars bottled mangoes for the show only. Often they were stored to be shown the next year. I never saw anyone eat any of these canned fruits but we were taught how to can.

I won a prize the summer before I started Clarendon College for cooking fricassee rabbit. This fame earned me the election by acclamation to be the captain for the Clarendon College 4-H Club team in 1960 Denbigh Show. I had only been at Clarendon College for six months but my reputation as a leader had preceded me. Mrs Stuart who was our examiner for Cookery was very impressed with me and sang my praises. She also saw to it that four of us were promoted to 5th form thus skipping 4th form, which was the place for us after the three years at the Comprehensive School Experiment. I did not seek the honor of being captain. I was just trying to find a place in a school, which I should have entered three years earlier, had things gone as they should, had I had parents who were charting my future. I was frankly uncomfortable in the place where everyone seemed to know that they belonged. My

older sister Sonia had earned a place as a brain in biology and chemistry, and everyone knew she was on her way to becoming one of the future surgeons in the island. She loved dissections in biology and titration in chemistry. I lived in her shadow. I was always Sonia's little sister.

5.15 Child Welfare

Teachers were expected to act *in loco parentis* to the children in their charge. For many children, such as myself, schools were homeplaces. Health, nutrition and hygiene were uppermost. The public health nurses visited regularly to give vaccinations especially during the years of polio. She would also talk about personal hygiene especially about germs and contagious diseases. We were encouraged to wash our hands before meals and to keep our nails clean. The school dentist had scheduled visits every Wednesday to extract rotten teeth. The United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) augmented the local government child welfare programs. From the FAO and other agencies in the United States came powdered milk, cheese, butter, and food yeast.

A soup kitchen was located right beside the housecraft centre and two cooks were employed to prepare hot lunches and to mix the big vat of powdered milk. A senior girl collected lunch money every morning and turned it in to the teacher in charge. This money was used to purchase produce from the market near by. I remember a large store of milk powder, butter and food yeast that were sent to the schools as part of the school-feeding program. Some parents contributed ground provisions while other contributed firewood. I did not eat from the soup kitchen because I went home for lunch for the first two years when I lived with Auntie Black. The next three years when I lived with Aunt Joyce she gave me lunch money. With my lunch money I bought bullah and pear and Canada Dry aerated water, when avocado pear was in season. The more stylish thing to do was to go to Uncle Sam's Ice Cream Parlour and buy cocoa bread and patties and banana splits with lots of chocolate sauce. Those of us who could afford to buy lunch were in an enviable position. School Uniforms: We wore navy blue tunics and white blouses while the boys wore khaki pants and shirt. There were the long pants for the boys over twelve and the short pants for the boys under. Those who did not have uniforms wore what they had.

School supplies consisted of Free Issue exercise books with the Queen's face on the front. The times table and table of weights and measures were printed on the back cover.

They were available in both single- and double-lined. These were provided to all children, along with slates, yellow lead pencils with a rubber one end, indelible pencils, and crayons. The Caribbean Readers and workbooks in grammar and sums were available to be used and left at school. Other supplies included chalk, white and colored, blackboard rulers and compass, Parker's and Quink Ink in blue and red. There was a supply of pens with the cursed G nibs for cursive writing. Only the teachers or those children whose parents were well off enough owned fountain pens with rubber bladders. Auntie had many, so I would sneak one from time to time to show off at school.

Arts and craft supplies consisted of plaster of Paris, and oil paint for making paper covers for bookbinding, which the seniors did. Newsprint was used for writing out songs and poems for the whole class to work from. With the plaster of Paris children designed and made wall hangings, which they took home. Irish potatoes cut in half and dipped into mixed paints made prints on calico cloth or on paper. The paper was used to wrap book covers when dry. The cloths were used to make garments or tablecloths.

The two-sided blackboard on easel and on wheels doubled as classroom divider. Each teacher wrote on the side facing her class. On occasion teachers in adjoining classes shared singing class and agreed to use both sides to write out the words and sometimes the notes to songs. They agreed to spin the other side by just tipping the lower end of the board and it would just spin around. The writing on the first side would appear upside down until it was spun around when the reading and writing had to continue.

The school bell was a regular feature of school. There was one for each division. A senior boy was assigned the task of ringing the bell for the start of school, for morning recess, lunch time, afternoon recess and dismissal at the end of the day.

The school furniture for the All-Age School consisted of long benches and desks, which seated 10 to 12 kids in the lower grades, depending on the size of the child. The upper division had an attached desk and bench combination that seated three or four depending on the size of the child. There were inkwells spaced along the topmost ridge of the desk, which sloped slightly from this ledge. There was a shelf under the desks for books and slates. Kids at the Comprehensive School had individual desks. These desktops opened into a space to store books. We could put padlocks on these desks, and had stacking chairs to go with them. We thought it was something special to have our own desks. The inkwell was still built into

the desk, but I believe ballpoint pens were coming into vogue then. Most of us had bought the popular Sheaffer or Parker fountain pen with the rubber bladder.

In listing these subjects and activities, I have tried to chronicle what was taught and learned, and what life was like, in schools of the time. In excavating the details of my schooling I provide a partial record of schooling towards the end of empire and in the current that was moving towards independence and the transformation of education in the island. The comprehensive school experiment of which I was a part provided the model for mass junior secondary education in the sixties.

I had a reasonably good school life at both May Pen All-Age and May Pen Comprehensive School between 1955 and 1959. I matured and took charge of my life and decided that life was going to be what I made it. My teachers held me in high esteem. They showed me that I had talents that I should develop and share to make this place better for my having passed this way once. I learned much and passed my exams at the end of my Comprehensive program and was promoted to go to Clarendon College for January 1960. Yet when my achievement should have been a time of rejoicing, things took a bad turn at home. Still, I longed for my mother. Where was my mother?

CHAPTER VI CLARENDON COLLEGE, CHAPELTON January 1960 - July 1961

6.1 The First Morning

In January 1960 my dream to attend Clarendon College in Chapelton came true. I was happy. Certainly I would have liked to attend a more prestigious high school, such as St Andrew's or St Hugh's, but this was never to be. Passing the Eleven Plus examination with the requisite high scores gave students a choice of attending a prestigious high school. Being a motherless child having a neglectful father, and living in unstable and transient home environments, I had no-one to see to it that I prepared for this exam. Mr Lampart, my beloved head teacher at the May Pen All-Age School, had given me a chance to sit for the over-age scholarship. As a result, I earned a place at the May Pen Comprehensive School Experiment to take the first three years of high school without paying any school fees.

As part of responsible self-government, access to secondary education for a greater number of the mass population was a priority. The three comprehensive schools piloted the reform in secondary education for the masses in the fifties and onwards. This opportunity changed the course of my life for the good, and I am eternally grateful to Mr Lampart for rescuing me in time. For the whole three years that I spent there I thought of myself as a Clarendon College student-in-waiting.

On that opening morning, I need pretend no longer, I was an authentic Clarendon College student. I left behind the navy blue, pleated tunic and white blouse uniform of the All-Age School to which the comprehensive school was attached, and donned the sky-blue, pleated tobralco tunic, and white poplin blouse which Auntie and I had made. Black leather pointed-toe Bata shoes and navy-blue nylon stretch-socks complemented these. In those days to wear nylon stretch socks meant that you were wearing the latest in fashion. I thought I was dressed even more smartly than my sister Sonia who was known for her elegance. My hair would have been hot-combed and brushed high up into a plaited ponytail and held in place, by a ring comb. The brand new navy wool flat beret would have been moulded over the ponytail and held in place, on either side with curling pins. In time, the flat plate of a beret would be broken in, to fit the shape of the heads of bulky kinky hair rather than the straight flat hair they were designed for. I joined the sea of billowing sky blue tunics and stiff khaki that symbolized the sartorial splendour of the College. Clarendon College (CC for

short) – I fitted right in! I had rehearsed all the mannerisms and affected speech that were characteristic of the CC students whom I knew and wanted to be like, including my sister.

My sister was equally well decked out, except I remember her swollen ankles. Her congenital heart problem caused intermittent bouts of serious heart palpitations that left her white as a sheet and sometimes caused her ankles to swell. Auntie Black would keep a constant supply of Oxo beef soup cubes to make an instant drink to restore her colour after one of these crises. When Sonia ran away from our father's house and found her way to Aunt Joyce, she was badly in need of medical care. Auntie took Sonia from Aunt Joyce to get her proper doctor's care, and to rescue her from Aunt Joyce's cruelties. In other words my sister and I changed places. The doctor started her on a course of big green pills. We emptied the bottle and counted one hundred and forty-four of them. When I was forced to join them that Christmas holiday in 1959, I could see that Auntie loved and adored Sonia. They both delighted in talking about public affairs and about the details of her courses of study. Sonia was headed to the final year of sixth form, at the end of which she would take her General Certificate of Education Advanced Level in zoology, botany, and chemistry – “zoobotchem” as the combination of subjects was known. Students who were in the science stream enjoyed much respect and veneration, and were generally considered to be “brains.” Sonia had always lived up to that expectation, to the envy of my brother and me. She was also good at role-playing her career as future doctor. I do not know where she got a stethoscope, but she always wore one around her neck.

The white lab coats, stained and holed with spilled reagents gave us the aura of scientists at work. Mr Gunter's business-like procurement and setting out of specimens – plant and animal cells, live cockroaches, frogs and guinea pigs, for observation under the microscope or for dissection under the bell jar – added to the mystique of the sciences. The big scientific words of anatomy and physiology and the long chemical formulae of organic chemistry were enough to intimidate the insecure or to attract the gutsy and curious.

On that bright sunny cool morning in January, Sonia and I had to be ready to join the throng of students, at Fernleigh Avenue and Main Street, walking downhill to the May Pen Train Station. At seven o'clock we caught the Kalamazoo – a two-coach train that was attached to the sugarcane cars – to take us some twelve miles away to Chapelton.

The city of Chapelton in the north used to be the commercial capital, before the parish of Vere, to the south, was amalgamated to form the parish of Clarendon. According to

Olive Senior in her Encyclopedia of Jamaican Heritage the parish of Clarendon came into being during the seventeenth century, when Charles II awarded land grants to former Commonwealth troops who established sugar estates along the Rio Minho valley. Place names such as Sutton, Pennant, and Ballard Valley are reminders of these original owners. The city had served the commercial needs of several major sugar estates in the north such as Longville, owned by Edward Long the historian, Suttons, and Danks. The Danks Sugar Estate is alleged to have been a gift from Sir Henry Morgan, the famous buccaneer and first lieutenant governor of Jamaica, to his German sweetheart. She named it Danks, for the German 'danke' – thanks.

Chapleton had and still has a clock tower, a market, an Anglican Church, a courthouse, a jailhouse, a sub-branch of Barclay's Bank, among bakeries, dry goods and grocery shops. It also had a hospital which May Pen did not. There were many fine big houses too that took in Clarendon College students as boarders. Auntie Black tells me that during the war, Summerfield, which was about fifteen minutes further north by the same train that took us to and from May Pen, was a marketing centre for ground provisions, grown by peasant farmers in the far north of the parish. The Marketing Board would purchase produce in bulk and ship them by train to May Pen to join the main railway line bound from Montego Bay to Kingston.

We could get off the Kalamazoo at the Chapelton Station, from where we walked uphill for another mile or so to get to the College. If we wished we could get off further up at the side stop, which gave us a short-cut up a three-terraced hill to the campus. The College was situated on a hill which gave a panoramic view of cane fields, meadows, and citrus groves. Try to imagine us gripping the dirt and gravel to walk up hill in a pair of pointed toe shoes. By the end of the week the toes were upturned and grinning at us. We had to resort to stuffing the toes really tight with cotton batten to try and keep them straight. My toes were pinched together into a painful cluster that in the long run damaged my tarsal, metatarsal, and my phalanges. I am sure that many children from that era have bad feet now. Pointed toe shoes and crinolines, both the height of fashion at this time, were the cause of painful self-consciousness, given my short stature. I seldom went to the popular teenage dance parties. For me to dress up and dance in two and three crinolines under my skirt and to wear spiked heels and pointed toes shoes made me look like a bobbing little mushroom. I must have been a sight because the unflattering comments were humiliating, and hard on a short girl's self

image. I did go to the parties that were held once a week, between three and five, in the building adjoining the playing fields and which were close to the Kalamazoo stop. Everyone was in uniform and virtually indistinguishable, so we could lose some of our self-consciousness.

By the time we made it to the top of the hill we were panting, hot, thirsty, and sweaty. The white cotton or linen handkerchiefs were soaking wet from mopping up the beads of sweat from our foreheads and necks. Every blouse and every shirt had sweat marks at the underarm. Some marks were pale and others were light yellow or light green. The most embarrassing thing to happen to any of us was to slide and fall as we navigated our way up hill. During the rainy season, it took skill to get up and down the hill without falling and sliding on your buttocks in the slippery clay mud. The big boys and girls helped up the handsome little form-one boys in short-pants, and the cute little girls who still wore ribbons in their hair. How well I remember the exquisite tingling of joy when the boy on whom I had a crush helped me up. His behaviour was consistent with the chivalric codes of romantic love, the stuff of our literature classes and deportment. By this code, the gentleman should rescue the damsel in distress, while the lady was never required to rescue the lad in distress. There was so much affection and respect among age groups. I miss those moments.

In the time before the bell rang to start the day, Sonia took me around to introduce me to her best girl friend, Eleth Gibbs, and to several boys whose eyes lit up and whose ears perked up to give me a completely flirtatious welcome. I do not remember feeling flirtatious at all because I had just spent one of the saddest Christmas holidays of my childhood.

6.2 The December before Clarendon College

Aunt Joyce had opposed my secondary schooling ever since I started the Comprehensive School Experiment. As I matured and became more sophisticated our relationship deteriorated and I had come to feel that she disliked me. In November of 1959, I really provoked her to wrath. I told her, somewhat boastfully perhaps, that I had passed my final exams to start at CC in January. I bubbled with happiness, and told her that I had done so well that I was one of four students who would be allowed to skip a grade and sit for 'O' levels in one, rather than two years. Her face clouded over as I spoke. I added that it meant that I had to board in Chapelton because I could not do the chores and walk the three miles in time to get to the Kalamazoo for seven o'clock. She turned red, flew into a rage and

demanded, "Ah who de hell yuh tink a go do de housewuk and help in a de shap? Meh na pay one red cent fe yuh ga a dat school." I was shocked and hurt that she did not find my achievement praiseworthy and a source of parental pride. The parents and guardians of my other three classmates boasted about their achievements and were ready to sacrifice everything to make sure that they did well in school. Secondary schooling was of such prestige that all parents and good guardians wanted it for social mobility and respectability. I could not, and did not answer her.

I just walked away like a wounded dog. At that moment I was consumed with hate and resentment, for her and towards my father, which burned a hole in my soul. I felt totally and utterly alone in this predicament of whether I would go to secondary school. I racked my brain trying to think of someone I could run to. But there was no mother, no father, or family. Hot tears burned tracks on my cheeks. I withdrew into a surly silence and mock obedience while I continued to be submissive to the slave-like labour regime. I had no choice. I often wondered if my mother was somewhere up there seeing what was happening to her baby whom she had left, when she died.

The folk would say I could not win because in this fight Aunt Joyce held the handle of the sword and I held the blade. In looking back now I can see why people used to say that the worst thing that could happen to a child is for her to lose her mother. Even to have a caring grandmother would be the next best thing, but I had neither.

From that moment on I could do nothing right. I guess I had beaten Aunt Joyce at her game and did well in school, in spite of her refusing to buy my books and making sure I had no time at home to study. I had defeated her by being 'a sneakin pickney.' I paid rapt attention in classes because I knew I would not have much time for revision before tests. I did my homework before I left school to walk the three miles home. My textbooks were stored in my padlocked desk at school. I did not take up a book in her presence because she was bound to find more work for me to do. If I was seen reading a book she considered it idleness, and would not let the devil find work for my idle hands. After the evening chores such as doing the family's weekly ironing that would sometimes take me up to ten or eleven o'clock at night, I would then read under my pillow with a flashlight. It was work, work, and more work. She was determined to make a servant and dressmaker out of me.

Aunt Joyce continued to try every mean trick in the book to dissuade me from going to Clarendon College. She piled on more housework in the mornings before school

and in the afternoons after school. Sometimes she would play sick, take to her bed, and have me stay home to wait on her. Once I caught her laughing to herself as she was setting herself up in bed to be served the chicken soup that I had to make for her lunch. When she saw my resolve she said, "You just like yuh black mooma. She did tink seh she betta am me. An ah it mek me get me bredda feh box har dung. Ah hav a mine fe box yuh dung, jus like how yu faader box yu mooma dung."

In writing this story, I have tried to figure out why Aunt Joyce hated my mother so much. Was she peeved that Black Jamaicans were ascending socially and eclipsing the power that white and coloured Jamaicans held exclusively before emancipation and for generations after? Was she jealous that my mother, a black Jamaican, had a better education than she had and that she was the daughter of an influential and powerful black man in Jamaican politics? My mother's father had been elected twice to the legislature and was later awarded the Order of the British Empire. In the process of doing this research I learned from Auntie Black that "he was the first Negro to be awarded this honour in Jamaica." All this is hard to take if you believe in the white supremacy ideology that justified slavery and empire and secured ill-gotten gains for a few like you. The loss of status, prestige, and sense of entitlements must have been humiliating.

Things came to a head one Friday morning, as I was on my way to school. Aunt Joyce gave me a blue-seam crocus bag (a sack made of unbleached jute used for shipping sugar), with instructions to go to do the marketing that the maids used to do. She gave me the list of items and told me how much I was to spend on each. She refused to include money to pay a handcart man to take the bag around as I bought the food provisions, and to carry the loaded bag to the bus. She insisted that I carry the bag of food by myself on the bus. This was an assault on my dignity. I was a teenager, struggling with my emerging sense of self, and which depended so much on the esteem of family and school. I refused, and walked off and left her and the bag standing. None of my schoolmates' parents would ever do this to them. I often envied the affection and high regard with which their parents held them. So many parents of lesser means expressed their vision of a bright future for their children, especially those whose "brains could tek book learning." I am sure that if my mother was alive and well Aunt Joyce could not have taken such liberties. My observation was that the poorest mother would not allow any one to put her children to work the way that Aunt Joyce did to me. Even her maids would not allow their children to do housework. Did

Aunt Joyce regard me as a slave child because my mother was black and I had the kinky hair to mark me?

When I came from school that evening Aunt Joyce was waiting to pounce on me like a tiger. In a drunken rage, she turned on me reeking of rum and cigarettes, and scratched my face; grabbed me and thumbed me all over my face and body. Finally, she grabbed a plait of my hair and held it really tight in the roots. I fought back and tried to get away from her. In the tussle I bit her finger that she had in my mouth trying to rip my cheek. When she saw her blood she screamed, "Yuh draw me blood!" I had literally bitten the hand that fed me.

She became a deranged woman, as though out to kill me. In that moment, the hate between us was like a blazing fire out of control. She fell on me again with her full body weight and I only escaped from the pounding when I pulled hard enough to leave my plait of hair in her hand. As a result of this appalling episode, I was left with the left side of my face swollen, my eye looking like a slit in a half-baked breadfruit. My body was black and blue all over.

This was Friday night, the busiest night of her business and the inconvenience of not having my labour to serve the crowd of customers added to her fury. My labour was valuable to her. On Friday nights and all day Saturday, I would weigh and wrap pounds of flour, sugar, and fine salt. I chopped and weighed out pounds of dried salted codfish and pickled mackerel to dozens of customers. I measured and poured coconut and kerosene oil in pints, quarts, and gallons. At the end of the day on Saturday my back and pelvis were always ready to break and the sole of my feet were sore and blistered in places. On Sundays I did not even get to dress up and go to church. I had to spend the day scrubbing down the counters and mopping the floors in the shop. This was noticeably an ungodly household in the community – no prayers, no Bible reading, no church going.

Aunt Joyce locked me out that night. I was too exhausted and sore to walk the three miles to Auntie Black's house, so I slept in the kitchen. On Saturday morning I walked the three miles to Mr Black's shop and was told that Auntie had gone to her half-day work. Uncle Harry asked me what was the matter but I would not tell him. I walked away to Mrs Martin's house. Mrs Martin was one of my All-Age Schoolteachers. She was and still is in my mind the kindest gentlest teacher, wife, and mother I have ever known. She pulled me into her arms and gave me one of those memorable protective hugs that I imagine that

mothers give to their children. She made me some tea and tucked me into bed. I spent Saturday night with her family and then walked to Auntie's house on Sunday to arrive after church services.

6.3 A Pause to Pay Tribute to Aunt Joyce

After this episode I vowed I would never speak to Aunt Joyce again for the rest of my life. It is interesting how I came to break that vow. One day when I was working in the savings department of Barclays Bank, Dominion, Colonial, and Overseas in May Pen Aunt Joyce arrived at the counter all dressed to the forty-nines as the folk would say. I was quite surprised to see her because the mattress or dark corners in the shop were her banks. I respectfully said, "Good morning Aunt Joyce." She smiled and came close to the counter and heaved up her purse on the counter top. It was weighed down with money. She said that she wanted to open a savings account. I directed her to lodge the money with the teller who would then give me the lodgment slip to open the account. She looked at me with that dancing eye as if she expected me to personally take the money from her and lodge it. I watched her shelling out the money at the teller. There were five-pound notes, one-pound notes, ten-shilling notes, five-shilling notes and bags of silver and copper. I cannot remember the total lodging but I remember being surprised that she had so much money to deposit. As I was filling in the section of the account holder she said, "Put yuh name pon it." I replied, "I do not want to, Aunt Joyce." At the moment I refused I saw that right eye begin to swivel from side to side and dance. Her temper rose with the red blood in her face and neck. Then she gritted her teeth and said with her hand akimbo, "See Yah, yuh put yuh name pon it far when me ded and gaane me no have nobody fe inherit de fruits af me laaba." I reluctantly put my name on the account and forgot about the account for some ten years or more.

Months after Aunt Joyce died, I received the bankbook by registered mail from Auntie. On her deathbed she gave Auntie the passbook to give me. I do not remember the sum of money but it was enough for me to buy my first car. Before she died she was also working on buying me a plot of land.

Though I did speak to Aunt Joyce again (Figure 6.1), and did some nice things for her, the way in which she treated me caused scars and rifts so deep that they never healed, or reconciled me to her until her death. She tried many reconciliatory moves over the years

before I left Jamaica, but my formerly warm heart for her had frozen cold. The memory of her life haunts me.

Nevertheless, I cannot deny Aunt Joyce's tremendous influence on my life. I will always remember that she insisted on beating her dressmaking trade into me. She boxed me up and told me when I grumbled about having to spend my holidays sewing buttonholes and doing dress-hems, "Every woman must have her own trade, and her own money. One day you will thank me for this." I have thanked her many times. The lessons of my life have led me one step further to say that every young woman should also have her own shelter, unencumbered, whether she has a partner or not.

Figure 6.1 Aunt Joyce & Yvonne c. 1961



I have benefitted from learning the dressmaking trade in many ways. In the first place I was able to make elegant school uniforms and clothes for myself. I have made most of my clothes since age thirteen when I started to be Aunt Joyce's apprentice. Then when I went to teachers' college I was able to earn my keep, and pay for my textbooks from the money I earned sewing. I did this by using my old Singer hand machine of the 1890s' vintage. When I was leaving for college Auntie Black talked me into buying it for my own use. When people in college saw how well I sewed, they asked me to sew custom-made dresses and to design graduation dresses. They paid me handsomely. This meant that I was relatively well off and self-supporting when I was in college. This was very important because I had no other means of financial support. Family supported most of my classmates because jobs for students were few or non-existent. I had fun sewing too, because the old machine generated much humour. It had no cover as hand machines usually do. The shuttle

cover had even got lost so you could see the shuttle moving back and forth as I turned the handle. My friends teasingly referred to it as “the portrait of a machine.” This was after a poem by Louis Untermeyer, which appeared in our textbook entitled Rhyme and Reason which we called “crime and treason.”

By designing patterns on brown paper or adapting commercial patterns, I was able to supplement the government-paid tuition and room and board to become a trained teacher. I was and still am very proud of this self-reliance.

When I graduated from teachers’ college Aunt Joyce gave me a top-of-the-line Singer sewing machine as a gift. By so doing she gave me the skills and the tools of the trade. I gave the old Singer to a very promising student in my clothing and construction class at Vere Technical High school, where I taught before leaving the island. At different times in my life when I have fallen on hard times I have been able to set up a cutting table, get out my block patterns, my scissors, tape measure, common pins and iron and go to work in my trade. When I was a young teacher in Jamaica, I began to earn more from dressmaking on the side than from my full-time teaching job.

When I became a mother, I made three-colour dresses for my two beautiful daughters just the way Aunt Joyce had made them for me when I was their age. They loved those dresses as much as I had loved mine. I tell them the story of how My Aunt Joyce made me dresses just like I made theirs. By having these skills, I have been able to adorn my body inexpensively; throughout the life cycle, and even to appear well off when I am far from it. Now, I only sew for myself as a creative outlet and as a means of therapy. I sew something beautiful for myself when I am troubled or angry. With every stroke of the scissors I slice through my rage. I make the pus of life ooze out with every prick of the needle through the cloth. I join the seams of experience together as I stitch the fine textures and colours to make a well-crafted suit. My frowns change to smiles as I emerge from my absorbing world of creativity and beauty. Every day as I get dressed I remember My Aunt Joyce with loads of compassion and regrets.

It is clear that I have lived to appreciate the truth of Aunt Joyce’s philosophy about a woman’s autonomy and self-reliance. She was absolutely right. I have come to accept that she meant well, but the memories of her cruelties still make me weep. I weep also for the terrible marriage that she had to endure to her death. After reading much of the history and sociology of the making of Creole society in Jamaica, I weep for the brutal history into which

we were born: that of a racist slave society in which families sorted their children and kin by their physiognomy – clear skin and black skin, good hair and bad hair, straight nose and flat nose and all the tricky combinations of inter-racial mixing, that were such ammunition for racist abuse. Nature must have had its revenge by playing tricks with the genes to produce children of a range of skin colour and hair texture from the same couple. The social and psychological consequences were the obsession with complexion and hair texture and the shape of the nose. A colour prejudice was at work in the social stratification by class and colour. Self-worth in families and schooling was influenced by how the genetic attributes were valued. We were born into a society which inherited the worst forms of brutality against man and beast. We were born into a brutally sexist society where men could beat women with impunity; and where men and women could treat children with the worst forms of brutality.

Aunt Joyce died within months of my moving to Canada and I was unable to return for her funeral. One of the nice things I had hoped to do for her was to give her a trip when I settled in and could save up some money to bring her on holidays. I had even thought that I could eventually get her out of the hell she lived in. But by a cruel twist of fate, she developed cancer in her neck at just the places where her husband used to choke her during their bouts of quarrels and fights. I learned that her husband withheld the painkillers and other medications from her when she went home after the surgery. This news, although shocking, was not surprising, given the unspeakable brutalities I witnessed, when I lived with them. My grief at her death was unbearable. She had asked me, when we were on friendly terms, to be sure to prepare her for her burial. She asked me specially to do this for her because she did not want to be taken to an undertaker when she died. I had no idea that she would die so young. She died a horrible death after years of battering. She was buried at the back of the property, which she and her husband owned. I visited her gravesite on a couple of occasions but at those times, I was too suffused with rage and sorrow to contemplate the meaning of her life and death.

In 1998, when I went to lay flowers at her tombstone, I was mellow enough to note what was written on her tombstone. It read, "In loving memory of Joyce Hylton, born March 31, 1916 died May 21, 1970." That was all. She was not a loving mother, a loving wife, a loving daughter, or a dear sister. She belonged to no one and no one belonged to her. In writing these autobiographical stories and doing the research to find meanings and answers to

my life history, I can now say that a great-great-granddaughter of the British Empire had been abandoned in the colony. She was unprotected, brought low, tortured and perished at the hands of a monster that the history of slavery had bred. She had lived out the worst nightmare of the planter class. When she sang "Guide me oh thou Great Jehovah pilgrim through this barren land" she was singing for all those like her family who could not return to England or Scotland after the fall of sugar and coffee. She had gone native and consorted with the descendants of the people their ancestors enslaved. In so doing they became intimate enemies. While Aunt Joyce and her siblings could pass, more or less, and regarded themselves as 'Jamaican white' the skin colour and nappy hair of my father's children, whom he sired with the "black wench" constantly reminded the family of sexual transgressions with their 'inferiors'.

That brutal history of enslavement, colour prejudice, racism and class pretensions poisoned every relationship in my beloved country. As Simone Schwartz-Bart writes in her novel, *The Bridge of Beyond*, about Martinique that had a similar history to Jamaica, "People are still dying from slavery." I am to this day grievously sorry about how bad our relationship became. In spite of the hardships and pain that enveloped us, Aunt Joyce taught me so much and did so much for me. She had saved my life. At a more profound level, I have come to understand how certain forms of brutality hold some women in captivity until they are killed in a marriage. I have kept my promise to myself. I swore when I was growing up with her, "I will never, ever, let any man control my life and brutalize me like that." I never have allowed any form of brutality to continue as soon as I realize it is happening. Through her suffering, she gave me the insights and skills to avoid and escape the traps.

6.4 Auntie Black Rescues Me

If it were not for the generosity and ingenuity of Auntie Black I may never have made it to secondary school. She saw the gravity of the situation, swallowed hard and decided to do what she had to do. Perhaps she was acting out of gratitude to my mother, Lucy May Reid, and her father, Charles Archibald Reid. I say this because when I was researching my mother's family background, as part of this project, Auntie Black reluctantly revealed that the Honourable Charles Archibald Reid gave her the civil service job with the Trade Board, which became the Ministry of Trade and Industry. She therefore had a secure

job until her retirement with a pension. He even paid for her to go to learn Pitman's shorthand and typing. This was an important educational gift for any woman who did not go to secondary school or earn a pupil teacher certificate. These skills obviously allowed Auntie Black to escape from earning her living as a dressmaker, had she not had these skills to offer. This is not to take away from the very hard work necessary to maintain her position, especially in the late fifties. This was a time when young black people with degrees from the University College of the West Indies began to displace coloured and white people who held patronage appointments, based on colour and family background in the landed gentry or the merchant class. These were people who had very little education that would have entitled them to the positions they held. Maas Charlie's largesse also extended to my father whom Auntie said was provided with accommodation. Auntie said that my father was such an abusive and disrespectful drunkard that Maas Charlie had to put him out. In disgust she once said, "That man should be whipped you know!"

Auntie Black never hesitated to take me in, a second time, and to make preparations right away for me to be ready in January for Clarendon College. I believe this was about late November or early December 1959. Auntie was so proud of my achievements given that she had co-operated with Mr Lampart to give me that chance at secondary education. Remember she was the person who had had to pay for my birth certificate and to get all my papers in order for me to take up that over-age scholarship. This was not as easy, as it seems.

Auntie Black always gave me a view of my mother opposite from the one given by Aunt Joyce. She held my mother in very high esteem. When I lived with her before, whenever I did something that disappointed her she would say, "Your mother would be so disappointed that you did that." Auntie told me that she and my mother were good friends and that my mother was the finest seamstress and milliner. She said when they were young they had a dressmaking business together in Kingston. They went out of business when the big stores in Kingston started selling readymade clothes, resulting in less demand for custom-made clothing. At these revelations, I would get bouts of melancholy and depression and cry myself to sleep. When I prayed, I would ask God why my mother had to die and leave me to suffer so. My Aunt kept everything surrounding my mother's death a secret during my childhood and for most of my life. I got no answers from God or man. I stopped praying for answers.

In my senior years I confronted Auntie Black about my right to know my maternal origins. I informed her that I had the right to know about my mother. Her answer was: "She is dead and gone already, why you want to know." I have never been able to understand completely, such indifference to an offspring's need to know her roots. In fact, Auntie said to me in 1998, "You come to find out your Negro roots! I have Negro roots and it has done me no good." Was she expressing the shame of sexual transgressions and the social and material consequences in that society at that time? Or, were some things too painful to remember? The so-called stain of black blood was still a social and economic handicap in Jamaica at that time.

When Aunt Joyce came to get me back, I could taste and smell the scorn in Auntie's demeanour. After listening to her and entertaining her, Auntie sent her away and prevented me from returning to such an abusive situation. I will never know what words passed between them. Auntie Black was very proper and restrained in her words and actions. Auntie's way of dealing with me was to expect the best of me. She never beat me or verbally abused me. She was by no means perfect in my eyes, but I loved and adored her very much. She had and still has her class and colour prejudices, which I had to live with, even within the family.

When I became an adult we had several arguments about the ways that she plays up to some people and patronizes others. One day after we had an argument about the way she treated her maid, she said to me, "I know you don't distinguish among people but I do." I could see in her eyes that she wanted to explain so much about how the social history of the island had brought her to that way of relating, but she did not attempt to. I can only now imagine that it was too messy and confusing even to try. Both sisters had always been estranged. Aunt Joyce winced with pain whenever she spoke about how her sister Mrs Black came to her wedding in a black dress, the colour for funerals in Jamaica. In those days one would never wear black to a wedding. This was a sign, perhaps, that she may as well have been attending her sister's funeral because her death started with her wedding when she defied conventional wisdom and married down in class and colour. Her older sister saw ahead, foreseeing that Aunt Joyce would come to a bitter knowledge as she lived in the unholy estate of matrimony. Auntie Black, without saying so, had no use for the life-choices and temperament of her sister, Joyce.

Auntie Black had to pacify her husband's outrage for having to shelter and maintain, yet again, one more of Cyril's neglected children. I can only imagine how my presence had disrupted a peaceful stable relationship. I knew instinctively what the tacit bargain was. I would willingly put in many hours of child labour in Mr Black's grocery store and in the household in order to earn the entitlements to my school uniform and train fare. I was quite aware that I would have a better standard of living, in spite of the work. I shared a room with my sister instead of sleeping in a corner of Aunt Joyce's dining room. Clearly Aunt Joyce had lesser means but her husband, who had come from a lower class than she had, also curbed her desires to raise their standard of living when they had the means to do so. This was especially evident when electricity eventually came to Palmers Cross and they could replace the icebox with an electric refrigerator. When electricity and running water came to the village, Aunt Joyce and Uncle Harold had many fierce quarrels about remodelling their house to bring the kitchen and toilet under one roof. He relented with the bathroom and toilet but not the kitchen.

The standard of living in both households stood in stark contrast. Housework in the Blacks' household was easier than in the Hyltons'. For one, Aunt Joyce and Uncle Harold lived outside the city limits, where there was no electricity or piped water in the house long after May Pen had had electricity. Therefore, the bathroom, kitchen, and toilets were in separate detached buildings throughout the time that I lived with them. Auntie's house by contrast had all these facilities under one roof. The kitchen range graduated from a big iron wood-stove, first to gas, and finally to an electric stove. Meanwhile Aunt Joyce stayed with a charcoal pot and paraffin stove even after the village of Palmers Cross got electricity. It was delightful to cook without having to cope with bad wood, charcoal, soot, and smoke. By the same token, it was easier to scour the pots with white Vim Dutch cleanser than with grey and black ashes. Dutch cleanser was less corrosive to the hands and nails. At Auntie's there were outside showers for the maids and yard boys as well as sleeping quarters for the maids. These were never used by the time I came to live with them, and were eventually demolished, so that several rooms made of concrete and steel could be added to the older original wooden house. I loved the labour-saving devices that Auntie steadily bought, even above Uncle Harry's protests. He became furious when he realized that Auntie used the appliances to save the maid's labour, and that she had no intention of doing the house work herself with these appliances.

Auntie sewed for herself, my sister and me until we were proficient enough to do so ourselves. She taught us *haute couture* touches, such as piping, trims, bindings, and tatting. Fabrics and fit were exquisite. Auntie had exquisite taste in clothing and accessories. It was a charm to sew on the electric Singer zigzag sewing machine, rather than the Singer treadle straight stitch sewing machine. The treadle was so hard to pedal and there was always the nuisance of avoiding backward pedalling and breaking the wheel belt. I learned to cut garments out of Vogue and McCall's commercial patterns rather than the freehand that Aunt Joyce used. It was from Auntie that I learned of such famous designers as Christian Dior, because we cut dresses either by using his patterns or by copying his style from stylebooks. Knowing the two ways of cutting garments has been very useful. The pinking shears and the zigzag stitch took the drudgery out of hand finishing seams.

The electric washing machine reduced days of hand washing, scrubbing, boiling, and bleaching of clothes. The electric iron replaced the solid irons which had to be heated on hot coals in the coal pot and cleaned with quailed banana leaves before applying to the garment. These irons had to be routinely greased when hot, before storing, to prevent rusting. The electric mixer made baking cakes a pleasure for me; I did not have to cream the butter and sugar with the wooden spoon for what seemed like hours. The pressure cooker made cooking stews and dried beans a breeze. Aunt Joyce was still parching her coffee beans over an open fire, pounding them in a wooden mortar and pestle, and then brewing the grounds with charcoal to get a clear brew. Auntie was using a percolator or instant coffee.

The floors at Auntie's were cleaned with mops, commercial floor wax, and the electric polisher. Aunt Joyce still used a floor-dye boiled from logwood bark and applied with rags and bare hands to stain the wood floors. Beeswax was then applied to a coconut brush, and I had to kneel on hands and knees to shine the wooden and terrazzo tile floors with the brush. Blackened knees and dye-stained hands were a sure sign that you were a domestic servant. The dye stains on my hands were a source of embarrassment when I went to school. I seemed to be the only one among my schoolmates who scrubbed floors. I yearned to be indulged in the ways that they were. Inasmuch as Uncle Harry tried to eliminate the maids, Auntie always insisted on having someone to wash and iron the clothes, especially at the times when they kept boarders in the new rooms that replaced the maid's quarters. I did not mind helping with the housework, but resented bitterly doing shop work

for Mr Black who seemed to think that was what I was born for. He did not believe that my sister or I deserved any privileges for living in his house.

Auntie, for the most part, treated her maids well. They generally liked and respected her, but they detested Mr Black whom they complained was mean, and tried to pay them less than a fair wage. He was always paying them short, and Auntie had to make it right with the maids in order to keep them. He was also in the habit of arriving at the house when Auntie had gone to work and ordering the maids not to use the labour saving devices, which he maintained should only be used by Mrs Black. Auntie had a cordial social distance between herself and her maid, while Aunt Joyce worked side by side with them and was in frequent quarrels about social distance and deference. She often said after some of these quarrels, "Familiarity breeds contempt." Or she would say, "You lie down with dogs, you get up with fleas." Of course it was easier for Auntie to keep her distance because she went to work outside her home, while Aunt Joyce worked at home and in her shop, which adjoined her dwelling.

There were many other ways in which the standard of living was higher in Auntie's home. Auntie stressed balanced meals and formal dining every night at supper. She loved to make beautiful salads and tasty custards. I enjoyed making Christmas fruitcake with her. During the course of this research I learned that this cake was originally made by the King's chef from the fruits and spices of Empire and therefore called Empire Cake. The recipe is displayed in the Maritime Museum in Greenwich. I enjoyed Auntie's company; she did not talk much but took obvious pleasure in whatever she was doing. I admired the artistic way in which she arranged food on the plate when she served at the table. Uncle Harry would not serve himself. He insisted that she make up his plate for him. Discounting the fact that he was a very lazy man, too lazy even to pour himself a drink of water, I believe that he appreciated her art of serving. She took pleasure in serving him, to the extent of even putting out his clothes for him and running his bath. They had a ritual of greeting each other warmly when Auntie came home from work in Kingston, a journey of thirty-six miles in the heat. He would peck her on the forehead and say, "Hi Putsy, how was your day?" She would smile coyly and say something like, "So-so." Then he would make them a drink of rum and orange juice, or whisky and soda.

Auntie sang in the Church Choir at Saint Gabriel's Anglican Church, and always had my sister and me dressed up to attend church with her and Uncle Harry. When she

succeeded in getting me to take catechism and confirmation, she gave me a beautiful little Bible in which she wrote, "You are bought with a price. Your body is a temple. Be pure in mind and spirit." I have lost the Bible but the words have remained with me.

The school fees and books were much harder to come by than the uniforms. Auntie, Sonia, and I sewed the uniforms together over that Christmas holiday. Auntie Black had to go to the bank to arrange for an overdraft to pay the school fees for my sister and me. My unexpected arrival brought on a crisis in the Black household and added another layer of melancholy to my feelings of abandonment. One Saturday, when Auntie was at her civil service job at the Trade Board in Kingston, and I was helping Uncle Harry and the shop helper, he got into a really foul mood. He was sitting on his high stool at the counter in his favourite corner of his shop doing his crossword puzzle and pausing occasionally to stroke the two big spoilt cats. Suddenly, he left his crossword puzzle on the counter, got up, did a little jig, as if he was having an anxiety attack. Then he flushed red, broke out into a sweat and yanked off his glasses and reached into his back pocket for his white stiffly starched handkerchief that I had ironed for him. He unfolded it, and wiped his face in jabs. Still holding the crumpled up handkerchief in his right palm he put the back of his hands akimbo and turned to me. He pointed at me and then laid down the conditions under which I could live in his house and attend Clarendon College. He said, "When you come from school in the evenings and on weekends you have to come and help in the shop. You get holidays today; the maids will be gone tomorrow. You will have to do the washing and the cooking." He did not stop there, but said, "When the time comes for you to board, you can only board from Monday to Thursday. On Fridays you have to come home for the weekend to work in the shop." The time to board to which he referred was the practice of many parents of day-students to board their children for the term just preceding the exams. They could study intensively in order to do well. Sometimes this made the difference between passing and failing. The consequences determined the future of a life and the family's fortune. I said nothing. I just held my head down and the tears of humiliation just fell to the ground. I continued to work in a sombre mood. At the end of the day he fired the shop hand.

I do not know what Uncle Harry told Auntie when she came home but she too got into a foul mood. On the Sunday following, they had a row behind closed doors. I was anxious to hear what they were arguing about, so I put my ears to the keyhole. I heard Uncle Harry shouting that he was tired of her family of parasites. He was particularly livid about

my father and his two brothers who he said “came off to nothing.” One was at the time living, for no rent, on a property that Auntie and Uncle Harry owned in Chudleigh, Christiana, my grandfather’s constituency and hometown. I do not recall what I heard Auntie say in defence of her family. Given what I have learned about the family dynamics, during the course of this research, Auntie may have reminded him of all the material benefits he had derived from Maas Charlie when he was a young poor man trying to make a living selling life insurance. Mr Black and Aunt Joyce provoked me into understanding how important it was for me to obtain a good education.

My strong desire for education overcame both the melancholy and the hardships under which I had to go to high school and study. I was so grateful to be attending high school, I did not care what it took to be there, to study for my exams. Doing well at my high school was my way out of servitude and into economic independence, and a life of dignity and respectability. In spite of these hardships, I had to find ways to study and I did.

These were the burdens and challenges that weighed on my body and mind on that first morning.

6.5 Opening Ceremonies

When the bell rang, Sonia took me to form 5B where I joined my other classmates, lining up in front of our form for the march to the wide concrete corridors of the Tavannore building. There, the whole student body would assemble in resolute military fashion, supervised by the prefects who would take their place at either end of the boys’ and girls’ lines. The head boy and head girl who supervised and inspected the line formations took their place last. To me, the head girl was a goddess, her posture erect, her head held high, her shoulders held back and her smile composed. Her pleats were starched and pressed razor sharp. They billowed like an accordion in the wind as she swung her hip from side to side. She walked to the beat of the music in her head. It could have been the rhythms of the ‘cha cha’, or the ‘twist’, or the ‘mashed potato’ or all three, tempered with the melodies of the ‘soft tunes’. She exhibited the sensuous pleasures of her lithe body. She was the personification of poise and congeniality, tinged with a dollop of English snobbery. The headboy was a perfect portrait of the colonial as a young man, handsome, athletic, suave, courtly. Both represented the finest models of the civilizing mission of the Presbyterian and Congregation Union.

The aims of cultivating our minds with the King James Bible, the patriotic hymns of the British Empire, English language and literature, the history of the British Empire, and the ideals of British Public schooling, were as lofty as the hills upon which Clarendon College perched. All this grooming gave us an image of the cultivated people we were to become. We believed every word of it. We were to become a social breed apart from the mass of poor black people, and to consider we were their betters. High school had a sorting effect where only 'the cream of the crop' could go. There is much here to unpack.

When the marching footsteps had stopped and there was absolute silence, out came the crew of well-dressed white, brown, and black teachers. In time I learned about this strange collection of people. The white teachers hailed from various destinations of the British Empire and beyond: England, Scotland, Wales, Spain, Sweden, and the United States of America. There were no Canadians that I can remember. Among these were the British volunteers and the American Peace Corp. These bodies were definitely out of place.

The brown and black teachers came from two sources. First, there were the young graduates of the thirteen-year old University College of the West Indies that was a sub-branch of the University of London. When they were at University, these individuals went to classes dressed in long flowing red gowns. They mimicked what they thought the University of London students were like. In so doing they plastered over their peasant stock with airs and manners of speech. Their "speaky-spokey" was a constant source of comedy for us students – the patois was always slipping out to blow their cover. They were of the new breed of home-grown Caribbean literati.

Then there were those Jamaican teachers who had gone to England to study as young colonials. They were bright enough to earn island scholarships or their families sacrificed by selling a piece of land or a few heads of cows, to send them away to study so that they could join the ranks of the respectable black people. They were mimics of the English just like the University College of the West Indies graduates, but they were first degree at it.

A constant source of humour was the distinction in fashion between the European and the Caribbean teachers. Just to give a few examples, there was a Swede who walked around in her black oxfords, thick woollen black stockings under her green plaid wool kilt, and turtleneck sweater. She topped it off with her headscarf tied in a knot under her throat. Then there was the English music teacher who could not stand the heat and wore no

underwear under her sleeveless moo-moo dresses. The boys in 5B were always late for their Agricultural Science class because they had to pass by the music room to see her spread her legs and fan her crotch before she positioned the cello and begin to play. The teacher thought that the crowd at her doors meant they just loved her cello playing. But the most comical turn for me was given by the English Reverend, who taught us Bible Knowledge – the books that comprised the Pentateuch were required for our Cambridge exams. His dress was anything but reverent in the eyes of Jamaicans. No self-respecting Jamaican reverend would go without his collar and definitely he would not wear brown leather sandals, short khaki pants, and white shirt. When he came to class, after the exchange of greetings, he put his butt on the side of the chair long enough to swing around and hoist his legs upon the desk. We only saw his head between his up-sticking legs as he read the Bible for the whole fifty minutes. He read well. He asked no questions and he did not notice what we were doing while he read. When the bell rang he pivoted on his butt, stood up, and walked out. One day, out of boredom, a boy stood up to stretch, peeked over the Reverend's desk and started the rumour that the Reverend wore no underpants. Needless to say, after this there were many stretchers throughout the class period. The reverend was oblivious to the antics of those little sinners he was teaching.

To resume the assembly: the teachers filed out of the overcrowded staff room and stood together at the top end of a sloping corridor. A white man marched out last, briskly, and stepped up to the open side of the middle of the three or four classrooms, located opposite the wide corridor. This position acted as a platform. He stood at attention and craned his neck to survey the formation. While he was so doing, I studied his appearance. His crew cut looked like a toupee of straight pins on the top of his head. His round white face had very finely chiseled features, a straight nose, thin lips, and blue eyes. He was dressed in stiffly starched and ironed khaki short pants, crisp cotton white shirt, and brown laced-up brogues. His long beige socks were folded over just below his kneecap and held in place with a green tassel, which swung with every firm step that he took, to the rhythm of heels in toes out, heels in toes out. He almost had knock-knees. He walked up to the microphone and said, "Good morning boys and girls. Welcome to Clarendon College. We shall begin the morning's worship." His Adam's apple moved up and down as he belted out the sounds from his mouth. He paused, changed his tone, and began a short recitation, trilling every 'r', and emphasizing every 't' and 'd', as if he was letting us know that we

would have to stop the habit of discarding these letters when we spoke in our patois. He recited, "Every good gift, and every perfect gift cometh from the father of light, in whom there is no variableness." After this recitation, he paused for effect and then continued, "In your hymn books, turn to the hymn number 99." On the first morning of every school year it was always "Lord Behold us with thy blessing." The rustle of the hymnbook pages broke the stillness. We had to purchase our school hymnals just as we purchased our textbooks. The prefects monitored our having our hymnal for morning and afternoon worship. Mr Hayden Middleton, the deputy headmaster from Wales, as we would come to know him, sang the first stanza, *a capella*.

*Lord behold us with thy blessing
Once again assembled here;
Onward be our footsteps pressing,
In thy love and faith and fear
Still protect us, By thy presence ever near.*

Then Mr Middleton announced that after the count of three, we would begin to sing. He waved his hand to the beat one, two, three, and the whole school sang in unison, while Mr Middleton conducted and sang above our voices to keep the tempo. We sang all four stanzas. Oh, it was glorious to hear hundreds of children singing their youthful hearts out. The bass and baritone of the boys' section was sonorous with ripening manhood. The alto and soprano voices of the girls' section soared to the highest heaven from the hill. Singing this hymn lifted my spirits. We ended with the Lord's Prayer.

It was the headmaster's turn. Mr. Clevens Levi Stuart, headmaster, whose reputation preceded him as the dearly beloved Pops, stepped up to the microphone. I remember him as stocky, if a little rotund, with a copper-coloured complexion, receding hairline, and a fixed grave toothless smile. This is not to say he did not have his teeth but to say that he did not show them when he smiled. He was formally dressed in a brown suit and tie with matching brown shoes, so shiny that they glistened in the sun. He may have been wearing the light blue shirt I came to associate with him. He walked with the stealth of a spy who habitually showed up unexpectedly to startle hot and bothered teenagers necking and petting in musky hideaways. He paused, raised his chin, grabbed his tie and straightened it. Then he lowered his chin slightly as he peered over his spectacles at the new student body. He was a rather soft-spoken man. In welcoming us warmly, he gave us a brief history of the founding of the school in 1945 by the late Reverend Lester Davy of the Congregation Union,

whom he said obtained support from the Colonial Missionary Society. A house was named for him and those who belonged to that house were reminded of their responsibility to carry the torch of the founder. He spoke of the Reverend Frank Nichol's effort to relocate the school on the present premises. I belonged to Nichol House. Every Founder's Day, the whole student body assembled at the original spot of the first school buildings a mile away down hill to mark the occasion. Mr Stuart reminded us of the tremendous privilege that we had in receiving a secondary education. We were expected to wear the school uniform proudly, and to uphold the good reputation of the school. He wished us a good school year and exhorted us to do our parents and guardians proud. In spite of the burdens that I carried, I was bursting with joy and anticipation of good learning times ahead. We were dismissed to walk together loosely back to our form rooms. There we would get our timetables and meet our classmates and form teacher who would take the attendance. Teachers came to our classroom for the various subjects, except agricultural science for the boys which was held outside, and housecraft and sewing for girls which was held in the housecraft centre.

At the end of the day, we reassembled to pray and sing a hymn such as "The Day is over the night is drawing nigh, shadows of the evening steals across the sky." Mail and notices were read out before we were dismissed. The mail was mostly for the boarders. The rich students got the most mail and packages from home. One could tell how rich their parents were from how much money they spent in the tuck shop the following day. We poor day students would write letters to each other, and mail them to the College so we could have our names read out from time to time. Some of us girls got love letters from our secret admirers. Yet, this formal opening ceremony gave us a clear signal that we were in a special place with high expectations of us.

6.6 Some Good Learning Times

It gives me great pleasure to revisit my high school curriculum, though I still have regrets about not finishing high school. It was the combination of subjects, the teachers who taught them, my classmates who shared the learning experiences and the classroom and school settings that made for very pleasant recollections. My School certificate is my prompt.

English Language was my favourite subject. As a young child coming to awareness, I remember being fascinated how I was able to put my thoughts into speech. I

lived a lot in my head through words and my imagination. In Infant School, every new word I learned created magical thinking. I am still fascinated by the brainpower of thought and speech. I simply loved words and the power of words to express sophisticated and complex thoughts. I loved best to mystify and insult my classmates with Latinate words, the bigger the better. With this disposition, I find it difficult to abide by recommendation to refrain from using Latinate words in my writing. After all, facility with words is the hallmark of higher education. The first time I heard the minister of my church read from the Gospel of St. John, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was God, and the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us", I knew, for sure that words have sacred power.

Even when I was at May Pen Comprehensive School, I had admired Mr Lampart's and Miss Broomfield's ways with words. Mr Lampart was a model public speaker who sometimes preached sermons at St Gabriel's Anglican Church in May Pen. I have already talked about his homilies around the thought for the day and how they enthralled and inspired me. Miss Broomfield deserves a tribute for widening my world to include an appreciation for brilliant speeches. The context was the talks surrounding the short-lived West Indies Federation, which occurred between 1958 and 1961. As part of General Knowledge, Miss Broomfield would bring in The Daily Gleaner, which published the full texts of all the Caribbean leaders debating the merits and demerits of the Federation. I remember a heated debate as to whether the capital of the Federation should be located in Kingston, Jamaica or in Chagaramas, Trinidad. Freedom of movement among the islands and how this would affect the islands with greater physical resources was quite contentious. The small islands resented Jamaica for what they saw as its excessive demands as the largest of the British West Indian Islands. Miss Broomfield read the speeches aloud to us and thus helped us to appreciate the structure of arguments and the effect of oratory and grandiloquence. She boasted of how those leaders could wield the Queen's English. The speeches of Grantley Adams of Barbados, Prime Minister of the Federation, were particularly impressive.

These were the heady years of the anti-colonial and independence movements all over Africa and the Caribbean. The world was opened up to us in words and pictures. The Daily Gleaner carried speeches and pictures of Africans of newly independent nations speaking at the United Nations in New York. Miss Broomfield would read us those speeches too and talked about the pride that Jamaicans felt in seeing African leaders – Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana, Nnamdi Azikiwe of Nigeria, Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia, Julius Nyerere

of Tanzania, Jomo Kenyatta of Kenya – and their Diplomatic Corps dressed in their national regalia. So impressionable were our minds that, a schoolmate, came to school one day dressed as Kwame Nkrumah, complete with the staff and flywhisk. He told us all how Nkrumah formed his “cabinet.” I puzzled over his use of this word because at that point in my learning of the English Language, the only cabinet that I knew was the china cabinet. This was a profound lesson for me in multiple meanings of words.

Those were also times of great public distress at the assassination of Patrice Lumumba and Joseph Kasavubu of the Belgian Congo. These anti-colonial conflicts generated much talk among the adults everywhere: in the press; at home; in the rum shops; under the mango trees, in the yards; on the verandas; from the pulpits and in the market places. Jamaican children were getting an image of Africans, which hitherto they did not have. The Garveyites and the Rastafarians found reason to celebrate the dress and eloquent speeches of the African representatives at the UN. The pan-Africanists also found reason to feel good in solidarity. Adults at home and in the streets talked and argued about politics and religion constantly. Some arguments lasted for weeks. Oh, these were heady times. We were a colony of talkers. Words were our amusement and our weapons – the Standard English competing with the Jamaican patois.

At Clarendon College, English and Spanish classes built on the strong foundation that I received at the Comprehensive School, and in community and Church. At the same time, I studied Latin, Spanish, and English. I kept a vocabulary book for each language to add new words, their meanings and usage. In studying these languages, we needed a big vocabulary to do the translation exercises well, in the idiom of the languages. At Clarendon College, I remember Mr Blair who taught us the English poetry of Blake, Conrad, Browning, Gray and the sonnets of Shakespeare. We analyzed for metre, rhyme scheme, imagery, and diction. Mr Blair was so earnest and gentle in manner that poems from Blake’s Songs of Innocence and Experience, and Gray’s Elegy written in a Country Church Yard seem to me ever associated warmly with him. I remember Mr Blair trying to teach us to appreciate the Last Duchess for the Cambridge exam. I did not like that poem; I did not understand its significance.

Mr Robert Fianda, a Peace Corp volunteer, taught us Shakespeare. Through his voice and eccentricity we memorized all of Henry V, which was the play assigned for the Cambridge examination that year. This man was said to have fallen for rum and black

women. I certainly remember he had a red nose and a warble gait. We gossiped over whether his nose was red from the sun or from the rum. He would sometimes miss classes. When he came to the classroom door he made a run for the desk and jumped on top, opened the play and just read with his perfect radio voice. When the bell rang, he shut the book, jumped off the desk and left the room. He cared nothing for the “Good afternoon, Sir” or “Good afternoon, Miss” routine, our standard response to a teacher’s greeting. We were so thoroughly charmed by his voice, and we loved the language and the drama so much that we would gather in groups and try to mimic his reading. While writing this, I am reciting the prologue to Henry V.

The other subjects I took at ‘O’ level were Bible Knowledge, Spanish, Biology, Needlework/Dressmaking, and General Housecraft. General Housecraft was the most ridiculous subject. Imagine we girls having to prepare to darn woollen socks over a light bulb, setting a tray for tea, and preparing a ‘convalescent meal’ for the exams. I hated this subject. I needed no more ‘domestication’; I had had quite enough in all the households in which I lived.

While I waited for the results of ‘O’ Levels to come in the New Year, I started ‘A’ Levels. In Easter term I took English Literature, Economics, and History, and in the Summer term after receiving the exam results, I changed to “zoobotchem” to be just like my sister. This was a time of great confusion for me. My sister had got a teaching job at Titchfield High School in Port Antonio, far on the eastern end of the island. With her leaving, I saw very little reason to stay in school. I could not see myself trying to do ‘A’ Levels under the work regime that Mr Black insisted upon. More than ever, I desperately wanted to be like all my friends who were indulged as children, and whose adolescence was ushered in with pride and celebration.

My sister promised that as soon as she got her feet on the ground, she would send me money so that I could be a boarder. She could never afford to do this but my sister had a way of seeing possibilities where I could not. She was a dreamer. I believed in her promise and on that basis I pressed on but my heart was not in it. My report card for Easter and summer terms of that year showed the results.

In spite of this confusion, I was drawn into the extra curricular life of the school. I was elected as captain for the 4-H Club team that competed in the Denbigh Agricultural Show, and the team returned with many prizes including the coveted prize for cattle judging.

I won a prize for being the best cook of fricasséd chicken. I became a member of the debating team that Mr Gunter, our flamboyant science master, took to the prestigious Munro College for Boys in St Elizabeth. Munro College represented a different world of schooling. We arrived just before suppertime and were warmly and formally greeted before being taken on a brief tour of the college. Then we dined with some prefects, I believe. I could not take my eyes off these black and brown boys behaving like little 'English gentlemen' and talking as if they had hot potatoes in their mouths. The big boys bossed the little boys mercilessly. I felt so sorry for them. Clarendon College debated hard. I do not remember what the motion was, but we beat the pompous Munro team on their own turf and qualified to go to the island finals. We were applauded loudly when Mr Stuart proudly announced our victory at the morning devotion.

We were heroes for beating Munro. In the hierarchy of high schools, it had a tradition as one of the earliest secondary schools, built in 1797 (Brown 1979, p. 91) to educate the elite in St Elizabeth, a parish that had many white settlers, including a significant Jewish population that survived the Spanish Inquisition and lived in relative safety in Jamaica from the time of Spanish settlement. The other group of white people in the area were descendants of German farmers and artisans who were invited by independent entrepreneurs and the Jamaican House of Assembly in waves after emancipation, to show the Negroes example of European industry and skills (Senior 2003, p. 211). By comparison, Clarendon College was a young secondary school, founded only in 1945, catering to the children of peasant farmers, shopkeepers, teachers, maids, and seamstresses in central and northern Clarendon. It surprises me now to realize that Clarendon, the most productive sugar parish, second only to Westmoreland, had no secondary school until the Presbyterian and Congregation Union established Clarendon College. I speculate that the planters and estate owners of the parish, which included such notable absentee owners as the historian Edward Long and Sir Henry Morgan (of buccaneer fame and former lieutenant governor of Jamaica), among others, remained true to the colonial ideology that said that education spoils labour. Since most were absentee owners perhaps there was no need for secondary schools for their children. Their resident attorneys and overseers would have sent their children to boarding schools in Kingston or to Munro and Hampton in St Elizabeth. The peasant parents sacrificed to send their children to school as soon as the opportunity became available to them. Clarendon College was therefore regarded as a cut below Munro. Our debating

victory was sweet indeed. We eventually placed in the Island competition, I believe in fourth place.

I also joined the drama club and loved it. Unfortunately, as a day student I could not be around at nights for rehearsals. At the closing ceremonies for the summer term I was invested as a prefect. But as things turned out, I did not stay around long enough to enact this leadership role.

I have kept my report cards (Figure 6.2), and it is interesting to note the three dimensions along which Clarendon College prepared us – as persons, citizens, and workers.

We were groomed to be citizens and workers of Great Britain and Colonies. These three dimensions are parts of the blueprint, which has determined who I have become. I am attentive to presentation of self and congruence of character and moral values. I exercise my civic responsibilities, and I try to be a conscientious, hard worker who goes the extra mile. The same pattern of socialization followed into teachers' college.

Figure 6.2 Yvonne's 1961 report card from Clarendon College
(Person, citizen and worker – emphasis added)

CLARENDON COLLEGE CHAPELTON																																																																							
REPORT on	<i>Yvonne</i>	Term, 19 <i>61</i>																																																																					
Age	<i>13</i>	Number in Form <i>26</i> Average Age of Form <i>12</i>																																																																					
House	<i>Mickel</i>																																																																						
<p>(a) <i>Yvonne</i> as a Person is very responsible and... <i>she is a very hard worker and is always going to the extra mile.</i></p> <p>(b) <i>Yvonne</i> as a Citizen although... <i>she is a very hard worker and is always going to the extra mile.</i></p>																																																																							
<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>SUBJECT</th> <th>AVERAGE PERCENTAGE</th> <th>TEACHER'S COMMENTS</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>English Language</td> <td><i>40</i></td> <td><i>Class attention needed off.</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td>English Literature</td> <td><i>70</i></td> <td><i>See above, good.</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Religious Knowledge</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>History</td> <td><i>60</i></td> <td><i>A good team work.</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Geography</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Latin</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>ECONOMICS</td> <td><i>56</i></td> <td><i>An intelligent pupil.</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Spanish</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Mathematics</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>General Science</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Agricultural Science</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Biology</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Zoology</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Chemistry</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Botany</td> <td></td> <td><i>Quite eager, a lot of interest in the subject.</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Physics</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Health Science</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Commercial Subjects</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>General</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Housework</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Needwork</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>AVERAGE PERCENTAGE</td> <td><i>PAVED</i></td> <td><i>Next Term. Classes begin on 19th April 1961. A Latin Party given at 10th but a greater emphasis and lower level of regard to be English Language.</i></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>			SUBJECT	AVERAGE PERCENTAGE	TEACHER'S COMMENTS	English Language	<i>40</i>	<i>Class attention needed off.</i>	English Literature	<i>70</i>	<i>See above, good.</i>	Religious Knowledge			History	<i>60</i>	<i>A good team work.</i>	Geography			Latin			ECONOMICS	<i>56</i>	<i>An intelligent pupil.</i>	Spanish			Mathematics			General Science			Agricultural Science			Biology			Zoology			Chemistry			Botany		<i>Quite eager, a lot of interest in the subject.</i>	Physics			Health Science			Commercial Subjects			General			Housework			Needwork			AVERAGE PERCENTAGE	<i>PAVED</i>	<i>Next Term. Classes begin on 19th April 1961. A Latin Party given at 10th but a greater emphasis and lower level of regard to be English Language.</i>
SUBJECT	AVERAGE PERCENTAGE	TEACHER'S COMMENTS																																																																					
English Language	<i>40</i>	<i>Class attention needed off.</i>																																																																					
English Literature	<i>70</i>	<i>See above, good.</i>																																																																					
Religious Knowledge																																																																							
History	<i>60</i>	<i>A good team work.</i>																																																																					
Geography																																																																							
Latin																																																																							
ECONOMICS	<i>56</i>	<i>An intelligent pupil.</i>																																																																					
Spanish																																																																							
Mathematics																																																																							
General Science																																																																							
Agricultural Science																																																																							
Biology																																																																							
Zoology																																																																							
Chemistry																																																																							
Botany		<i>Quite eager, a lot of interest in the subject.</i>																																																																					
Physics																																																																							
Health Science																																																																							
Commercial Subjects																																																																							
General																																																																							
Housework																																																																							
Needwork																																																																							
AVERAGE PERCENTAGE	<i>PAVED</i>	<i>Next Term. Classes begin on 19th April 1961. A Latin Party given at 10th but a greater emphasis and lower level of regard to be English Language.</i>																																																																					
<p>House Master/Mistress: _____</p> <p>Form Teacher: _____</p> <p>Headmaster: _____</p>																																																																							

My sister and I got together with much rejoicing when she came home for Easter holidays of 1961. By this time, we had the results of our Cambridge exams and we had both been successful. We made Aunty proud. She was so happy. Mr Black gave his lukewarm congratulations. He had always told me that he thought the best future for me was to work in a shop. Of course, I could not openly tell him what I thought of that idea. As with the situation at Aunt Joyce's I just kept quiet and worked to undo his plans for me.

Figure 6.3 Sisters: Sonia (above) and Yvonne, 1960



Besides sharing our happiness about our exams and the doors that our High School education could open for us, we sisters talked at length about our future (Figure 6.3). Sonia was going to be a doctor and I was going to be a teacher. We had a conversation about how we imagined our marriages would go, our children, and what kind of aunties we would be to them; and then we talked about death. We marvelled that no one ever came back and told what life after death was like. We made a solemn promise that whoever died first would make sure to come back and tell the other. Little did we know that this conversation was a foreshadowing of what was to come about in only three months' time. My sister died of complicated and mysterious causes in early July 1961. Her death was a big blow to my hopes of doing my 'A' levels. Without her promised financial support, I saw no point in staying in school.

My sister's death brought on a crisis for me. I had to make a decision about extricating myself from a dead-end situation in the Black's household. I made the decision, unilaterally, to leave school and get a job. I pretended to be my Auntie Black and wrote a letter to the principal saying I would not be returning to school for the Christmas term. This decision to leave high school before completing my 'A' levels left me wondering how my life course may have been different had I completed them. I have always regretted that I did not stay to proudly wear my prefect's badge, or to become a full-time boarder.

In 1998, I returned to see the school that I attended for only eighteen months but which had deeply influenced me. Chapelton seemed less prosperous than when I attended Clarendon College. On the campus, Tavanore where we used to assemble was gone and the College now boasted a large auditorium dedicated to Mr Stewart. The dining room where we learned to dine family-style around large tables that seated twelve had been razed to the ground – only the concrete foundation remained. The dormitories, which I remembered as well-kept residences, were no longer in use – the mattress of the bunk beds rolled up and left to the rats to sleep in them. The teacher's cottages were in a state of disrepair and the grounds were neglected. I felt very sad at the obvious decline of a high school from which many of the contemporary island leaders graduated.

I then applied to Barclay's Bank for a job. The boarders that the Blacks had had, over the years, and who worked at both Barclay's and Bank of Nova Scotia, may have inspired me to apply there. To my surprise, in a few days, I received a letter inviting me for an interview. The sub-manager interviewed me about banking. I must have given him back verbatim all that I had learned about banking in my 6th form economics class. He then gave me sheets of figures to add up and manipulate. The speed and accuracy of addition I learned from filling the orders for Mr Black's high-class customers, came in handy. After checking my answers, the sub-manager then had a discussion with the manager and accountant, while I waited. He offered me a job on the spot as a filing clerk and told me to report for work on the Monday following. I could not believe my lucky stars.

I remember making the announcement that I was going to work at Barclay's Bank over supper to both Auntie and Mr Black. They were taken aback, as if they were caught unaware. They did not even compliment me, but proceeded to tell me that the only reason I got the job was because I lived in their household. I resented this comment, and to this day. I was the one who had applied for the job without their knowledge or reference. I was the one who had to perform at the interview. I did not just walk in to pick up a job, obtained for me by the pulling of strings. What they were really saying, I now realize, is that, at that time, the norm was that in order to obtain a job in the bank, one had to have important social connections and be sponsored. Their claim did not make sense then, and only does now in an unsatisfactory sort of way. In the social and economic scheme in May Pen, the Black's had, in my opinion, relatively little socio-economic influence. Mr Black ran a grocery shop that catered to the market people and a few high-class families. Their patronage disappeared as

soon as the supermarket came. Auntie Black was a civil servant. She had better standing in the community than he did. Furthermore, they did not even bank with Barclay's, but with the Bank of Nova Scotia. They must have been referring to the residual influence of their colour. Times were changing from a patronage-based selection based on skin colour and family connections, towards merit-based selection for jobs. The increase in educational opportunities for the majority black and brown population meant that more of them acquired the secondary schooling necessary to qualify for the jobs, which were previously reserved for white skinned people. They were stuck in the old colonial system of patronage which had been under attack and came to a head in the labour riots of the thirties. I guess Mr Black could not really believe that I would not be his servant for life.

When I got my first pay cheque, which was deposited to my own bank account, of which I was so proud, Mr Black demanded that I write a cheque handing over the full amount to him. I was so irate that I talked back and said that I would do no such thing. I told him that if he wished to charge me for room and board that I was agreeable but under no account was I going to give him my paycheque. He became so angry shouting at me that his false teeth fell out and broke. He and Auntie had their closed-door conference and the sum that I should pay for room and board was decided upon. Auntie insisted that if I paid room and board I would be treated as such with my own room and my meals prepared and my laundry done.

Those conditions did not sit well with Mr Black. He then started to object to things like my going to the movies with my work friends, or going to Kingston on a Saturday after work. He still expected me to come and work in his shop on Saturdays after work. I detested this man's ways so much, and resented his business practices. I could not stand to watch him cheat the poor market people in weight and measure for sugar, flour, codfish, and kerosene oil. He expected me to do the same things. I did quite the opposite by giving the people overweight and measure when he was not looking. I would also purposely give some of them extra change. When eventually he became aware of this, he kept me from the tills and began watching every customer interaction like a hawk. If he caught me he would get so furious and give me some diatribe about how to do business, telling me that I did not know "a dagone thing" about business. I had to suppress the urge I had to call him a thief, a liar, and a hypocrite.

Eventually this man's ways became so obnoxious to me that one Saturday after coming home from the bank, I packed my clothes and left to board with the family of my best girlfriend. Auntie seemed upset but as always she was caught in the middle of her double loyalty to her husband and her family. She always kept in touch with me and invited me to come to visit from time to time. I have come to really appreciate Auntie's quiet strength and family diplomacy. Life must have been very difficult for her. I sure wished I had my mother at these times.

6.7 What's a Mother?

This is the first significant question I asked when I was about four or five years old. The precise occasion was my effort to bond with Miss Eu's niece, and Miss Eu remarked, "She thinks you are her mother," to which I replied, "What's a mother?" The question remained significant throughout my life. The meaning of the question is becoming clear as I write about my peculiar experiences of growing up as motherless child in Jamaica. In writing this part of my life history, I can see how several attitudes in my family were reverberations of the social and economic practices of slavery days. First, as the child of a black woman I had the mark of the slave child. In slavery days, the children of black women, regardless of paternity, were automatically slaves. As such, they learned to labour as early as six years old by working in the slave masters' households, or with the pickney gang in the cane fields, or in cattle pens, or in the provision grounds. It was the mothers who shielded and protected their children from the excesses of that brutal system. After emancipation when children of six years and older could work with the consent of their mothers, very few mothers permitted their children to work. In the absence of my mother, and the presence of a father who seemed to think that he had fathered slave children, I was left to the mercy of people who still clung to those racist attitudes, which permitted them to abuse their illicit power and take advantage of innocent children. This was evident in my father, Aunt Joyce, and Mr Black. Now I understand when the folk who were suffering at the hands of such people would reflect on their vulnerability by saying, "Poor me dead woman pickney."

I can now answer the question: What's a mother? A mother is not only the woman who gives birth to children; she also loves, respects, and protects them from social and

economic predators. Auntie Black is a mother, Mrs Martin my teacher in May Pen All-Age school was a mother. I am ambivalent about this status for Miss Eu and Aunt Joyce.

The second practice that harks back to slavery days was the practice of hiring out slaves to increase the income of the slave master. In those days, whatever the slave earned was handed directly to the master and not the slave who earned it. Mr Black's claiming entitlement to my paycheck from Barclay's bank was in this vein. So was his attitude to cheating his maids and yard boys out of their fair wages.

A third practice regarded the colonial attitude towards the education of mulatto and black children who were automatically slaves in slavery days. This ideology, maintained, by the state legislature, the planter, and merchant classes, asserted that education spoils labour; therefore, the only kind of education suitable for these children was that sufficient to make them literate labourers. This was the kind of education that the state would accede to after emancipation. Mango Walk School and Carron Hall were examples of these kinds of schools. I consider that Aunt Joyce and Mr Black were acting out of this impulse, and to some extent my father was too. I do not think he had any vision for us beyond the All-Age Schools that the law compelled for the masses by the forties and fifties. The limited educational opportunities eventually created the vacuum for some churches to intervene to provide secondary education. My subsequent employment at the Bank seemed to have flown in the face of the retrogressive attitudes that surrounded me. I was graduating from domestic labour and out of the control of people who thought they had permanent control over my life chances. Mr Black and Aunt Joyce were looking to make me a servant for life – the euphemism for slave status after emancipation.

6.8 Barclay's Bank Dominion, Colonial, and Overseas

After working for nine months with the Barclays Bank, Dominion, Colonial, and Overseas, I had stirrings of needing to leave that place. I could not see a future with the bank, although I loved the work. I looked around, evaluated the status of each woman, and knew why. There was one older woman, the white wife of an official at Monymusk Sugar Company, working for pin money and who talked incessantly about her children who were at boarding school in England. The mulatto wife of a Methodist Minister made it clear that she was just working until her respectable Bardadian husband was transferred to another district. Then there was a mulatto spinster who had roots in one of the sugar plantations, who never

revealed her future aspirations. There was another mulatto single marriageable female who had too many drops of black blood to catch one of the white men in this branch or from the Kingston head office. The men often talked about her being on the shelf behind her back. The East Indian secretary was just waiting to marry one of the black sons of a rich factory owner. The brown man from Barbados could not keep his hands and lips off her body in the lunchroom. A flighty Jamaican white young woman was at the bank, actively seeking to catch a white man but had plans to go to England if she proved unable to hook the Jamaican white son of the rope factory owner. The mulatto secretary to the absent-minded white accountant was just biding her time to emigrate to Canada and to marry her high school sweet heart, then studying in the United States. The Syrian young woman of ample means talked constantly of her amorous desire for a white man. The day she heard that a single man from head office in London was coming to join the staff, was the day she made arrangements for plastic surgery on her nose and to buy some new fashionable clothes. She would come to the file room to read the correspondence to obtain all his particulars. She even planned a welcome itinerary with her family to take place very soon after the bank's formalities. Alas she was the figurative ugly duckling. She walked like a duck and looked like a duck. After the surgery she was transformed into a princess waiting in anticipation of her prince.

The tragedy here was that when the gentleman arrived, I thought he was the most boring and unattractive white man I had ever met. On his first weekend, all the white folk in the bank took him to the high-class country club in Kingston for his right colonial welcome. These country clubs then were exclusively for Jamaican white folk, and their white expatriate friends. Late at night when they were returning to May Pen, the car in which he was riding ran smack into the back of a parked truck. He was killed and so was the accountant's young wife, leaving behind three very young children. The interesting thing to me is that within a week, funeral arrangements were made for him to be buried at St Luke's Anglican Church in one of the choicest lots. The Church of England put on the most formal funeral service as befitting an Englishman who died unexpectedly in the colony.

Looking back now I see why I was a social misfit. There was I, the Red Ibo girl as my schoolmates called me, the one with the brown skin and the 'bad hair' that could not pass for white under any disguise. I loved the work and did it well to the satisfaction of my bosses, but I did not fit into the class and color hierarchy. As a filing clerk, I had the opportunity to read every single piece of correspondence during the time I was left in the

vault to file. The vault for the files was next to the cash vault and safety deposit boxes. I do not remember the details of any of the letters and invoices that I read before filing, but I picked up the bureaucratic language of authority and entitlements to land, labour, and capital. Furthermore, I saw and heard the names of those who could ask for and obtain privileges of large loans without collateral or guarantor, and those who could not. I also learned of those who created bad and doubtful debts which the bank wrote off. Moreover, I learned of the international banking networks among the Bank of London and Montreal, the Royal Bank of Canada, the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce, the Bank of Nova Scotia, and the Bank of London. We cleared cheques drawn on any of these banks and they did the same for Barclay's Bank. Each of these banks had a column in the ledgers, which reflected daily transactions.

When I do the sociogram of all the employees at the time, I can see how the racial hierarchy matched the positions in the bank and reflected the racial and color hierarchy extant in the island at the time. The manager, sub-manager, and accountant were all white and came from the head office in England. The two cashiers were Chinese – a male and a female. When the female left to get married, I was taken from the filing room and put to do the savings ledgers; and a mulatto woman was taken off savings and put in the cash wicket. When the Chinese man was away a few times, I was put in his wicket to do his cash by default. By the social mores of the time in the bank only people who looked close to white were put in front to present the face of the bank. Interestingly, The Encyclopedia of Jamaican Heritage by Olive Senior reports that the Chinese broke the colour bar of white English and Canadian banking systems in colonial Jamaica, during the 1950s.

I did so well at both customer service on savings and cash that I was sent to be the cashier at the Chapelton and Old Harbour sub-branches all by myself, with bodyguard and driver of course. At that I did well too and was appointed a cashier in the May Pen branch for the last six months of my stay. In having responsibility for the cash, I got to have the keys for the money vault while I was at work. I was entrusted to take in lodgings, and figure the payroll for some of the big sugar companies. I remember processing the payroll checks for cane workers on the Caymanas Estate. A worker's fortnightly wage was one pound, one shilling - a 'guinea'. The ledgers were hard to balance with so many of these workers paid out. I remember the huge metal trunk of money that came in from one of the big sugar companies. There were paper money bags for holding the copper and silver coins.

We calculated them by weight. One pound of silver coins was equivalent to five pounds sterling. All the paper money was carefully stacked with the Queen's head on top and in bundles according to the five-pound notes, the one-pound notes, the ten-shilling notes and the five-shilling notes. The accountant and the sub-manger liked me, and valued how reliable I was in the time of crises in balancing the ledgers, especially fortnightly and monthly. If we did not balance all the ledgers to the penny we could not go home. I can now see that all the learning of sums, that grooming throughout all my schooling, to be reliable, honest, and dependable worked in both my favour and in my employer's favour.

Without understanding the full significance then, I was the darkest employee in the May Pen branch of the bank at that time. I was aware of the social pecking order along color, race, class, and gender lines from the moment I started, but I did not know or understand the historical and economic bases of the phenomenon I was both observing and experiencing.

I came face to face with the meaning of the public political debates and protests about color prejudice in government jobs and in the banks. About this time too, there were fierce debates about expanding places in the prestigious secondary schools which formerly served the white and coloured sector of the population to include black and working class children who passed their Common Entrance at the appropriate level. There were letters to the editor written by middle and upper class coloured and white people to The Daily Gleaner bemoaning the fact their children could be sitting beside the children of their maids and yard boys. I felt socially inadequate, but I believed strongly in my ability to learn the job and do it well.

In spite of proving myself adequate for the job, I could not prove myself socially. Neither my family nor I possessed the requisite social and economic capital that counted. First of all, I had not attended one of the prestigious girls' schools such as Saint Andrew's or Immaculate Conception. I did not play tennis. I did not swim, or frequent the beaches on the North Coast. I could not drive a car and I did not belong to a well-known family that would allow me to boast any great family wealth and lore. In fact I wanted to disown my family. I did not shop at Nathan's or Issas' stores in Kingston that carried the ready-made clothes that I could not afford. My family did not have a cottage on the North Coast to offer free weekends, in exchange for other privileges. I could not give a garden party. I had nothing to exchange but my intelligence and my labour.

I observed the same socio-economic pecking order at the Trade Board, newly turned Ministry of Trade and Industry, when my Auntie Black got me a job there one summer when I was in college. During that time, I came to observe what I would now characterize as a hierarchy of deference along colour lines. It seemed to me that my Auntie Black worked very hard to pass for white in order to hold a high place in the pecking order. She did so by the way she straightened her hair, though she had relatively 'good hair', the way she dressed, by her manner of speech and in her etiquette. She was not putting on airs because she was a circumspect woman with a pleasant disposition most of the time. Aunt Joyce, by contrast changed speech registers depending to whom she was speaking. She changed her speech in like manner as she changed from her drudging clothes to her dress-up clothes. She was always more at ease in the patois and working-class ways of being.

The politics of skin colour was so confusing and full of contradictions. There were three crude categories of skin colour: white, coloured, and black. Sometimes the classification was white, brown, and black. Within the coloured category, skin tones ranged from brown, yellow, and near white, all having various subtle distinctions depending on the eye of the discriminating. The closer the skin tone to white the better socially, the closer to black the fewer advantages accorded in the society at the time. Skin colour denoted social prestige and status, which in turn, involved an irrational interplay of family connections, gradation of skin colour, ethnicity, wealth, and education.

I now wonder what social cachet I may have had, had I known and could sing the praises of my late maternal grandfather, the Honorable Charles Archibald Reid, Member of the Legislative Council and first Negro to be made Order of the British Empire (Figure 6.4). Charles Reid's biography in Who's Who and Why in Jamaica – 1939-40 (p.152) records that he was born in Christiana in January 1887; had primary school education; learned the shoemaking trade; entered a grocery business in 1919; and in 1929 became a planter. He owned citrus and banana plantations in Christiana, and, as a literate property owner of independent means, he could stand for election to the Legislative Council of the Crown Colony. He was first elected on January 30, 1935, and served on many Government Boards including the Civil Service Selection Committee. The London Gazette of 17 February 1942 records in a bulletin from Downing Street that the King had been pleased to appoint Charles Archibald Reid Esq OBE as Member of the Privy Council of the Island of Jamaica.

**Figure 6.4 The Hon. Charles Archibald Reid OBE
PC MLC** (*courtesy National Library of Jamaica*)



I am now puzzled why only the poor black folk talked to me about him, when they found out that I was his grand daughter, while my father's family kept quiet. Any family would surely be proud to boast of this accomplished person in their family.

Extending this puzzlement more widely, I noticed in my research, that in the telling of the story of Jamaica, only coloured and white men are shown as actors, when there were many notable black men in the struggle for personhood. The women's contributions, of course, went unrecorded, except in folklore.

I may have had some social capital to trade on, if my maternal grandfather were white

or brown and equally accomplished. I would have known about him if he were white. In that world of the Jamaican colony, black skin signified inferiority and exclusion from high society. Wealthy black people having a certain type of education could push the colour bar slightly. There were always the gatekeepers ready to remind such black people that they had limited membership, and could be slighted without provocation. If you were black or brown and attended one of the prestigious high schools there was some cachet there in influence; and yet, there were powerful social forces to keep people with black complexion, such as my grandfather, out. White skin without money still commanded respect, and deference, and unearned privileges. White or near white complexion could garner respect and regard long after those people lost power and prestige. I guess this is why my father always strutted

around and beat his chest when he was drunk, reminding himself and all around him of his genealogy. Maybe he drowned his shame of falling from landed gentry into near poverty by drinking rum and womanizing.

Women were always kept in a waiting pattern in the bank. It was assumed that they were waiting to get married. They were seldom promoted. Marriage or the prospect of it was the central criterion that determined the temporary and transient status of women workers in the bank. No matter how many years women worked in the bank, as soon as they got married they were demoted to temporary staff. I had an aversion to marriage. I saw no good in it from observing the lives of married women around me, and by counting the options that were closed to them. I wanted autonomy, self-reliance, and adventure more than anything else. Marriage was antithetical to my ambitions. I also wanted to get away from May Pen and from my aunts and the devouring demands of their egocentric husbands. In keenly observing how much their husbands controlled their lives and killed their spirit of freedom and adventure, I was determined that marriage was not one of my desired goals. In a few years time, however, I was to learn how religious and cultural imperatives ensnare and trap young women into the holy estate of matrimony. The catch was that although I did not want marriage, I knew I wanted children. Having children out of wedlock was literally inconceivable for young women striving to respectability. For many a young ambitious woman contemplating motherhood and companionship on her own terms, marriage was often a very high price to pay for her respectability and compromised autonomy.

The turning point at the bank came when I encouraged a male schoolmate to join the branch with me, about ten months after I had joined. He was paid a higher salary than I was. To add insult to injury I was assigned to be his mentor and to teach him the ledger system. I could not live with this unfair situation, and I could do nothing about it. That was the gender norms of the time. I had to walk away.

CHAPTER VII BECOMING A TEACHER: MICO COLLEGE 1962-1965

*When we go forth from the walls of the Mico,
Forth to lead others as we have been led,
See that we hold to ideals that are lofty,
Emulate Mico's illustrious dead.*
(College song, stanza 3)

7.1 Deciding to go to Mico College

So if I could not continue at the Bank, then where? I considered nursing, or secretarial work, but they were not for me. In high school I had failed miserably at shorthand and typing. I still cannot type. Subservience to a boss was in any event no escape from the stifling male Dominion of the Bank. The only profession within my reach was teaching. I had a large number of role models throughout my schooling, and saw a range of ways I could join the profession of women teachers. The most admirable women, in my opinion, were single middle-aged female teachers. Most of them were childless or had one child, in or out of wedlock. These women were self-confident, joyous, intelligent, ambitious, adventurous, and generous. They dressed well and carried themselves with self-assurance that said, "I am contented and in control of my life. I do not need a man to make me whole." I observed, listened, and pondered hard on the complexities of real marriages, as against the Christian ideal that was preached.

Most distressing to me then, and now, was the disproportionate amount of work that married women did. Their bodies withstood the wear and tear of pregnancy, childbirth, and lactation. After the birth of children they did mother-work in addition to housework, wife-work, and outside work all at once. Even where these women had maids, they still had to manage household operation, and take over when the maids did not show up for work. Often their husbands behaved like potentates, expecting to be waited on hand and foot. Some wives complained bitterly to their female confidants of the audacity of husbands who came home, ate the meal their wives had carefully prepared, and then soon after got dressed and went out with younger women, in the clothes that she herself had laundered. Many wives found it hard to admit to the physical abuse that their protests often brought on. Black-and-blue skin, and black eyes were carefully explained away in an effort to hide

embarrassing facts that everyone could figure out. There was no room in these women's lives for themselves. They were self-sacrifice personified.

Some were happy in this state; others were bitter and controlling of their children and husbands. I often overheard maids discussing the merits and demerits of middle-class marriages by comparing those of their employers. Invariably the concluding statement would run something like this, "Lawd missis me no wah feh married nobody. Me no wa feh mash up like Mistress *So and So*. Me no wah no husban feh tun crasses pan me yah."

A most interesting revelation came to me upon reading Philip Curtain, Two Jamaicas: The role of ideas in a Tropical Colony 1830-1865. According to Curtain, when, after emancipation, Negro women were offered Christian marriage, they refused. They saw Christian marriage as a mark of subordination and slavery to the male. Most chose to stick with common law relationships and strove to retain their status as income generators from their food growing responsibilities (p. 25).

My observation was that the most miserable women teachers were wives who tolerated the provocation of philandering husbands. On behalf of these husbands, they would keep up appearances of being happy couples in wonderful marriages. Yet society blamed them for their husbands' infidelities. I was definitely not going to be one of those wives. I had no intention of walking in the footsteps of wives who willingly or unwillingly carried the burden of blame for wilful actions and choices that their husbands made against their vows of fidelity.

At nineteen years of age I had important life decisions to make about my life as a woman and about my self-sufficiency. I sent for the prospectuses of Shortwood College for women, and Mico College, a coeducational institution. I opted for Mico College because I liked the fact that the institution had trained a long list of prominent leaders in the island and beyond. Although most of the graduates were men, it did not faze me, because we had been told in school that 'man' and 'mankind' included women – and I believed it. I saw myself as equal, and at times plainly superior to my male colleagues. I often out-performed them, especially in both verbal combat and academic subjects.

I filled out the application and sent it in. I remember vividly the question which asked for religious affiliation. I thought of Auntie Black's insistence on my confirmation and regular attendance at St. Gabriel's Anglican Church in May Pen. I had the distinct feeling that membership in the Anglican Church was beneficial. I had seen the influence of

testimonials written by the Rector. I also predicted that my attendance at high school, even though I had not completed my 'A' levels, would work in my favour – most applicants to Mico College, in those days, came from those who were successful in the Third Jamaica Local Examinations. In my mother's day this exam had permitted candidates to study to be a teacher on the job, and take what was called the pupil teacher exam and to receive a certificate.

Shortly afterwards, I received an invitation to write the entrance examination. The opportunity came earlier than I expected. My plan was to work for another year at the Bank, and save up enough money to pay my way through college. I did not expect that I would pass the examination on the first try, so I planned on trying a second time. I nonetheless decided to write the examination, and in fact it was not the kind of examination you could prepare for.

One Saturday in April or May 1962, I took time off from work and with my twelve-year old cousin went to Mico College in Kingston, thirty-six miles away to write the entrance examination. I estimate that some two or three hundred of us sat on that occasion. I came out feeling pleased with my performance, and justifiably. Two months later, I was both pleased and anxious to receive the announcement that I had passed the written examination and should report for an oral examination some time in July 1962. The anxiety I felt was because I was not yet financially ready to go to college. But I put these worries aside, and otherwise remember no nervousness; I only remember exuberance and pride at making another big decision about my life, independently of my aunts and their husbands. My faith was very strong that I would be successful, and so I was.

7.2 The Independence Batch 1962 - 1965

Just as the country was busy preparing for independence celebration to be held on August 6, 1962, I was preparing for my own independent career to begin at Mico in September 1962. I was among the Independence Batch of one hundred and fifty students – one hundred men, and fifty women. We were hailed with great fanfare as the biggest batch to be admitted to date. Moreover, this batch included the largest number of young women. Prior to that year, the college had struggled resolutely to maintain its all-male membership, and when forced to admit women, had admitted only married or older women, who would presumably be of no sexual interest to the men.

In my year, single women were admitted. There were also several more profound changes, resulting from student demonstrations of the previous year. At the time, a food strike by the students had hit the news. A Mico colleague who was part of the protests has helped me recall several of the allegations. Some students alleged that they were served corn beef or dry bread for breakfast seven days per week. Seniors accused the principal of intimidation and discrimination tactics, similar to those of the British colonizers. Some were bitter about what they perceived as a poor-quality curriculum. The style of American psychology then taught was particularly loathsome. My friend recalled with some bitterness having to learn what Shockley and Jensen had advanced, concerning the so-called 'inferior intelligence' of black children. Such vocabulary as the 'disadvantaged' and 'culturally-deprived' did nothing to raise them up, or give them a sense of agency in building a new Jamaica. Tutors too came up for criticism, for allegedly treating students as children.

Another colleague who was part of the protest recalls sexual repressiveness. He particularly resented one tutor of a certain faith who taught 'Christian Ethics'. This tutor also owned a locksmith business. He was legendary, even in my time, for being able to sniff out fornication in whichever room it was occurring, and using his skills to break in on the unhappy malefactors. He was known as the 'sex police'. My colleague also recalls repressive measures taken to regulate relationships between men and women students. Besides attempting to regulate male-female interactions there were rumors of homosexuality among and between some students and tutors. Matters around sexuality were so complex and fraught with Victorian Christian morality that dealing with them was said to cause a big rift, and an exodus of some excellent tutors.

By September 1962, the college had begun reforms that continued during my three years and beyond. One reform that affected my batch was the change of the beginning of our school year from January to September necessitating two weeks of orientation, rather than one.

Women were to report to the Women's Hostel at Trevennion Road, where we met in the main building by two of the senior women. This building was an abandoned private woman's hospital, with a large room upstairs that would have been the public ward. This was now finished with three bunk beds. Then there were a series of private rooms along an L-shaped hallway, each of which was furnished with a bunk bed and a small closet. Mrs Mills, our much loved Housemother, had her suite upstairs too. Downstairs was the

reception area, with a settee and chair to receive guests. Under the stairwell was a large desk and telephone. Receiving telephone calls generally attracted a lot of attention and eavesdropping. On either side of this area there were small rooms which held one or two bunk beds, depending on the size.

There was another small house to the east of this building in which the Music tutor lived. Further to the east, there was a fair-sized two-story house in which the Home Economics tutor lived with her English husband and their baby. She had been abroad, had studied Home Economics at Chelsea College, I believe, and had returned with her English husband, and her English manner of speaking. It was while babysitting for them on one occasion that I was introduced to blue cheese. I could not wait to go and tell my friends that these people ate cheese with 'junjo' (mold) in it. All I knew of cheese then was the soft cheddar cheese imported from New Zealand, which I thought was all there was to cheese.

In an adjoining property to the west of this main building, there was Hostel 'B', which housed fewer women but with similar furnishings of single and bunk beds. Accommodations were modest but clean and well-maintained. The place smelled of floor wax from the regular maintenance of the wood floors. We had all of our laundry done for us, except our underwear – the men, meanwhile, enjoyed fully-laundered underpants. Our suppers were delivered daily to the hostel, as well as our weekend meals. We had house devotions at nine o'clock, and 'lights out' at ten o'clock. We could study in the dining room after ten if we had to. Creature comforts were good.

I would not have been able to afford further education without the generous Government subsidy that covered room and board. Mico Teachers' College was often called the poor man's university. All we had to provide were our textbooks, transportation, and pocket money. When my small savings ran out I turned to sewing to earn my pocket and textbook money. Auntie Black often gave me gifts of new shoes and fabrics to make new clothes. She was good at tracking down sales in quality merchandise at Nathan and Issa stores. I particularly remember my first pair of pearlized grey Bally shoes, which she gave me.

Orientation began on Sunday morning in the hostel with a certain senior lady waking us all up at five o'clock and having us do laps around the grounds at the Big Hostel. I resented this so much, especially as I deemed that she needed the workout far more than I did. She had us do this every morning throughout orientation. I cannot now remember if we

had to find our way to our respective churches that first Sunday. More than likely we all had to report for chapel service on Sunday afternoon. As part of our clothes list, we had to have two white dresses and a pair of white shoes for chapel services. I have not worn a white dress since college, and I detest white shoes. We also had to wear a kind of uniform to classes, comprising dark-coloured skirts, and pastel blouses in coordinated colour schemes. The senior ladies and female tutors policed our necklines and hemlines. In the age of the thigh-high micro-mini, and the body-hugging hobble skirts, it proved much more difficult to police the skirts than the blouses. The fashionable peter pan and revers collars, and jewel necklines revealed just enough neck and chest to be acceptable. There was so much useless fuss made about the shade of skirts that we may as well have been asked to wear uniforms. I did not mind so much because in complying, I limited the 'free show' for leering and lecherous eyes.

On the Monday of the first week of orientation we had to report to the college campus, about a mile away, for breakfast at seven thirty. After breakfast we had sessions on college rules, regulations, deportment. The senior men and women forewarned us of the initiation, into our status of 'grubs' and 'grubbesses', which would be carried out, when the fearsome second-year men arrived two weeks later. We were told to go along with the 'ragging', because it was meant to be fun. It was the tradition for the second year men to do the 'initiating'. A few of my mischievous batchmates had had an early taste of this initiation in the first week for being "fat", that is, being impertinent to our seniors. This part of orientation was the equivalent of boot camp.

The highlight of the week was the social, which occurred either on Friday or Saturday night, for which we dressed in our party best. By this time, crinolines were out and the hobble skirt was in. I did not care for that style either but I loved the 'A-line' skirts and 'princess line' dresses that were becoming fashionable. I was happy not to have the self-consciousness of high school. I dressed to "puss back foot" as we used to say, and went to the social to see and be seen. No more the bobbing mushroom of high school days; I thought I was petite and rather stylish in my pink and white eyelash-cotton dress and white shoes. In those days I wore no jewelry or make-up, except lipstick. The really sharp dressers among the men wore bolero jackets and continental pants, short enough to show their white socks. The twist and mash potato dances were on their way out. On the way in were the local sounds of Bob Marley and the Wailers who gave us the Ska and Watusi dances. The local

popular music was growing, with the encouragement of the young, newly-minted Harvard anthropology graduate who, as our Minister of Youth and Community Development, started the annual festival of arts and music: the Honorable Edward Seaga.

The soundmen set up on the platform in classroom B. Among them I noticed a rather handsome young man operating a reel-to-reel Grundig tape recorder, which played several tunes in a row so we could dance several tunes non-stop.

I felt free, lovely, and sexy (Figure 7.1) and chose to dance with this young man. Contrary to what Mrs Harvey taught me in deportment classes, at Clarendon College, about waiting for the boy to ask me to dance, I went straight up and asked him to dance. I heard the voice of Sam Cooke singing in my head, "Cupid draw back your bow and let your arrows fly straight to my lover's heart for me." I did not even wait for Cupid either. We danced the night away and like a perfect gentleman he walked me home to Trevennion Road after the party, in time for

nine o'clock devotions and ten o'clock bedtime. (If we ever came in from a party after ten o'clock, we had to sign a book and indicate the arrival time home.) The young man who walked me home that night was to become my husband four years later. We are the parents of three offspring. To these wonderful children, I am a mother.

During the second week of orientation the second years joined us. It was their job to 'rag' us and reduce us to the slimy grubs and grubbesses that, as lowly first year men and

Figure 7.1 Yvonne in College, c. 1963



women, we should properly understand ourselves to be. I had never seen such two-legged barbarians in my life. Commands issued by the men were such as:

“Grubbess get over here and butter the senior man’s toast.”

“Don’t you hear the senior man’s orders?”

“Grubbess get down and polish my shoes.”

“Who do you think you are, grubbess?”

“You are nothing but a slimy little paramecium.”

“You were nothing but a little monkey in the zoo with the senior man.” (This, referring to a date at the Hope Botanical Gardens that I had with a senior man whom I knew before entering college.)

I would have none of their boorishness, and I disobeyed every command. These second year men chose every opportunity to torment me and “cut me down to size.” I was provoked at breakfast time in Mills Hall dining table, at mid-morning teatime, at lunch hour, at afternoon tea break, and after classes. I would not give an inch. Their objective was to humiliate and intimidate me until I broke down and cried. By the conventions of ragging, it was supposed to end at the end of orientation. The intention was that by this time we timid newcomers would have been broken and made docile. Some of the men were alleged to be identifying their female ‘love interest’ through this process. If they were trying to impress me as he-men, they could not have been more mistaken – I thought of them only with contempt.

The bullying clowns kept up this ragging for six whole weeks, culminating in a show-down one Friday afternoon when some twenty or thirty second-year men swarmed me in front of Mills Hall and the Science Block as I was on my way home. Those third-year men, who were not yet weaned off this animal-like behaviour but who would not openly indulge in ragging, took up positions as spectators on the second floor balcony of the science block. These two-legged animals made a circle around me and started hurling commands and insults at me. When I refused to answer them and attempted to walk out of the circle, two men criss-crossed their legs and tried to have me step over. Of course I would not attempt to do that because they would not have hesitated to trip me and to have my skirt above my head. Men were shouting commands from all directions of the circle, “Grubbess! Don’t turn your back on the senior man.” “Grubbess! I am talking to you, look at me.” Their anger and frustration at my obstinacy boiled to a menacing chant, “Cry grubbess cry,

cry grubbess, cry.” Like hell! I was not going to give such cowardly creatures the satisfaction of seeing me cry in front of them.

At the moment when I knew not how this was all going to end, a senior gentleman, Mr Fairweather, walked up to the circle of angry men and attempted to lead me out of the circle. By the rules of deference to the senior man, they should have stopped, stepped aside, and permitted safe passage, so to speak. Instead, a few true ‘wooligans’ kept on shouting insults at me. Two of the men again crossed their legs again to trip me. Mr Fairweather stood firm, stared them down and they retreated reluctantly. I was both scared and angry. If I had the physical prowess, I would have thrown feminine modesty and respectability to the wind, and vanquished each one with my bare hands and the fire in my rage. Writing this now I can discern echoes from slavery days. Was this a re-enactment of the public humiliation of the rebel woman?

Mr Fairweather and I walked in dead silence to Trevennion Road. I was so full of tears, I could not open my mouth to thank him. I would not have him see me cry, for all his gallantry and compassion. I just bowed low and shook his hands. I have remained grateful to this day for Mr Fairweather’s chivalry. I went straight to my bed and cried in my pillow for hours. I fell asleep, resolved to pack my suitcase and leave the next day. But where, oh where would I go? I weighed the future possibilities of staying in College as against going out to nowhere. I stayed.

I vowed I would never participate in the ragging of first year students nor would I condone such behaviors from senior students when I witnessed them. I kept my promise and engendered strong resentment from many of my batch mates, when I was a senior lady and a member of the hostel committee. I ruled against one of my senior ladies at the women’s hostel for commanding a first-year student to bow down and polish her shoes. When the first-year woman refused, my batch mate slapped her on the cheek and accused her of insubordination. The committee met to hear the student’s complaint, and I was expected to condone the act, and be complicit in a barbaric practice that bred nothing but disrespect and hate. I had nothing good to say to the perpetrators. I am still enraged. I can only liken the practice of ragging to slavery days when Africans were brought to Jamaica as the first stop after the Middle Passage and left to undergo ‘seasoning’ (Higman, 1995) as their initiation into their new status as slaves. After ‘seasoning’ they were deemed docile, and ready to be distributed to plantations in other islands and on the mainland of British North

American plantations. Those who refused to be rendered servile were banished to the harshest conditions.

During my College years I had my struggles and challenges. I had to struggle against the underlying chronic melancholy and pain of my earlier years, that at times threatened to plunge me into deep depression. The loneliness that I felt for my mother and my need to find out who she was continued to plague my soul. I was unable to unravel the mystery that seemed to surround her and her family, in my father's family. With my sister's recent death and my estrangement from my two aunts who helped raise me, I felt lonely, abandoned, and mournful. I was bereft of any family feeling. I could not suppress the impulse to begin the search for my mother.

7.3 Who is My Mother?

One-day, during my first year in College, I decided to show up at the Cross Roads Post Office to introduce myself to Miss Muriel Reid, head post mistress, whom I had learned, from snatches of overheard conversation, was my mother's only sibling. I wanted to see if I might get a glimpse of what my mother might have looked like. Besides, I had hoped that she would have been glad to see me, and to tell me why she, my mother's sister, had not taken an interest in me, a baby when she died. My expectation was based on the custom that the mother's family rallied around her when her marriage was in trouble. Furthermore, the custom was that should the mother die and leave infants, it was usually her family that took care of the infant children. I wanted to understand why this custom had been broken.

When summoned, she came to the counter, looked at me with the face of a dead stranger, and asked me whom I was. When I introduced myself as her niece, she grimaced derisively, made a sharp about-turn, and marched back to her office. Luckily, I was by myself and there was no one to see my shame and devastation. I stood on the steps of the Cross Roads Post Office and wept. Trying to find out who my mother was has proven to be the most difficult quest for me.

I could not go to my Auntie Black whose office at the Ministry of Trade and Industry was in fact close by, to tell her of this incident. I was deterred by the memory of her forbidding my sister Sonia from meeting again with a Mr Goodwin, whom she had met once and who said he was related to my mother, on her mother's side. My brother Trevor was my only confidant but we lived in different worlds by now. Months later when I visited my

brother, I told him of the incident. He smiled a painful knowing smile and told me of his recollection of a day, shortly after the death of my mother's father, the Honorable Charles Archibald Reid, when Muriel and her lawyer came to Toll Gate where they were living, and ordered our mother off the property. Trevor started to cry and said that he remembered our mother asking Muriel to wait until she finished making her Sunday dinner and feeding her family. My brother said that Muriel and her lawyer refused. If this were true, then, this incident would have occurred sometime in 1944 or 1945. Her father died in September 1944.

The opportunity to continue the search came some time in 1964 around the end of my second year in Teacher's College. I went to visit Aunt Joyce. This time, when she insisted that I accompany her to visit her brother, I was agreeable, not for the reasons she thought, but because I saw an opportunity to be able to see the grey tin case again. I had disowned my father since I was fourteen, so I was not at all interested in seeing him. I would however be required to fake daughterly affection and deference. When we arrived at my father's house somewhere in Old Harbour, Aunt Joyce knocked on the little wrought-iron gate. The maid came to greet us. Aunt Joyce inquired if Mr Shorter was at home. She replied, "Missa Shaata nat home. You fambilly?"

"Yes I am his sister, Joyce Hilton." Pointing to me, she said, "This is his daughter, Yvonne." While the introductions were going on I was busy peering in the door from outside. The familiar Simmons bed had a cover that hung too short. I saw the familiar gray tin case under his Simmons bed. The maid invited us in and offered us a drink of water. During the awkward small talk that followed between Aunt Joyce and her inferior, I moved to the bedroom and pulled out the case like an old friend.

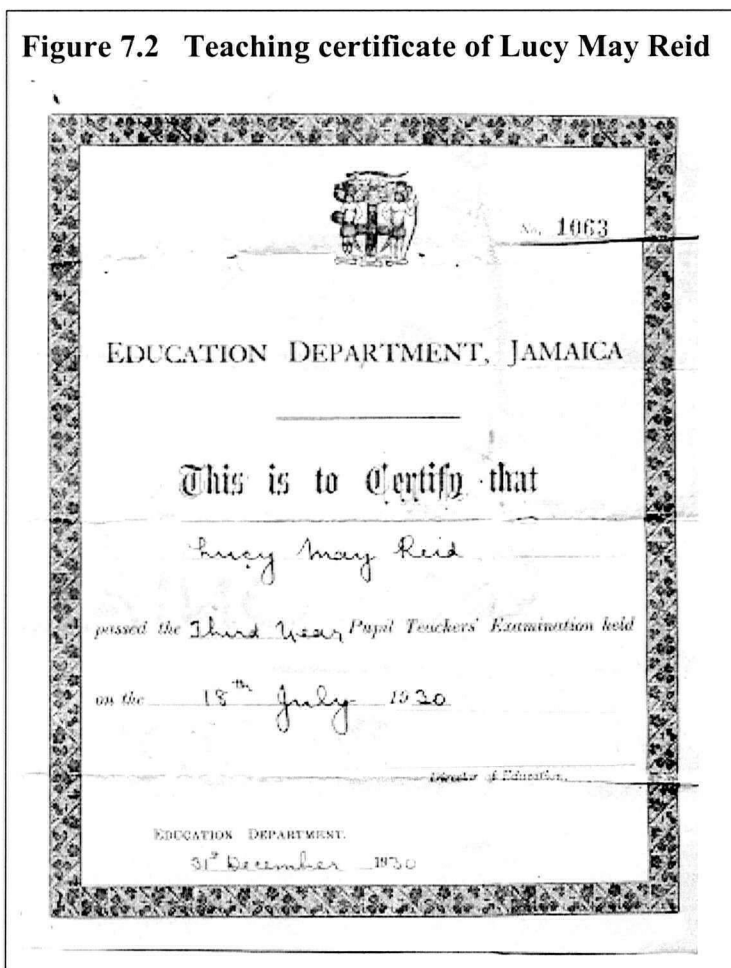
I opened it. To my very pleasant surprise the contents were as I remembered, only dog-eared and dirty from my play when we lived in Louisiana, years before. I saw something I had not noticed before: a teacher's certificate with the name Lucy May Reid written on it (Figure 7.2). It was the name of my mother. I took it out and showed it to Aunt Joyce who looked singularly unimpressed. I was impressed because this was the first revelation that my mother was more than a dressmaker. It also gave me a hint of the deep resentment Aunt Joyce had towards my mother. My mother had had more education than Aunt Joyce. By the racial social conventions of the times, a black woman should not have had a higher level of education than a so-called white woman. I now understood what Aunt

Joyce meant when she would say to my sister Sonia when she talked back to Aunt Joyce fearlessly, “Just like yuh black mumma who thought she was better than me.”

I kept the certificate, put it away carefully, and after a while forgot all about it. I did not even discuss my finding with anyone in my family, or my friends. It was not until 1990 after I had moved to Canada that I would look at it again. The circumstances were rather sentimental and somewhat melodramatic. I was at home recovering from a hysterectomy and meditating on how my womb had been so violently excised from my body and disposed of in the hospital garbage bin. I began to mourn for this – literally – vital organ, one that had given life to three healthy human beings, but which I had never seen.

I started thinking about the meaning of giving birth, and of motherhood. Once again I broke out in sorrowful tears that I did not know my mother, and had no trace of her. I must also have been thinking about my lost innocence and unrequited love. Mysteriously, I got up and went to a trunk that had all my important papers and keepsakes, such as love letters from the father of my children, before we were married. I had not looked at these for some twenty-five years. I did not know what I was looking for. I opened a case in which I stored these love letters from my former husband and there among them was my mother's certificate, neatly folded. She had been awarded this certificate in 1930, exactly sixty years ago. S. A. Hammond, Director of Education, signed the certificate. I found some articles of his in the Journal of Negro Education, while I was searching for articles on education in Jamaica in the thirties and forties.

Figure 7.2 Teaching certificate of Lucy May Reid



This certificate remains my only material link to my mother. I have no recollection of my mother's face, her scent, her body, or her love. My life has been about motherlust. It is consoling to know that I followed her footsteps to become a teacher and in a twist of irony a seamstress too. Women who knew that I was Lucy May Reid's daughter would tell me what a very fine seamstress she was. Her acts of kindness and generosity were repeated to me often. I feel so deprived for not having known her.

Putting together pieces of hearsay and information I received recently from Auntie Black, it was around 1945 that my mother lost her mind and was admitted to Bellevue Asylum, where she later died. I have not yet been able to ascertain the exact date of her death. She was buried in an unmarked grave. I cannot even find the place where her bones rest, that I may go and pay my respects. My mother is lost to me without a trace except for the clouded silhouette appearing in the newspaper clipping of her father's funeral procession. I do not even know what of her genetic features I carry. The sadness I feel about the loss of my mother will not leave me.

In writing these stories and researching the answers to important questions that arose during the course of writing them, I learned that my mother was the "outside daughter." The bastardy laws meant that she could not be fully and equally recognized in law and in life as her father's child, even though he gave her his name. Auntie Black has pointed out that according to the prejudices of the times, it was difficult for her father, who became a prominent politician, to 'own' her publicly. Giving the outside child his name was a strong statement of acceptance and recognition of his paternity. The wife and lawful siblings usually hate and resent the outside child and its mother, even without the added insult of sharing the father's name. The outside child usually carries the mother's name, and was stigmatized to live in the shadows of lawful children.

When I compare the different life chances that were given to these two sisters, it reveals much of the family and legal battles, which may have been fought to distinguish lawful from unlawful progeny. Muriel Reid was sent to Saint Andrew's Girls School and later became the head postmistress of a very large post office. Saint Andrew's Girls School was the school for wealthy white and coloured people, and a few children of the so-called respectable black people. When I asked myself why there would have been different kinds of schooling for two sisters who carried their father's name, I have come to learn that the grammar schools of the day refused to admit illegitimate children. (Senior, 1991 p. 23) This

might explain why my mother got the best that 'private lessons' in the All-Age schools could offer. These schools were designed in the nineteenth century for the children of former slaves. Since she could not go to secondary school, the next best thing was that she should learn a trade. With grammar school education from one of the finest girls' schools in the island, Muriel must have been regarded as the child of the respectable black man who had been voted to the legislature, mostly by the white people of Northern Manchester. My Auntie Black likes to remind me of this fact when she breaks her silence briefly enough to answer my probing questions.

Lucy Reid was allowed to remain in the All-Age Schools of the time which were meant to prepare literate labourers. She was allowed to rise further above this by being given private lessons in order to pass her pupil teacher exams, so that she could teach in the elementary schools. My Aunt has insisted that my mother wanted to be a seamstress rather than a teacher, and therefore her father sent her to a renowned seamstress in Kingston to learn her trade. My mother may have chosen to be a seamstress out of practical economic necessity of being my father's wife, of having, no doubt, to shoulder the full responsibility of raising her children. In those days, to be a seamstress was a perfectly respectable trade. Seamstresses were able to earn a very good living.

The shunning of the "outside child" was demonstrated clearly when I obtained and read the report of her father's state funeral in The Daily Gleaner. Although my mother was included in the photographs and named as Mrs Lucy Shorter, she was never recognized as his daughter. Only Muriel, his lawful daughter, was so recognized. I can only imagine how this must have hurt my mother, especially after I learned, during the course of this research, that my mother was her father's right hand during his political campaigning and electoral victories.

By the articles of the inheritance laws, illegitimate children had no rights of inheritance. Muriel, being the lawful daughter, could disinherit my mother with impunity. It seems that Muriel disinherited more than my mother. During one of my visits to Christiana to find people who might remember my mother and her famous father, a nephew said, "That Muriel, she is an awful woman." He revealed that the family feuds that followed Maas Charlie's death were so nasty that some family members have not spoken to her since her father's death.

The surviving members of my mother's family, on her mother's side, refused to speak to Trevor and me. I can only speculate that dreadful things must have happened to cause such irrevocable damage in the families. I have never learned where my father was in this entire crisis or where my mother's people were. Was she so totally and utterly alone in the world? The more I came to know of my mother's existence the sadder and more depressed I became, now as then. I kept these revelations to myself, for the most part, to spare my brother painful remembrances. My brother is seven years older than I am, and he witnessed much. To his death, he carried the burden of the family atrocities he witnessed.

In College, my challenge was to shake chronic depression and bouts of melancholy, which I had to keep to myself. I plunged into my studies in the hope that they would help me rise above the pain and to enable me to live a better life in the future. I knew full well the importance of this educational opportunity. In order to do my best, I developed a steely determination to suppress these memories and to get on with life. My brain was ravenous for knowledge; my soul was hungry for adventure – to study, to travel, to work abroad and travel around the world. In fact the urge to travel was so great that I planned to take a trip, while I was in College, on the *Federal Palm* or the *Federal Maple*, two boats which Canada had given to the failed West Indies Federation, to facilitate freedom of movement among all the British West Indian Islands. Taking this ten-day boat trip was like the grand tour for the University of the West Indies students then. Regrettably, I never did take the trip because I simply did not have the money.

But my spirit was in flight. The conditions in College were just right for me to devote all my time to study. I did not live in the oppressive households of my aunts and I did not have to do housework or shop work. I was now independent and I felt both confident and scared at once. I did not have to worry about my material comfort. The Government of Jamaica paid for our room and board, and our tuition. Moreover, the tutors were very caring and respectful. I got along well with most of my batch mates, although I was by no means 'popular'. Some of the men called me the arrogant bitch, especially at times when they were talking foolishness, to which I would respond with an authority that they so resented coming from a woman.

I can still remember one idiot who always jumped up like a jack-in-the-box at every students' council meeting to interrupt and obstruct the proceedings. The meetings

were run according to parliamentary procedures and Robert's Rules of Order. The idiot would jump up and shout, "On a pint of aada Mr. President, a pint of aada." When he proved to himself and the audience that he had no point to make, he would change course and babble just to hear himself speak to an audience. If the president asked him to cease and desist interruption, he would jump up again and bellow, "On a pint of privilege Mr President, a pint of privilege." I would invariably walk out of the meeting to the strong roar of objections by the other fools. Some of the women thought I was 'extra' (extravagant, or boastful). While this attitude towards me bothered me sometimes, I felt confident, free to grow and to be joyful. Looking back now I realize that while I attended Mico College, I had the comforts of school and home, all in one. I use my transcript as a guide to revisit my college experiences and to pay tribute to three of the best years of my life.

7.4 The College Curriculum

Education studies included child psychology, school management, principles of education, history of education, and practice teaching. Child psychology redefined childhood for me, and consequently held endless fascination. We were taught that children were unique and developed according to their own timetable. Play was actually good for children! The role of heredity versus character training began a debate that ran through all three years of college. I had to work to overcome a mindset, which believed strongly that children were born to be who they were and no amount of training would change that. The folks in their frustration with obstinate child behavior would say, for example, "Ah jus so im baan. Yuh cyant do nuttin bout it."

The most important influence of psychology throughout my three years in college was that it offered me the opportunity to think about others and myself in non-judgmental, and positive, ways. The one thing I did not endorse then, as now, was the way in which teachers were encouraged to bring specific family practices into school as a way of explaining and excusing some child behaviour and performance. I do agree that home life affects children's learning readiness and ability to sustain learning, but I believe far too much emphasis is placed there. Teachers forget sometimes that school can be and often is the refuge and stimulating learning environment for many children. School has the power to make-up for some socio-economic deprivations. The schools such as Carron Hall Infant School, May Pen All-Age School, and Clarendon College that I wrote of earlier were

learning havens for me, and gave me a better sense of who I could become. My home conditions more often than not worked against my learning and personal uplift. Good schools with kind and caring teachers can and do counteract the negative influences of home. In the society in which I grew up, poverty and illiteracy were very prevalent, and schooling offered a way out and away from these conditions. Most parents and guardians wanted their children to “take book learning.” It was a source of pride for parents, grandmothers especially, to say of their son or daughter, “Im have brain fe tek book learning.”

We had little curriculum school management, as such, but much on principles of education. This subject offered so many ways of teaching that I could not wait to get out on my practicum to try them out. The idea of teaching all subjects from a centre of interest immersed my pupils and me in many creative opportunities for inquiry and critical thinking. To this day the project method and “centre interest” remain sound principles of my teaching. I use them in my teaching from elementary through university level. Another sound principle of education that has stayed with me is teaching to develop citizens to live and work in a democratic society. John Dewey was the source for our understanding of education and democracy. My understanding of the child-centred classroom, providing multi-sensory active experiences, stood me well in my practicum.

The history of education in our first and second years was mostly the history of education in Europe. Such names as Pestalozzi, Comenius, Montessori, Froebel stand out. The folk schools of Scandinavia and the progressive education movement in England and the United States fascinated me. Through learning about educational philosophies and the work of these educators, I traveled imaginatively to Poland, Norway, Germany, Italy, and the United States. In our third-year, we learned about the history of education in Jamaica and the British West Indies, from emancipation to the present. What a stark contrast it was to be learning about the ideal learning conditions of a German Kindergarten and a Montessori classroom, with all their learning toys and learning centres, to teaching over-crowded classrooms with chalk and talk. This contrast inspired imaginative ways of inventing toys and teaching aids to get children excited about learning and exploring.

Practice teaching was my greatest love. It was a bit like the serious imaginative play of my childhood, full of invention and acting. We had two practice teaching periods per year – a short one, followed by an extended one. In the first year, we studied the psychology, methodology, and practice teaching for the elementary curriculum. In the second year, we

did the same for junior grades of the secondary and comprehensive schools. In our third year we chose to specialize in either elementary or secondary teaching. I chose to concentrate on secondary teaching.

Academically we needed much more content to teach at the secondary level. This did not stop me from applying for a job to teach Home Economics in a secondary technical high school, after one year teaching elementary. I wanted a greater intellectual challenge than elementary school allowed. I loved the elementary children; they and I were of a size and curiosity that was full of good humour, exciting adventures in story telling, and the magic of science. It was sheer magic to hold a class of over forty Grade Seven boys and girls spellbound with my story telling and drama. Science experiments on air pressure, pumps and hydraulic systems, plant transpiration, photosynthesis, and the study of plant and animal habitats pulled the children into hours and days of conversations about their physical universe. I was one with them in their wonder.

7.5 I Develop My Approach to Teaching

My approach to teaching crystallized around my understanding of the child-centered classroom, as expounded by R A Shirley in his Principles of Education Classes. Shirley's mantra is: "Children learn by doing." In consequence, he takes trouble to demonstrate as many strategies as possible, by which we could teach children to be independent learners. I understood my role to be the magician who charmed the children with multi-sensory activities in all their subjects. Mrs Ivy Williams, psychology tutor in my second year, emphasized the multi-sensory nature of learning – the greater number of senses we engage in teaching the more likely the children will remember the materials taught, and the more children will be likely to make connections and ask questions. I designed learning activities to lead the children to generate their own questions and to engage in speculation, inference making, debates, and questioning. I enthused the children in Language Arts, and General Science, my passions. Mrs Merton Wright, our first-year language arts tutor, did an excellent job of teaching Language Arts and Reading readiness. By using dioramas, flannel boards, cardboard televisions, puppet theatre, and drama improvisations, I could hold a class of forty to fifty children spellbound in the story telling experience.

The patois was generally forbidden in the classroom. In those days, it had no legitimacy, as it was regarded as the language of the illiterate, and a sign of retardation. I

permitted children to speak it because, in the patois, the children could demonstrate superb comprehension and joy. Joy and laughter were important elements of my classes – they still are. In their writing exercises, I would help children translate the patois into Standard English. Many years later when I studied socio-linguistics, I learned that what I was doing was called code-switching or learning when to use different registers.

General Science offered the children and myself endless opportunities to be curious about phenomena in the world of plants, animals, soils, the wind and rain, habitats and life cycles. Looking back now, I can see that I was building upon the interest ignited by my Carron Hall Infant School nature walks. The UNESCO sourcebook of Science Teaching, to which Mr Hutchison, our science tutor, introduced to us, provided numerous examples of simple science experiments and projects grounded in children's everyday experiences. The most exciting thing for me, then, was that I did not need a laboratory in order to teach kids science. A science corner in the classroom with a balanced aquarium, among other projects, kept the children enchanted and engaged. Nature walks with simple hand lenses introduced children to microscopic life forms and structures. I complemented these sources with Scientific American magazine that I myself bought at the F W Woolworth store located at Cross Roads close to the College. The illustrations and explanations were so good that they were another source of my own science education. Student teachers could go to the United States Information Services (USIS) to obtain free science textbooks. Though most of the examples were about conditions and examples of the temperate zones, there was much that I could adapt to the local environment. Although I was generally weak in mathematics, I expended great effort in understanding and translating the concepts into practice, and to concrete applications. By doing this, I over learned the concepts so that I could overcome my insecurity about teaching the subject.

My final teaching practice remains a high point in my maturity. The classroom at Greenwich Town All-Age School was one of those two-walls-and-a-roof buildings, with long benches and desks anchored in the concrete floor. I applied the best of the privileges of teaching and learning that appealed to my intellect and personality, to creating exciting learning. The teachers in the school were fascinated by how this four-foot eleven inches young woman, weighing just ninety-five pounds, could get the children to “eat out of her hands.” I made a point of sitting with the children whenever they were doing group work or seatwork. Since the children and I were about the same size, the head teacher, Mr Blair, got

confused the first time he came to my class. It took him quite some time to identify me among the children.

It was the custom that selected classrooms of outstanding student teachers might have a surprise visit by a team of three examiners. One day, the examining team, comprising Mr Glen Owen, the principal; Mr D R B Grant, a renowned teacher educator; and Mr L H Facey, my economics tutor, arrived to observe. Happily, the children were engaged in one of those absorbed blissful moments of peace and quiet as they worked away. This quiet was a significant contrast to most classrooms at the time, which were characterized by a din over and through which teachers were obliged to lecture. Sitting there among the children, I did not get up immediately to greet the visitors. We were advised to continue with our teaching when the examiners arrived. Well, these three examiners walked around the class, looked at the children's work, and stood from time-to-time looking quizzically around the room. The children looked from them to me until a boy blurted out, "Lawd Gad, teacha so sumall dat dem no see har." The class burst out laughing and I stood up. "There you are," said Mr Owen.

While the children settled down and continued their work, the examiners looked over my lesson plans, teaching aids, and engaged me in a sophisticated conversation about my philosophy of teaching and evaluation of learning. The examiners were impressed. I was elated that the approach to teaching that I was developing was seen as having great merit. I earned a distinction for my practicum, and at graduation, won the teaching prize. The realization that I could teach without the aid of straps, whips, and intimidation was a spiritual triumph. A good curriculum, and high positive regard for children's integrity, have served me well as the schoolteacher I became.

7.6 Academic Studies

Academic studies provided broad liberal studies in the first two years. The menu of courses comprised: English composition and grammar; English literature; mathematics; general science; history; geography; economics; religious knowledge; music theory and practice; art; crafts; physical education; Spanish and home economics. I found the load of thirteen subjects in my first year, and twelve in my second to be too many.

There were four of these subjects that caused me distress – mathematics, music theory and practice, art, and physical education. Of the four, mathematics gave me the

greatest frustration. I was put in remedial mathematics perhaps after my first term. In my second year, I remember Mrs Ballentyne working until she sweated, to get me learn a language which I seemed incapable of comprehending. In going through my college keepsakes, I came across some examination problems of my second year. Now as then, I cannot reason these problems out. Here is an example of a problem: "A person due south of a lighthouse observes that his shadow east at the top is 24 feet long. On walking 100 yards due to east he finds his shadow to be 30 feet. Supposing him to be 6 feet high, find the height of the light." I earned a 'D' in mathematics in both years. I have not improved since.

The language of music was little better. The concepts of scales, intervals, sharps, flats, and chords of music theory make no sense to me. Such concepts as pitch, timbre, melody, and harmony stayed with me just long enough for the exams. The definitions of fugues, oratorio, symphonies, and arias were a little easier, because I could listen and appreciate these forms, now as then. In fact, the college had very brilliant musicians and music educators who trained melodious choirs with piano, violin and recorder accompaniment. Many of my batch mates excelled in music. For me however it was at the edge of my abilities. My efforts to learn the recorder was a most humiliating experience. This instrument was required, in order to teach music and to help 'sol-fa' sheet music notation. When I was in my second year, it somehow came about that I needed to teach Brahms's Lullaby using the recorder. For all the practising that I had done, I could get neither the tune nor the timing right. Not only were the children unable to recognize the tune, neither could I. I gave up and have never attempted to teach music again.

7.7 Remembering My Tutors Warmly

During my time at the College, we had the best music educators in the island – Miss Olive Lewin, Mr Arthur Clarke, Mr Lloyd Hall, and Mr Morris. There were numerous accomplished musicians among the students also; many having been members of their church choirs, and some receiving music lessons from the organist and teachers in their villages. The College was alive with music.

Christmas of 1964 remains etched in my memory. These music tutors and their music specialists wrote and performed a Christmas pageant. They converted the ground corridor and the first floor of the West Wing of the Buxton Block into stages. The whole student body sat on chairs arranged under the stairs; in front of a large wooden platform. The

lighting shifted the scenes from stage to stage. It was a perfect setting for the choir to perform, "Oh holy night the stars are brightly shining. It was the night of the dear Saviour's birth." The unpretentious magnificence of that performance, that night in December 1964, came as close, in my imagination, as anything could to recreating the solemnity of the nativity. At that same concert, I heard for the first time the Caribbean carol, "The Virgin Mary had a baby boy/The Virgin Mary had a baby boy/And they said that his name was Jesus". The bass section of this choir was heard with all the masculine pride and power the bass voice is capable of. Mrs Merton Wright, our Girl Guide sponsor, had the Guiders rehearse and perform "The Little Drummer Boy." As I am writing about a place that contributed so much to my maturity and independence, the melodies flood back in medleys. I pause and give thanks.

Mr Claude Case, a Peace Corps volunteer, taught drawing. He was a good artist and a good teacher, but his efforts were little rewarded in me. I remember well the exercise using charcoal to draw faces so as to achieve different expressions. A batch mate pointed at one of my studies, and declared with a mocking giggle that the face had 'liquid eyes'. Crafts were akin to art and I did a little better there. Pottery and ceramics, with Mrs Berry, left the most lasting impression.

Although Mr Freddie Green and Mrs Edith Allen provided a fine physical education program, athletics and sports were for me not so much instructive as downright painful. I hated the uniform of ridiculous little short white bloomers and pleated skirts that we had to wear for our classes. While our games were sex-segregated, the men attended our netball games with the expressed purpose of leering at our bosoms, crotch, and legs. Their sideline comments were full of embarrassing sexual innuendos, which made it difficult to concentrate on the game. For example, when the ball was in play they would repeat, "On your balls girls, on your balls." Then there would be some loud comment about so and so knowing how to handle her balls. When a woman jumped to intercept the ball, the men would shout, "Grab your ball girl, grab your ball." And how I loathed the house competitions. Out of house loyalty, one had to compete in every sports event so as not to let your house down. My poor performances would garner many days of teasing about my size, height, and less than skilled performance. I endured teasing about how good I was at carrying the bucket. That I did, in every race.

7.8 Achieving Academic Excellence

My final year in college was the most enjoyable. I worked very hard. In addition to two education courses and practice teaching, we had to choose two academic subjects and one practical subject in which to specialize, in addition to the compulsory English composition and grammar. My two academic subjects were biology and chemistry; my practical subject was home economics. This was quite a change, as I was carrying three academic courses rather than the thirteen and twelve of my first and second years respectively.

Mr Henry Hutchinson who taught both biology and chemistry knew his subject well; and was moreover an excellent role model as a teacher. He had been recruited to Mico following the dismissal of a Dr Hawthorne, after an investigation of student complaints revealed that he had forged his credentials.

The evolutionary biology approach, which Mr Hutchinson adopted, gave me a good sense of order and progression. We were especially interested in the study of vertebrates. Through observation under the microscope and by dissection of specimens, we studied the physiological systems – circulatory system, reproduction system, endocrine system, nervous system, and the renal system. When we came to the primates, we dissected the guinea pig, and informed that the systems in the guinea pig came close to humans. Similarities were carefully noted. As we were studying the reproductive system for its likeness to humans I could see no accounting for female menstruation. I put my hand up and asked, “Mr Hutchinson, when does the guinea pig menstruate?” I was earnest and serious in asking, and meant no mischief. My classmates, however, ever ready to tease and jeer, burst out laughing. Mr. Hutchinson’s blush was hard to detect under his ebony skin. Stuttering to find his composure, he gave me the serious and respectful answer I deserved, and his attitude vindicated me before my classmates.

Mr Hutchinson made biology interesting, even for those who did not specialize in biology, by ever changing displays in and outside of the science labs. He created a balanced aquarium in an old bathtub, which provided a source of fascination and discussion about the gaseous and food chains, and life cycles of both aquatic plants and animals. When I had my own elementary classroom, I recreated a balanced aquarium with my pupils and with them enjoyed the enchantment and mysteries of life, growth, and death.

Chemistry was more challenging for me than biology. I found organic chemistry very difficult and frustrating. However the magic of atomic and molecular combinations hooked me so firmly that I studied chemistry night and day. I saw the connection with chemistry and the commonplaces of the home, such as food processes, or detergent. Hydrogenation explained how margarine was made; the fermentation process explained the production of alcohol and leavening; the process of emulsion resulted in mayonnaise and so on. So impressed was I with the application of biology and chemistry to everyday life that my graduating project for home economics was entitled, "Science and Home." I turned my pure biology and chemistry into applied food and textile sciences. Many of my tutors who viewed the graduating displays complimented me on their originality. Going into my final exam in chemistry I worked very hard to improve my 'D' grade, and earned an 'A'. A number of us who were weak in chemistry were given great help in a study group led by my batch mate Neville Robinson who was the most able chemistry and mathematics student in our class.

I had two great composition and grammar teachers in my second and third years. Mrs Thomas, an Englishwoman, came from Titchfield High School in Port Antonio to teach at Mico in my second year. She took my class through the rudiments of composition in the most learned and erudite manner. She was teaching us her mother tongue, which we used only formally. Our everyday speech was the unwritten, expressive patois. This lady brought us to attention, so to speak, and taught and demanded expression in Queen's English. In my final year I had Miss Dora Edwards, a Jamaican who had earned her Master of Arts from Edinburgh, Scotland and her Diploma in Education from London, England. By the time she came to teach us we knew she had gone to the mother country. She had erased every bit of patois and Jamaican accent, speaking now with the accent of the British literati, and she taught us as such. English tenses were her forte and she drilled us in their usage. She introduced peer editing to our writing. Miss Edwards taught me that writing could be published. It was a revolutionary notion that we as humble colonized people could actually write for publication. Although she did not push us to publish any of our writing, she planted the seeds of possibility and showed us a process.

Mrs Thomas had equal commitment to teach us good writing and accurate grammar. Writing précis of numerous texts forced us to be precise in word usage and to develop a sizeable English vocabulary. I have often been complimented on the precise

English of my speech. English Language and composition was one of the distinctions I achieved in my final examination. I write of these teachers' work in order to pay tribute to their fine teaching.

The Mico College, that I had the privilege to attend from September 1962 to July 1965, has left indelible influences on my character as a teacher. After entering at the age of nineteen, I spent the best three years of my youth there. I have talked about the curriculum, and the pedagogical practices of my tutors. I would now like to look at how the institution was organized into a total educational institution.

7.9 Mico College: the Total Institution

All but a handful of students were boarders. As such our waking and sleeping hours were organized and controlled. I have already described the Women's Hostel, located on Trevennion Road, within a thirty-minute brisk walk from the college. The men lived in Mills Hall and other adjoining male hostels located in close proximity on the campus.

As boarders our nutrition and health were fully taken care of. We were fed breakfast, lunch, and dinner, with a mid-morning snack of beverage we called "pug", and afternoon tea. The lunch queues that spanned the length of the lounge in the Mills Hall block were times to see, and be seen. To one end of the large dining room was a section where tutors dined. Animated conversations and laughter echoed throughout meal times. Mills Hall was also the place to see and enjoy the jokes of anonymous cartoonists of social activities in our college life. My notorious romance caught the attention of satirists. After one Saturday night social, a brilliant cartoon appeared entitled "The sergeant major and his lady." The 'sergeant major' was my date, who was in the army cadets – his drills were evidently legendary.

Mr Glen Owen, the principal at the time, wore a dignified persona that earned him the nickname, the "Keps," derived from combining the sounds of the Latin and French words for principal. In my eyes he was both the principal and a man of principles. Obviously many of the young men thought so too, because several of them imitated his manner of speech, gestures, and chivalry. There was a certain batch mate who was dubbed "likkle keps" (little Keps) because his mimicry was close, which I found attractive. Yet, others who tried to imitate these standards of conduct found them alien and unrealistic and as a result earned the nickname "crowd ass." Looking back, I see that imitation of these English gentlemanly

behaviours – standing when a woman enters a room, holding the door so that a woman enters first, walking on the side walk so that the man is next to the traffic – constituted dramaturgy without substance. Outside the context of the college these behaviours fell into laxity. Men and women in College practised the social roles assigned to the masculine and feminine gender of a colonial society striving to adopt the gestures of the British Empire.

Mr Owen and his staff set the tone, which emphasized personal dignity, moral character, and scholarly leadership. In addition to the formal curriculum, the administration had a comprehensive plan for our social organization and extra-curricular grooming. The plan included religious socialization, athletics and games, music and culture, secular youth organization, the house system, inter-house competitions, and the student of the year competition.

7.10 Denominational Affiliation

Although the College was founded on non-denominational principles, it demonstrated a commitment to Christian moral socialization. All students were required to have a denominational affiliation, and to attend that church on Sundays, except for the Seventh Day Adventists who attended on Saturdays. Furthermore, the whole student body was expected to attend the College's chapel service, I believe once per month, on a Sunday afternoon. There was usually a special preacher and the choir sang.

Morning worship occurred after the first two class periods. We worshipped in a variety of places. First, there was the house worship when we gathered with first, second and third year students belonging to the same house, under the leadership of the Housemaster. The pattern of house worship occurred in three parts. First the student leader would call the worship to begin with the announcement of the hymn. The hymn was sung *a cappella* or accompanied by a pianist, or a few recorder players. Then another student would read a passage from the Old or New Testament. Finally we would recite the Lord's Prayer. House announcements were made here. The Housemaster took the opportunity to praise us for house loyalty, and to celebrate any victories made to honour the House. He would never fail to remind the Buxtonites that we were the best. We belonged to the house named for the great emancipator, Thomas Fowell Buxton, who was one of the founding trustees of the College and for whom the Buxton Tower was built and named in 1896. Thus he shone the light of education as the great emancipator from class and race oppression. Did not white

men such as Buxton see through the great social evils of their day, and had they not done something about them?

Wednesday mornings were reserved for general assembly when the whole student body worshipped together, just before a public lecture on current events was delivered by a variety of speakers – some dull but most engaging, many brilliant, and a few memorable. I always looked forward to them. The whole College assembled, seated on chairs arranged in the open air under the ackee shade trees in front of the west wing of Buxton hall. The long verandah served as the platform for the tutors and guests. The assemblies were meant as sessions to groom us in public speaking, and to give the seniors opportunities to read the Bible passages with perfect cadences, intonation, and pitch. My batch mate R T Campbell was the best at this when he became a senior. He read the Bible as if he were reading poetry with his radio voice. Senior students were also given the opportunity to compose and deliver votes of thanks. The best part for me was question time. I took great pleasure in finding the holes in the speaker's arguments and exposing them.

There was this one memorable general assembly which occurred in my final year. The guest speaker was none other than the Honorable Edward Seaga, Minister of Youth and Community Development in the first Parliament of independent Jamaica. Mr Seaga had just returned from Harvard University with his newly-acquired degree in anthropology. He had written a thesis on the slums of West Kingston, the district which became his constituency. He was young, handsome, and brilliant. He described a well-conceived plan for community development and economic self-reliance for the peasants in the country parts of the island. But in my view it had a big flaw.

I rose at question time to pose my question, prompting an uproarious teasing with the men shouting, "Stand up, senior lady, stand up" in obvious reference to my height (Figure 7.3). It took a while for Mr Owen, the principal, to settle things down enough for me to ask my question. But as soon as I began, the shouting started again, "Speak up, senior lady, we can't hear you." At which point Mr Seaga took the microphone and said, "Come up here young miss and ask your question." I went up to the microphone, but as my head was barely above the lectern, this was the signal for yet more teasing. When the microphone was adjusted, and I could at last speak, I boldly praised Mr Seaga for his brilliant plan but said, "Sir, I do not see how your plan for the people to set up small business on their own will work, without start up capital. How do you propose to make capital available for starting up

such businesses of which you so eloquently spoke?” Finally! At this, the audience burst out cheering, clapping and whistling, “Point well taken.” Mr Seaga conceded the point. And indeed, I cannot remember anything that came of those community development plans, nothing as far as I know.

Figure 7.3 General Assembly with the Hon Edward Seaga, 1965



One or two mornings were devoted to worshipping with our batch mates. It was on these mornings that issues concerning the batch were discussed after the worship. Batch socials, disciplinary matters, and graduation plans were made after worshipping together. Thursday afternoons were reserved for the whole student body to meet in religious fraternities. These were presided over by a chaplain or other official representative. I belonged to the Anglican fraternity. Here we would discuss church doctrines as they pertain to the holy sacraments. The marriage sacrament generated many lengthy and animated discourses around celibacy versus pre-marital sex. Most of us were young and single and expected to enter into a Christian marriage at some time soon. Catechism was also conducted for those interested in joining the Anglican Church. I enjoyed these fraternity meetings, especially when Reverend Weevil Gordon, from the Allman Town Anglican Church nearby, was in attendance. In his company I felt the same fellowship I enjoyed with the Reverend Neville De Souza in the Anglican Young Peoples Association (AYPA) at St Gabriel's Anglican Church in May Pen. Young Reverend De Souza, who later became the Anglican Bishop of Jamaica, introduced us young people to the new ideas in theological

thinking. I learned the word “existentialism” from him in those AYPAs sessions. Both men took us on theological excursions that went refreshingly beyond the boundaries of the Biblical text.

In writing and thinking about my religious upbringing, and biblical instruction throughout my formal schooling, I pause to articulate the influences these have had on my ethical thinking. Although I have fallen out of the habit of church attendance, religious and Bible lessons have remained indelibly in my psyche, and continue to inform my ethical thought and behaviour. At the simplest level, I can appreciate biblical allusions and themes that infuse the poetry, novels, and dramas of Western literature. Biblical texts exposed me to a variety of literary forms: parables, sermons, epistles, letters, jeremiads, books, psalms, gospels, and songs. More deeply, my personal ethics and worldview are guided by Judeo-Christian principles of unconditional love, justice, truth, redemption, deliverance, and faith. Virtues were instilled in us.

7.11 Pastoral Care and the Tutorial System

Closely akin to the system of religious fraternities was the tutorial system whereby each tutor was assigned a group of about ten to twelve students of all years, once per week. This group was like a group counselling session on academic development, social belonging, and moral and spiritual well-being. In my first year I was in Miss E M Duncan’s tutorial. She was of a fundamental denomination and to my way of thinking a little too concerned about our salvation. I had a batch mate of a rather mature age, named McBean, who shared Miss Duncan’s enthusiasm. He testified in the tutorial that when he accepted Jesus as his personal savior, it felt like eating a cool cucumber. I thought they were all a bunch of cool cucumbers and skipped the very next meeting. As she lived at the hostel, she made a point finding me and upbraided me the same evening. I felt like such a sinner I went sheepishly back to the next week. Such was the social control, if one did not arrive where one was supposed to be, someone in authority would hold you to account and demand to know where you had been.

7.12 Athletics and Games

Athletics and games had an annual cycle. Cricket, netball, and track and field had their seasons. Cricket was for the men and netball for the women. The women also played rounders, a female version of baseball. Some people pursued this informally. But we

prepared for track and field events very seriously, with the goal of preparing the talented athletes to compete in the annual inter-college championship held at the national stadium. This was another occasion where the spectators paraded in the latest casual dress. Looking back now I can see this was an opportunity to show differences in material status. On other occasions more uniform dress prevailed.

In addition to inter-college championship we had inter-house competition. Every single student had to participate. On the one hand this was a great way to get us all involved in physical activities outside our physical education classes. In this case the races were both for the swift, and for those that endured to the end. But on the other hand, for non-athletes such as myself these occasions were times of intensely negative self-consciousness.

I recall learning to throw the shot. When I threw that heavy metal ball, it just pulled me along with it. I inadvertently provided entertainment in the long and high jumps. I would have done anything to stay out of the celebratory parade of the houses in order of victory. On the whole, it must be said, the games and athletic program contributed much to our character building. Vinton Powell, a batch mate, came into his own as a sprinter during his Mico years.

7.13 Music and Culture

Participation in musical and other cultural activities such as drama and dance was encouraged and expected. I had no musical talent or skills to join any of the choirs, or to be a soloist or part of the duets, trios, and sextets. Worse yet, I could not play any of the musical instruments – I tried, but I learned quickly that I had no aptitude. Had I been lucky to have been given piano or violin lessons at a young age, perhaps I would not have had the inhibitions at that late stage. This is a regret, as I would love to be able to lose myself in playing the piano or the violin. I learned enough music theory to be able to attend the symphony and understand a performance, however, and I am grateful for this exposure. Classical music is good for the soul and lifts the spirit.

Drama came more naturally and I remember enjoyable drama productions, which a group of us put on for the whole college, during my first or second year. Mrs Edith Allen choreographed a few dances in which I performed with some enjoyment.

7.14 Extra-curricula Program

Club days were set aside for two kinds of clubs, academic and uniformed. The academic clubs comprised such as drama, music, parliamentary, Spanish and camera clubs. I do not remember these as strictly enforced. I was part of the drama and parliamentary clubs, which met in the evenings. The parliamentary club took on debating many current political affairs. I loved the verbal jousting and acrobatics in the parliamentary club. A high point was the debate in which I participated concerning the United States power in the Panama Canal Zone. I took the side of Panamanian independence and self-reliance. My side won the debate. My collegial esteem went up notches. In preparing for this debate, I had my first intellectual excursion outside of the British Empire history.

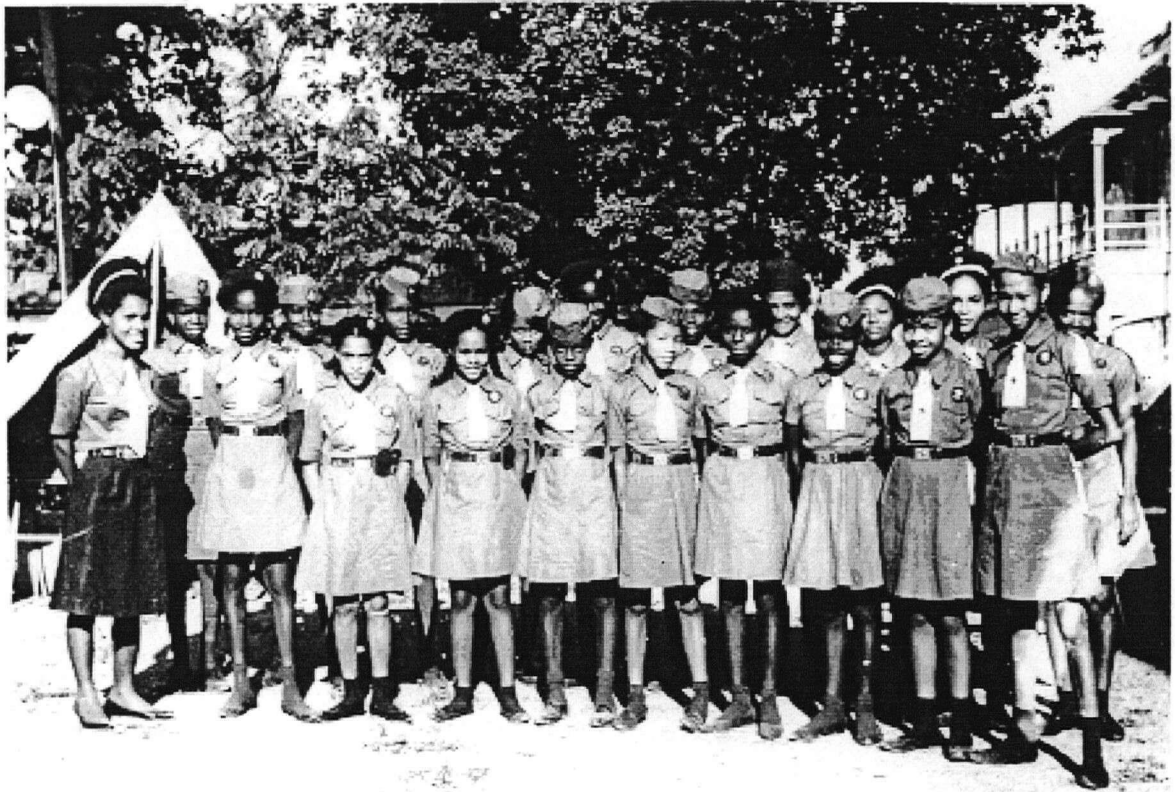
Students in the camera club chronicled special events in the college. We were able to purchase prints of special occasions from club members. To them I owe my fine collection of pictures, some of which are reproduced here.

The uniformed clubs included Scouting, Guiding, and Boys Brigade, and Army Cadets. As graduates, we were expected to sponsor a youth club in our community. I opted for Guiding. Mrs Merton Wright and Mrs Edith Allen were our sponsors. I appreciated their dedication and enthusiasm; through their efforts I was able to experience Girl Guide Camps in partnership with Shortwood Teachers College Guide Company. In the summer of 1963 or 1964 they took us to camp in Mandeville where we had the opportunity to explore the private botanical gardens of a doctor whose name I do not remember. It was a cultivated and cultured landscape in the island that I would not otherwise have seen. Miss Hoylett, the Guide mistress from Shortwood College, designed the most impressive activities to get us to explore the physical features of the garden landscape. I believe the doctor's gardener or perhaps the doctor himself gave us a botanical description of special imported plants and flowering trees. It may have been a reproduction of the English country gardens in the tropics.

In February of 1965 we camped at Pax Acres Guide Camp. Miss Hoylett was present again, and this time taught us mountain climbing and stargazing. I was quartermaster at this camp. My leadership and organizational abilities really surprised me. I received high praise for my accomplishments. That same year the college company hosted several guide companies during Guiding Week (Figure 7.4). I learned very valuable organizational and management skills. The discipline and decisiveness of being a patrol leader toughened me

up. It took quite some courage to give commands on a parade and to prepare a company for inspections. The threefold promise was to do my duty to God, to serve the Queen and country, and to help others, and to keep the Guide law. The three-fingered salute and the three-leafed clover engraved on our belt buckles symbolized our pledge and promise. We made this salute as we repeated our promise at every meeting. Between the motto - Be Prepared – and the ten-article Guide Law I learned to be alert, adaptable and giving. I did have difficulty with article six – a guide is obedient. Unconditional obedience was and is not what I am inclined to give then, as now.

Figure 7.4 Yvonne (left) with Girl Guide Company at Mico College, 1965



Though I can now look back and can criticize the quasi-military nature of Guiding, and can see how it was a socializing organ of empire, I have to say it worked well as a sorority of empire. When I moved to teach in rural British Columbia in 1969, I had instant membership in a familiar organization. The next year I assisted with commanding the South

Slocan Guide Company when Princess Anne visited Castlegar, British Columbia in 1970. I have my guide belt, whistle, and penknife still, and the Guide Song means much to me. Howard Arnold Walter, a Congregational pastor and missionary, wrote the song as his creed in 1906. "I would be true for there are those who trust me" sung to the Londonderry Air, refreshes all my youthful idealism. Through this song I have been inspired throughout my life to be courageous in the face of adversity and suffering. They are my guiding ethical values.

*I would be true for there are those who trust me;
I would be pure, for there are those who care;
I would be strong, for there is much to suffer;
I would be brave, for there is much to dare.
I would be friend of all- the foe, the friendless;
I would be giving, and forget the gift.
I would be humble, for I know my weakness;
I would look up- and laugh- and love- and lift.*

7.15 The House System

The house system was very familiar. I had belonged to Sharp House when I attended May Pen All-Age School, and to Nichol House when I was at Clarendon College. At the Mico there were five houses named mostly for English men who had done outstanding service to the college as advocates, trustees, and principals. They lived through the period from the founding idea of educating the emancipated masses of apprentices and former slaves from the 1830s onwards. The names of the houses during my time were Arthur Grant, Bishop, Buxton, Lushington, and Rodgers. Thomas Fowell Buxton, an abolitionist, and Dr. Stephen Lushington were among the original trustees of the Lady Mico Charity appointed by Sir John Leach, Master of the Rolls, in 1834 to establish schools in the West Indies for the Africans released from slavery into apprenticeship. Four years later, in 1838, these apprentices were fully emancipated.

I belonged to Buxton House for whom the original building on the present site is named. The Buxton Hall was built in 1894 when Buxton was chairman of the board. He also donated the clock tower – the Buxton Tower. Who would have thought I would come to know of Thomas Fowel Buxton in this personal way by being a member of a house named for him. Mr R A Shirley was my housemaster. As in his teaching, he encouraged us to reach for greater heights and to be the best in everything.

I mentioned house worship and inter-house sports competition earlier. Inter-house competition extended to include academics, community service, and personal deportment of its members. The house system brought together students of all ages, classes, and interests to foster friendly competition and camaraderie. We fostered house spirit by identifying and valuing talents in each other. Our house gathering brought us closer to peers as role models. We learned to value and compliment each other with genuine affection and admiration. I certainly benefitted from the esteem showed me by the tutors and students in Buxton House. It seemed there was a place for everyone in the house system.

7.16 Sexuality in College

I think the College tried hard to regulate male-female relationships. We young women had strict hours of returning to the hostels. The nine o'clock devotion was roll call before bedtime. There was an eleven o'clock curfew on Saturday nights. I always felt that I was being watched and monitored. I did not resent this because I believed that my tutors cared deeply about me, and I knew many had high ambitions for me.

Heterosexual tension among young men and women was ever present and evident. Less evident to me was the tension, which must have existed between homosexuals – males and females. I was aware of rumoured male homosexual relationships but totally unaware of lesbian relationships of which there must have been some. The relative awareness may have come from the fact that there were religious sanctions against male homosexuality, while it seemed that no one cared about the level of intimacy between and among women. I was immersed in heterosexual tensions both within myself and in my relationship with my male colleagues.

The greatest challenge in college was how to suppress and mask my desires to explore heterosexual relationships in a context that was both sexually repressive and aggressive. The repression came from the advice of our tutors, chaplains and the admonishing of our religious leaders to preserve our virginity until marriage to the right Christian man. Waiting for marriage before exploring our female sexuality was deemed a measure of the decent and respectable woman. To have sex before marriage was tantamount to sacrilege. In a secular sense, abstention had the practical value of saving one from sexually transmitted diseases and from pregnancy out of wedlock. To catch sexually

transmitted diseases was cause for utter shame and disgrace, never mind the wrath of the family.

I dreaded most becoming pregnant for two reasons: It was a matter of honour for me that no man should be able to say to me, "I married you to give your child a name and to save you from disgrace." The second reason for my fear of becoming prematurely pregnant had to do with my observation of the large number of young women whose future was ruined because of pregnancy. I also heard the stories of regrets from women who had to marry before they were ready or even beyond their better judgment, because of an unwanted pregnancy. Abortions were regarded as one of the greatest sins that a woman could commit. I knew of abortions that caused medical complications for some young women and in a few cases took lives. I still feel sorrow for school friends who met their untimely death because of septic abortions.

The sexually aggressive aspect of Mico concerned male sexual behaviour towards the females. Both sexes had three categories for each other. The men categorized the women as the 'lady', the 'platonic friend', or the 'streggay' (equivalent to whore). The 'lady' combined the Jamaican sense of beauty, at that time, and something called 'lady-like behaviour'. This category of woman was both desirable and aloof. She was for the pedestal. She was treated with all the outward trappings of chivalry and deference. Some men behaved chivalrously toward her out of genuine admiration and affection, while others masked lechery and lust with gallantry, in a bid to undermine her persona.

The 'platonic friend' was almost the man's equal, like his sister, and was his confidante. This relationship was characterized with less sexual tension, even if it sometimes became intimate. Those women who were regarded as the 'streggay' were treated with the utmost disrespect, as if they had no human feeling. Some men would circulate "lie an story" about some alleged sexual aberration on their part. They never of course implicated themselves as antagonists in these stories.

The women's categories comprised the exact counterparts: the 'gentleman', the 'platonic friend', and the 'dog'. The 'gentleman' was the opposite of the lady, and every heterosexual woman desired such a man for a husband. He was beyond most. The 'platonic' boy friend was like a brother; he could be trusted and respected, and it could be a relationship having real bonds of affection. The 'dog' was the man who undressed you with his eyes, and was largely incapable of any conversion beyond smut. The 'dog' took pleasure in attacking

female sexuality, and in slandering any female who dated two men of which he was not one, especially if she had refused his overtures. Interestingly, a person could be in at least two categories at the same time, depending on the eye of the potential mate.

Another aspect of aggression came from the fact that there were fewer females than males, hence the so-called 'sexually appealing' females found themselves in the company of several eligible males engaged in aggressive sexual competition. When I look back on the various approaches, even then, I had flashbacks to the sexual behaviours I had observed on early nature walks and on the farm. It seems crude, but I could not help recalling the lizards, the roosters, the drakes, the ram goats, the donkeys, the bulldogs, and the bulls. What was instinctual was presented as either unadulterated boorishness or elaborate acts of dramaturgy. In my opinion, there were a few, including the batch mate I eventually married, whose romantic dramaturgy stood up to the rigours of egalitarian relationships. How could this be in society of the time which was so thoroughly sexist?

Given the lessons I had learned about sexual treachery in the lives of women and men I had known and observed, I was determined to be cautious and careful. My firm resolve was never to let a man distract me from my fervent desire to excel in college and to strive to be a scholar and to be economically independent. I excelled in college to become an able teacher and scholar. I have always been economically independent but the circumstances of marriage, divorce and single motherhood have submerged my scholar self. I long for the carefree days in college when I was beautiful, sure of my ambitions, and strong.

7.17 Student of the Year Contest

It was through the house system that the annual "Student of the Year Contest" was organized. The purpose of the contest was as explained in the following quotation from the June 1965 concert program, which I found among my college memorabilia:

"Mico College Student of the Year contest began four years ago to provide an additional incentive for our students who are preparing themselves to guide our country's youth." Only students in their final year were eligible for the award. The criteria on which students were assessed were: integrity, courtesy, speech intelligence, deportment, initiative, and service to the College and community.

Each of the five houses mentioned earlier, nominated its most outstanding male and female respectively. I was the female nominee for Buxton House. I was described as

courteous, alert, trustworthy, mature in outlook, and a very promising teacher. Once I was nominated I took the competition very seriously. I dismissed predictions that certain men were sure-fire winners. Past experience showed that all winners to date had been men, and that they had been either students' council presidents or outstanding athletes. I was none of these. My attitude was that once we were nominated we were equal competitors and would be judged on our performance in the competition. I set about finding how the competition was conducted and speculated on the sorts of questions we were likely to be asked. I also thought hard about ways to appear knowledgeable on all the possible subjects that we could be interviewed on. We were judged at two levels of competition. At the first level, a College panel that included the Principal, Vice Principal, the Sportsmistress and the Sportsmaster, and the Principal's wife interviewed us. Mrs Gloria Owen (Figure 7.5) the principal's wife, was very active on three fronts: in the organization of the competition; in acquiring prizes; and in mobilizing influential friends of the College. She made the Student of the Year competition a highly talked-about event in and outside of the College.

Six finalists were selected and sent forward to the second level of competition. I was among these. I remember pointedly thinking about and preparing myself to answer questions about Washington DC, the official destination for the winner and chaperone. I went to the Encyclopedia Britannica and to the United States Information Service, a place I frequented to obtain curricular materials. I also thought about the very important persons who comprised the panel and tried to second guess what these people might ask a young teacher-to-be. By the time this round of the competition came I was ready for anything. I remember two of the questions. The first was a question about hobbies. My childhood experiences did not allow for hobbies or leisure activities. I made up some answer about my hobbies being reading and sewing. I felt pretty silly after giving that answer. However, I bounced back in top form when I was asked about

Figure 7.5 Mrs Glen Owen, wife of the Principal of Mico College
Newsphoto The Daily Gleaner



the city that the winner would be visiting. Later, I learned that the panel asked all the competitors that question, and that I was the only one who had been prepared to answer. This panel ranked the six finalists in order of merit based on their performance in the interview. The top male and top female student would be announced, and one of them would be declared Student of the Year.

On a Monday night on June 7, 1965 the Mico College Student of the Year Concert was held at the Little Theatre in Kingston under the Distinguished Patronage of His Excellency, the Governor-General, Sir Clifford Campbell, GCMG. Sir Clifford was a graduate of Mico College, and our nation's first Governor-General after independence. The College and the young nation were so proud of him. The evening was full of pomp and ceremony as befitted the celebration of the Independence Batch. During our three years, we were told repeatedly that we were among the leaders of tomorrow. Ours was the challenge to help build the new nation. Oh, the expectations were high indeed. (As I am writing and reliving the time, I realize how far I have fallen short of those expectations, by leaving the island after only four years of teaching.) Miss Olive Lewin and Mr Arthur Clarke, our music tutors, planned the program that featured some of the best musical and dramatic artists of the island. The result was an evening of top-notch cultural performances that included clarinet, violin, and piano solos of European and American composers. The Mico College choir and soloists were at their best. The performances were interspersed at three moments for presentation of competitors.

First, the six finalists were presented. The top male student was Ivor Wilson and top female student was Yvonne Shorter. The air was charged, until finally the announcement was made: "The Student of the Year for 1965 is Miss Yvonne Shorter." I cannot say the choice pleased everyone, because there was a noticeable booing coming from the back of the theatre. Still, I walked up proudly to be honoured as the first female student of the year in the College's history. I believe Sir Clifford handed me my award. What an honour! Of course, I thought "if only my mother were here."

Mrs Edith Allen, the Sportsmistress, was my chaperone on my official visit to Washington DC, which took place in July, after final exams were over. While there, we had official visits with the Jamaican Embassy, the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Education, and the Teachers Association (where I was given a mountain of curricular materials). Of course, our program included the visits to the Smithsonian Institution, the Space centre, the

Washington and Lincoln Monuments and much more. We shopped too. I was truly overwhelmed. All the festivities and the preparation for final exams had kept the depression at bay.

Figure 7.6 Yvonne, Student of the Year 1965, meets the Governor-General, Sir Clifford Campbell

AUGUST 27, 1965.



THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL Sir Clifford Campbell talks with Miss Yvonne Shorter, Mico College's "Student of the Year" (centre) when she visited the Governor-

General yesterday morning at King's House. Accompanying her were Mrs. Edith Allen, chaperone (left) and Mr. G. H. Owen, Principal of Mico College at right.

When I returned from my prize trip, the Owens prepared the finest program of official activities to fête the Student of the Year. By so doing they also promoted the College as a significant institution in the life of the Island. In addition to making an official call on the Governor General at his King's House residence (Figure 7.6), we also called on the Prime Minister, The Right Honorable Alexander Bustamante, at Jamaica House. I was given interviews on the Jamaica Broadcasting Corporation Radio and Television, and features in The Daily Gleaner.

I pause once again to thank the late Principal, Mr Glen Owen and Mrs Gloria Owen and the Tutors and Staff at Mico College 1962-65 for giving me a sense of self that I have tried to live up to, and which has sustained me in the teaching profession and in all aspects of my life.

7.18 Graduation and Future Prospects

The Student of the Year Competition was not the event that marked graduation from the College. The final examinations and the preparation of the “Matter Book” of teaching and learning resources, which Mr Shirley insisted we produce before we graduated, were yet to be done. He had difficulty ensuring compliance and resorted to staring at those of us who had not handed them in, as we walked up the aisle of, I believe, the Kingston Parish Church, where our graduation ceremonies were held. His actions were well meant, born of his appreciation of the desperate need for good teaching and learning resources in a resource-poor environment of teaching and learning. I was among the guilty ones. As I write, I smile about the good humour and affection that Mr Shirley shared with the Independence Batch. There was just so much to be done that it was extremely difficult to put in the labour required to produce this book. I believe we appreciated only superficially then, what Mr Shirley fully understood as the urgency and enormous responsibility to educate the large population of school-age children, and to raise the standards of education in the new nation.

I graduated from Mico College in early July 1965 to await the results of the final examination, which would determine my certification, and to find a job. It was a nail-biting time for me. I had separation anxiety from leaving the College and its security. The results of the examination would be published in the Jamaica Gazette along with the results for all the other five teachers’ colleges - Bethlehem, Moneague, Saint Joseph’s, Shortwood, and West Indies College. In writing about this time of my life I had to go back and check the Gazette for August 1965 to verify my recollection that I passed my examinations and placed in the Honours Division with distinctions in English Language and Composition, Chemistry and Practice Teaching. I had the most distinctions of all. I look back with great pride to this period of my life.

In late August, I received an appointment at the May Pen Junior Secondary School, which was modelled after the May Pen Comprehensive School experiment of which I had been a part from January 1957 to December 1959. Although I returned to the city of my childhood and was hailed with great honour, I knew in my heart that I did not want to return to that scene. Some of the old ghosts began to haunt. For example, Mr Black seriously expected me to come back to help him in his shop, and Auntie wanted me to be her

household helper again, although she at least was subtler in her approach. Echoes from a past in slavery!

December rolled around and it was time to return to the College for the presentation of our Teaching certificates and prizes, and to see my tutors and batch mates again. Looking over the programme helps me to make meaning of that very special occasion. This ceremony had a big surprise in store for me. I believe the ceremony was held at the amphitheatre where that special Christmas concert that I wrote about earlier was held. Although we were no longer a Crown Colony, it was too soon to switch cultural allegiance away from Empire. After all, the Queen was still Head of State. The hymn chosen for the occasion was the hymn I learned for the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II in 1953 – “I vow to thee my country.” I now wonder if we had consciously changed from thinking of ourselves as subjects of the British Empire when we sang that hymn that night. Once again we had the company of our native Governor General Sir Clifford and Lady Campbell. He gave the formal address and she handed out the certificates. At this ceremony many prizes and cups were handed out for both academics and service. I received the Glen Owen Cup for education, the Doris Morant Cup for Home Economics, and the Duff Memorial Prize for the most outstanding student in the final year. At that time, the Duff was one of the most prestigious prizes. Mr. John Hartley Duff was the first Jamaican to become principal of Mico, his tenure lasting from 1920–23. Once again, I am proud to record, I walked off with the most prizes.

When I came to the bottom of the steps after receiving my certificate, a very tall well-dressed black woman greeted me warmly and hugged me. She said, “My child you do not know me. I was your mother’s best friend. I left for England for three years and when I came back she was gone. I have been looking for you for nearly twenty years. You were the baby. I have always wondered what happened to you.” I must have looked at this lady like a ghost, transfixed. I cannot remember for sure, but I believe she said her name was Mrs Smith. She said she had been following the television and radio appearances and the news items about me and became convinced that I must be the child she had been looking for. She gave me her address and asked that my brother and I visit her. When we did, my brother remembered her and they began to talk about the misery our mother suffered at our father’s hands. My brother cried so hard I had to ask her to stop talking. I have always had a soft

heart for my brother's suffering, to the very end indeed when in 2000 I sat at his bedside and watched him die of cancer.

Not appreciating her importance, I never went to see this lady again. I forgot even her name, and wish now I could remember it, because I would surely love to attempt to find and talk to her. Yet she appeared on my path. The folk might say my mother was up in heaven observing the ceremony and that she had sent her friend to represent her.

My graduation from Mico College in 1965 marked the beginning of another stage of restlessness and yearning for a family, of my own making, and for a new life in a new place. I would have to come to terms with marriage, work, children, travel, and immigration. It has been forty years since my graduation from teachers' college, and in that time I have fulfilled many of my dreams and achieved most of the major goals I set for myself. Earning a doctorate is the last of these. My dream to become a university professor will go unfulfilled. I survived and lived, to write the stories I always promised myself I should.

CHAPTER VIII REVELATIONS AND REFLECTIONS

We beseech thee ... to preserve all that travel by land and water, all women labouring of child, all sick persons, and young children; and to shew thy pity upon all prisoners and captives; The Litany, Book of Common Prayer (1662)

8.1 Bodies, Memories, and Empire

The journeys of my younger self, the journeys of my independent self, the journeys of my enquiring self, have been towards an understanding of a deeper self, a journeying identity that has crossed oceans of geography, history, and culture. Layers of memory have given back their likeness in whole episodes and lesser fragments. Yet what emerges is only the smallest measure of an interior comprehension of mind, body, and spirit. So much remains out of reach.

The received knowledge of the English civilizing mission served to displace any positive knowledge of our past, our culture, how we had come to be. Throughout my whole schooling I received no enlightenment about Africa or its peoples, but learned only of the relationship of Jamaica as a colony of Great Britain, and of our consciousness and civic duties as British subjects. And yet, Africa was everywhere in and around me, in people and commodities that were made of them and by them. I can now count a few of the many unacknowledged ways in which Africa and Africans were present: 1) in the Milo, Ovaltine, and Fry's Cocoa beverages that we drank; 2) in the ivory handles of the knives and forks that the middle and upper class dined with; 3) in the ebony and ivory of the piano keys that played the melody and tunes of empire; 4) in the rubber of the Dunlop and Michelin tyres that cushioned the wheels of bicycles and motor cars; 5) in the edible rubber of the Wrigley's Chewing Gum and the balloons that we children loved; 6) in the palm oil that greased the wheels of industry and was one of the main oil ingredients of Palmolive Soap; 7) in the coffee plants that originated in Ethiopia; 8) in the skills of Africans that supplied the muscle and sinews of industry.

A tangled web of Bodies, Memories, and Empire: such is the history into which I was born, and what is wound around me, my family, community, education, and the landscape of Jamaica. Exploration of these constructs has, I hope, extended my thinking beyond the parochial and self-centred, and allowed a sense of the global connections created

by movement of peoples and commodities to emerge. In this final Chapter, I reflect on each of my principal themes.

8.2 Bodies

Given my origins, it is telling that I should have been so astonished to learn of the relentless physical and symbolic use and abuse of black bodies in European expansion and conquest of the Americas and the Caribbean. Taking note of the abuse of my own body and learning of the brutal sexual and racial encounter of colonization and slavery, I had become more conscious of the recurring, simultaneous, visible yet invisible presence of African bodies in my lived experiences, my readings of the history of Africa and its diaspora, and as I travelled along the colonial trails of Great Britain, France, and Holland. This invisible presence was felt at those other sites of memory I journeyed to, in the Canadian provinces of Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia, Ontario, and British Columbia.

Before I began this research formally, I took a trip to the other motherland, West Africa. In 1992, I visited Nigeria, and the Cape Coast in Ghana, a site of memory of the slave trade. I stood in the male and female slave-dungeons in Cape Coast Castle, a slave warehouse in Ghana, and looked out of the Gate of No Return. The low gate was the only exit from this horrible dungeon with brick walls, three feet thick. Through this gate all the captives crouched to enter equally cramped space in the hundreds of slave ships waiting to swallow them up in hell. As the guide explained the travails of the slaves and in particular the plight of the women, I could hear the screams of anguish as I imagined the conditions of their captivity. I was undone. I needed to study to know what this meant.

Since that time, I have noticed how black bodies parade as still life in paintings, photographs, and books representing various poses of torture, forced labour, servitude, active rebellion and quiet dignity. These are symbolic representation of a chilling lived reality of millions of African black people. The brutalization of black bodies in the New World is difficult to grasp. The litany of abuse is astonishing. The image of the slave catcher mounted on a horse, carrying a rifle and followed by a bloodhound or a rottweiler sends shivers down my spine. The application of whips, manacles and shackles, the lynching of black men as sports, leaving "strange fruit" hanging on the trees, all have invoked an ancestral pain, and left an indelible scar on my psyche. Everywhere I look, black bodies stare at me in anguish. At the sight of their suffering and misery my soul joins the silent

requiem to those who perished in the slave trade, during plantation slavery and to those who still perish today in the ghettos of western cities, in the slums of the Caribbean islands, in the *favela* of Brazil, and in the refugee camps on the continent – the motherland.

There can be no realization of the scale of the infliction of white pain on black bodies without a sense of both the historical and contemporary displacement and dispossession of African bodies from their homelands in Africa, that great continent which is acknowledged as the cradle of humankind.

If there is a sense that the Europeans, and North Americans have in the last two centuries refined the technologies of exploitation, the people of North Africa, the Arabian peninsula, and the Indian subcontinent have centuries-long traditions. The slave trade of the Arabs first, and then of several Western European nations, scattered millions of black bodies in Arabia, Europe, the Americas and the Caribbean. The European scramble for Africa and its colonization during the nineteenth century divided and displaced families and clans and ethnic groups by creating imposed and artificial boundaries. Once in place, the imperial powers saw no contradiction in abandoning their received traditions of respect for life. In King Leopold's Ghost, Adam Hochschild (1998) gives an account of how the Belgians wasted an estimated ten million Congolese bodies in the cause of harvesting wild rubber, cultivating rubber plantations, building railways, and in mining uranium. His narrative of how during this period Congolese hands were severed to prove the land had been cleared of its people, is chilling. Hochschild exposes further atrocities of the French, Germans, and Portuguese, in the Congo and the equatorial regions of Africa.

The ravages of man-made disasters, the famines, internecine wars and political destabilization by former colonist and multinationals continue to waste black bodies in place after place on the continent – Rhodesia, Sudan, Rwanda, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Somalia, South Africa, Angola, Mozambique, Sierra Leone, Nigeria, Ivory Coast. During lengthy civil wars, violence and self-hate have been internalized, the corrupt 'divide-and-conquer' legacy continued, and the wealth of the continent misappropriated, that great riches can be amassed amidst dire poverty.

In The Shadow of the Sun, Ryszard Kapuscinski (2001) shows how Cold War rivalries between the Soviet Bloc and the West were played out in strategic locations on the continent, and have left behind graveyards of discarded military equipment, and black bodies. Further political destabilizations have occurred as a result of international predatory

trade practices by Euro-American, and Canadian multinationals such as Shell Oil, Dunlop and Goodyear Rubber companies, De Beers Diamond, Cadbury's Chocolate Company and Talisman Energy Inc., to name only a few. Those unacquainted with these unhappy histories may be referred to some classic historical texts from Caribbean historians, as a starting point: Eric Williams (1944) Slavery and Capitalism, and Walter Rodney (1982) How Europe Underdeveloped Africa.

Structural poverty is endemic to Black people everywhere. Many black people are ensnared in the cycles of lowest existences; they beg, squat on the outskirts of major cities, engage in criminal activity, and spend their lives wasted in prisons. Black people are among the highest percentage of the underclass in the streets of major cities anywhere in the West, and they labour as domestic servants, and on plantations on the continent of Africa and without. Black lives are seldom considered precious or innocent. The massacres of former Yugoslavia rightly called for international intervention, and it was given; the massacres of Rwanda were merely deplored.

As I read, travelled, and observed, remembered scenes of brutalized black bodies in Jamaica kept superimposing themselves upon my perceptions. So too was the imperial language of human degradation. I was compelled to deal with the haunting relatedness of these memories to the contemporary realities of black people everywhere. In providing these modest reminders, it is my hope to inspire further investigation into the use and abuse of black bodies.

I would like to reflect on how memory was both a cognitive capacity – a living archive – and a narrative process.

8.3 Memories

According to Olney (1998) in Memory and Narrative: The weave of life-writing, memory is the mother of the muses. So it was for me. In looking back at the experience of using my memory as the main source of data for the constructions of my stories, Olney's observations articulate what I learned. To paraphrase, he describes how memory recalls origins, returns us by way of recollection, imagination and invention to the human beginning, at which point one can see unfolding, as by an inner necessity, the course of the life of an individual, of a nation, of humankind (p.97). Through the operation of memory we are able to look forward, look at, and look back. Olney states that memory has three aspects: memory

itself when it remembers things; imagination when it alters or imitates them; and invention when it gives them a new turn or puts them into proper arrangements and relationship (p.104).

He reminds us that memory always involves the deepest kind of emotional engagement. Drawing on the work of Israel Rosenfield, Olney pointedly argues, “Emotions are essential to the creation of a memory because they organize it, establish its relative importance in a sequence of events much as a sense of time, and order is essential for a memory to be considered a memory, and not as a thought or vision at some particular instant, unrelated to past events.” (p.373)

Olney’s perception that the acts of remembering and narrating are at once painful and pleasurable, and at once necessary and impossible (p.21) reiterates my own experience of writing these stories. There were times when the pleasure of family secrets uncovered, or childhood observations relived gave me breath-taking joy. At other times, the remorse, grief, sorrows, and rage that I felt towards brutalities and injustices overwhelmed me and made me question why I was writing these stories at all. Could I not just forget them? No! I could not forget because I am not allowed to forget – the memory is in my blood. In my veins runs the blood of the enslaved and the enslaver. The contemporary nightmarish scenes of brutality against and among black people demand that I hear the screams from the silence of the past. They must be heard, to wake us from our dozing complacency towards the suffering of Africa and its peoples, past and present.

In describing the significant events of my life within the context of slavery and colonization, I have imbued memory with further meanings and dimensions. I give four dimensions to memory in my narrative inquiry: *autobiographical, genetic, topographical, and archival*.

8.3.1 Autobiographical memory

Autobiographical memory as a research tool invites a number of questions about accuracy of recall, selectivity of things remembered, and the truth-value of the product of such research. While it is not possible within this Chapter to survey the literature on autobiographical memory and autobiographical reasoning, I acknowledge the debate and the questions raised. I select a few points from writers who presented essays in the special issue of the Review of General Psychology (2001) Volume 5 Number 2. Among them are proponents of autobiographical memory and autobiographical reasoning (Bluck and

Habermas 2001, Pillemer, 2001, McAdams 2001, Singer and Bluck 2001, Staudinger 2001) who argue for the validity of memory work in constructing life stories over the life span. In summary, the importance of this view lays not so much in the accuracy of recollection, as in the selection of episodes that illuminate like flash bulbs. The events that are surprising and consequential are likely to be remembered in fairly accurate detail. Such events are those that precipitated life-changes or caused deep emotional ruptures. These memories are likely to be rehearsed over one's life span, and are therefore both available for easier retrieval and have more meaning than inconsequential events. As I indicated in Chapter I, I have drawn on this memory bank in order to construct my life story and to invent a kind of truth.

David B Pillemer's (2001) article entitled Momentous events and the life story has helped me understand the nature of autobiographical memory. Using Pillemer's typology as a guide, I have recorded four categories of autobiographical memory: *originating events*, *turning points*, *anchoring events*, and *analogous events*.

I regard the stories in Chapter V about my life and schooling in May Pen as examples of *originating events*. Here it was that I took charge of my life and set in motion some long-term goals that have remained central to my worldview. To quote Pellimer, "*Memories of originating events continue to energize, motivate, and inspire long after the initial occurrence. Because the memory is specific, detailed, and vivid, it continues to command attention and evoke intense feelings*" (p.127). When I have hit the rough spots in life, I have returned to the philosophical thoughts that Mr Lampart shared with us, for inspiration and guidance. Every single one of those quotations has remained in active service; so too has the memory of the personal power I was encouraged to wield by making autonomous decisions.

The second category of autobiographical memories is *turning points*. There were two significant turning points in my stories. The first was the death of my sister, which forced me to make the hard decision to end my high school studies, and go to work. The second was the experience of sexism and racism in Barclay's Bank, Dominion, Colonial, and Overseas, which forced me to choose an alternative way of making my living. At the time, I understood the sexism more clearly than I understood the racism. In that early stage of my life, I thought that the racialized social order was natural. The inherent importance of this turning point has only latterly become clear, as, during the course of this research, I have learned how the ideology of racism had been harnessed in the service of Empire. Pellimer

says that turning points are concrete episodes that are perceived to redirect our lives with sudden effect. The initial event is tied mentally to life-choices that follow (p.127).

The third category of autobiographical memories, Pellimer terms *anchoring events*. These are somewhat similar to originating events, but with the distinction that these recurrent episodic memories provide the foundation for a belief system. They are sources of valuable lessons of how the world works. "They provide persistent affirmation of what is valuable or continued warnings of what to avoid" (p.127). There is no doubt that my recollections of 4-H Club, Girl Guide and religious fraternity have been sources of my belief system. The overheard conversations and loud tracings that I heard in the market place have also provided me with sources of wisdom through folkways, sayings, and aphorisms.

The fourth category of autobiographical memory, Pellimer terms *analogous events*. These events are evoked when a present situation triggers memories of a structurally similar situation, and are useful in informing present decision-making. In several respects, the entire English education that I received, in the colony of Jamaica, provides analogous curriculum and pedagogy. I found virtually no difference in the racialized, and gendered stereotypes and omissions between the education I had in Jamaica and the further education I have had in British Columbia, Canada. I have returned frequently to my work experience at Barclay's Bank, Dominion, Colonial, and Overseas, to find the institutional analogue for institutional racism, sexism, classism, and the remnant power of the British Empire. I was a participant observer in the public discourse that took place during the short-lived West Indies Federation, and the movement towards independence. I have embedded in my psyche a strong sense of political double-speak as personified by Sir John Huggins, Sir Hugh Foote, and Sir Robin Blackburn – English governors who served during the 1950s and 60s. The rhetoric of local politicians with heroic aspirations to replace the Crown showed how class interests can collude to disinherit and manipulate the poor and illiterate.

In summary, these aspects of autobiographical memory were operative as I excavated knowledge, and constructed the stories embedded in history. I recorded, without realizing it, originating events, turning points, anchoring events, and analogous events of my own experiences. I would like briefly to reflect on my process.

I imposed a chronological order by beginning with my earliest recollections of coming to consciousness, and tracing my development through schooling in different locales. I went through stages of recollection as I probed, pondered, made connections to events, and

noted the questions that triggered the need to probe deeper and wider. In using autobiographical memories and reasoning through the significance of events beyond the personal and parochial, my inquiry moved into ever-wider circles of connections beyond Jamaica. With such important implications, I was concerned about the quality and accuracy of the contents of my memory, and heeded the critics of memory-work who point to its weakness, the tendency towards unreliability and inaccuracy. I needed to be able to test the accuracy of my recollections so that I could trust my memory. I also needed to go further to fill gaps in my knowledge and to obtain reliable information in order to elaborate my interpretation and analysis during the construction of the stories.

The earliest breakthrough came when I located my infant school principal, Mrs Vinette Elliott. My letter to her is included in **Appendix III**. Her extensive response to my questions both confirmed the accuracy of my memories, and extended my historical understanding of the landscape of Carron Hall and Hazard. This in turn led me to explore historical texts which provided important support for representing the context of this period. Conversations and exchange of letters between older members of my family such as my late brother and my Auntie Black provided further clues and explanations.

There remain significant gaps in some stories, especially around my maternal grandfather and the history of my father's side of the family, as to why, how, and when, they arrived in the colony.

8.3.2 Genetic memory

The second dimension of memory in my work is found in the genetic mixings of the descendants of the various peoples who were brought together on the island. The seventeenth and eighteenth centuries brought increasing numbers of different peoples to cultivate the sugarcane to satisfy the ever-increasing demand of sugar, molasses, rum, and to a lesser extent, coffee. As discussed in Chapter II, people came from England, Ireland, and Scotland both as indentured servants, rulers, buccaneers, clergy, and merchants. The slave trade brought some three million Africans from the Guinea coast and the Bight of Benin during this period.

In the nineteenth century, after the abolition of both the slave trade and eventually slavery, Indians from Uttar Pradesh and Bihar were brought in as indentured labour. In particular, Chinese were recruited from various locations in China and in the Americas.

From China they came from the province of Guangdong, Hong Kong, and Macao. They were also re-exported from Panama, British Guiana, and Trinidad. Their indenture contracts were for three- and five-year terms, at the end of which the people could return home or take up some small property on the island. Although the conditions of labour in the cane fields were similar in many ways to the conditions of slavery, those who accepted labour were made to believe that they were at least of higher status than the emancipated African people. Nobody wanted to be a slave or be likened to a slave. As soon as they were able to, the Chinese abandoned the plantations and either migrated elsewhere or set up general stores all over Jamaica. In so doing they brought consumer goods to the remotest parts of the territory, and set up a special credit and merchandising system that sold goods in very small quantities to accommodate very poor emancipated Africans. The Chinese also introduced two popular gambling games – ‘drop pan’ and ‘peaka-pow’. Unfortunately, fewer of the Indians were able to escape the conditions on the plantation and found themselves among the poorest on the island and the object of derogatory labels, such as ‘babu’, and ‘coolie’. Nonetheless, they left their mark in their cultural retentions, in plants such as ganja, rice, green vegetables, and flowers. The Indian goatherd, who traded hundreds of goats along the road, was a unique occupation that I saw when I lived in St Mary. Curried goat is a popular dish in Jamaica.

Additionally, Portuguese, Lebanese, and Germans were brought in as settlers and farmers. The Portuguese and Lebanese went into merchandizing, while the Germans isolated themselves mainly in St Elizabeth and Manchester, and turned to homesteading.

The existence of these various peoples around me in Jamaica when I grew up, feature in my stories, and led me to ask questions about how they came to be there, and hence to discover why they came and what was their link to the commodity production and commerce in the island. The physiognomies of various individuals give clues to the different mixtures of the racialized populations. Probing my own genetic heritage has led me to the discovery of my Scottish, English, and African links. Looking at the reach of the British Empire, I was reminded that this social heritage of transporting various people to the colonies set up a global social hierarchy based on race, ethnicity and skin colour – white (European and Lebanese), yellow (Chinese), brown (coloureds, that is the admix of black, white, and Indian), and black, in that order. This pattern can be observed in Kenya, Uganda, South Africa, Fiji, and indeed in almost any of the territories whose social geography has been drawn by colonization, commodity production, and empire building.

8.3.3 *Topographical memory*

The third dimension to memory, the topographical, is that recorded in the landscape. Landscapes record not only the millennia of earth's evolution which gives a region its physical geography, but also the human intervention into the naturally occurring flora and fauna. In Jamaica, the Spanish exterminated the population and civilization of the Taino and Arawaks and replaced them with African slaves to cultivate indigo, cotton, and cattle. The English in turn drove off the Spanish, seized the island and replaced the balanced ecology of natural plants and animals with cash crops, mainly sugarcane, tobacco, and coffee. The introduction of horses, donkeys, mongoose, goats, and poultry survive, to remind us of colonization and plantation history. Donkeys, horses, and mules survive, to tell the story of the breeding of the mule from the female horse and the male donkey as beasts of burden and pack animals during the heyday of plantation, before the invention of the motor engine. A careful look at the political map of Jamaica shows place names indicating the Spanish, English, and African presence, but very little or nothing of the Taino or Arawak presence. So too, the ruins of great houses, sugar mills, water wheels and abandoned wharves along the coastline conjure up images and questions of the past in sugar. The British Empire – as indeed all empires – has left in its wake the enduring reminders of their power and dominion on the landscape: formidable architectures of imperial administration, government buildings, various styles of churches denoting different Christian denominations, special cemeteries, monuments to their victories, and statues to their great conquerors. The sea routes, donkey trails, roadways, and railway tracks tell much about people activity. All these landmarks are reminders of successive eras of conquests, colonization, and the sustenance of empire.

8.3.4 *Archival memory*

The fourth dimension of memory, the archival, provides proof and evidence to help construct personal and historical narratives. Archival memory is comprised of the powerful and symbolic records such as diaries, literature, travelogues, legal documents, government records, institutional practices, plantation and ship's ledgers, and institutional records, such as those pertaining to banking, and insurance. But not all are of literary form. The folk wisdom of African ways of being and philosophies for survival are encoded in the dynamic Patois or Africanized English. The patois is spoken with an African musicality

sprinkled with percussive accents of Scottish, Irish, and Cockney lilt, indicating regional variations in settlement. These sources exist as valid memories, providing data to complement and verify autobiographical memory.

My stories have drawn on all four sources of memory: the autobiographical, the genetic, the topographical, and the archival. The interplay of imagination and invention with these four dimensions of memory provided a highly compelling range of indications, which have enabled me to select and to write the presented stories; to illustrate the relationship of the search for my mother and my identity with the larger history of the British Empire; and to comprehend the role of Africa and black people in both.

8.4 Empire

Empire as the third construct forced me to address the overwhelming presence of the British Empire in my youth. Before I began writing these stories, I had perceived, fuzzily, a link between the inferior status which the British assigned to Africa and African-descended people in Jamaica, and the inferior status that my father's family accorded my mother. As counterpart to this inferior status, was the pervasively lofty presence of the British Empire in the culture of my schooling and in the political economy of the island.

Once in Canada, I saw that the knowledge regimes of the British Empire under which I was schooled were as tenacious here as there. It amazes me still to recall how well equipped I was, educationally, to teach home economics and English as a young teacher in Canada. I was licensed to teach, based on my teacher education in Jamaica. I had known the curricula before I arrived, since I had to pass external examinations in these subjects set by the University of Cambridge during my high school. Olive Senior records that the Cambridge external examinations were introduced in Jamaica in 1882, and the London University Examinations were introduced in 1891. My teachers' college curricula were based on those of the English Normal School. Those who are familiar with curricula extant today in schools and universities will perhaps have discerned the similarity of the curricula that I have recalled, in some detail, of my schooling and teacher education.

Robin Blackburn's work was cited earlier to show the geographical reach and political economy of the slave trade, and to it I add a reference from Ella Shohat and Robert Stam (1994) Unthinking Eurocentrism: Multiculturalism and the Media to show the reach and

legacy of European Empires, of which the British Empire was the most outstanding alongside the French.

While nations had previously often annexed adjacent territories, what was new in European colonialism was its planetary reach, its affiliation with global institutional power, and its imperative mode, its attempted submission of the world to a single 'universal' regime of truth and power. Colonialism is ethnocentrism armed, institutionalized, and gone global. The colonial process had its origins in internal European expansions (the Crusades, England's move into Ireland, the Spanish reconquista), made a quantum leap with the 'voyages of discovery' and the institution of New World slavery, and reached its apogee with turn-of-the-century imperialism, when the proportion of the earth's surface controlled by European powers rose from 67% (in 1884) to 84% (in 1914), a situation that began to be reversed only with the disintegration of the European colonial empires after World War II. Some of the major corollaries of colonialism were: the expropriation of territory on a massive scale; the destruction of indigenous peoples and cultures; the enslavement of Africans and Native Americans [and Native Canadians]; the colonization of Africa and Asia; and racism not only within the colonized world but also within Europe itself. (pp.15-16)

The cultural civilizing mission of the European empires, including the British, and the imperial knowledge regimes laid down over the last five hundred years, form the matrix of contemporary discourses on post-colonialism, neo-colonialism, anti-racism, multiculturalism and globalization of labour and capital. And yet, how often still these discourses exclude the voices of the colonized, and further repress and subjugate certain histories that are foundational to the genesis and maintenance of these structures. In classrooms and in the workplaces of Jamaica and now Canada, I have often felt like a ghost made flesh, come to stalk the halls and classrooms of the academy to remind my classmates and peers about these repressed histories and their embodied presences. Like the African ancestral dead who has not been properly buried, my restless spirit roams the halls and classroom searching for those bodies of knowledge that will speak truth to me of Mother Africa and her motherless offspring scattered in the Atlantic Diaspora. My peers who have similar colonized origins and consciousness share my feelings. These repressions can burst forth from us, like precocious children at the dinner table who blurt out the family secrets in respectable company, causing embarrassment and subsequent punishment.

At a more complex level, let us envisage the experience of the self-aware slave domestics in the great houses during slavery, who, while serving dinner to Massa and Missis could see and hear all the schemes pertaining to the expropriation of land, the exploitation of

their bodies as labour, and in the service of sugar, cotton, and tobacco. They must keep their silence or lose favour, or their lives, for acting on the knowledge they were privy to. Perhaps their very sanity depended on dissembling their awareness. Theirs was knowledge of the contradictions, disruptions, ironies, suppressions, repression, and paradoxes, which abounded, then as now. But they knew their place and the expectations of them. They were simply useful hands of the bodies of labour made that they were compelled to be.

I find myself working within the knowledge regimes and institutional structures of the academy, listening to and observing proponents of the 'new' globalization behave as though globalization had no antecedents. This represents a colossal forgetting. This dissertation is in part a reminder: as a colonized other of the colonization of the West, I argue that all the components of globalization had their antecedents in the slave trade, mercantilism, colonization, and empire building. In reviewing Robin Blackburn's (1997) The Making of New World Slavery: From the Baroque to the Modern, 1492-1800, (included in **Appendix IV**) I was surprised to find evidence to disprove the claims of globalization to be a novelty without antecedents. In the contemporary discourses on globalization, Africa is assigned an inferior status or else excluded entirely. And yet, their minerals and oil factor in the global economy, in both white and black markets. Things have not changed for Africa in the 'new world order', so-called.

It may be considered that these assessments are partisan, self-serving, and unduly harsh. But let us consider: In 1969, I left the island of Jamaica for the then Dominion of Canada, of which I have been a citizen for over thirty years, and resident in British Columbia for 35 years. The founding of the colony, and lately the province of British Columbia formed a keystone in the extraordinary reach of the British Empire. Its arms and flag still bear the device of the Sun in Glory, as, when British dominion was established on the west coast of the Americas, the empire girdled the globe. It was an empire on which the sun literally did not set. The British of the colonial era may have believed it was British decency and fair play that brought this about, that God was indeed an Englishman. At the Anglican church services that lasted through the long Sunday of an entire rotation of the earth, the lovely prose of the Book of Common Prayer and the King James' Bible must have laid to rest the troublesome misgivings and doubts of the dominant culture.

Yet the records – memory and history – show that the empire did not come into existence through the pious recitations of the Anglican liturgy. The reality was that the

humane values expressed in the Prayer Book were not interpreted so as to diminish the power and extent of British expansionism, its determination to advance its interests and protect its trade through naval and military force, or its ruthless exploitation of all the resources at its command, material, territorial, and human.

The profound consequences of imperialist ambition are with us today, and insufficiently acknowledged as such. In inquiring into certain haunting memories of family, education, and scenes of people and landscapes of parts of Jamaica, I was able to analyze and comprehend the historical bases for my experiences and perceptions about my own status and the status of Africa and Africans, in Jamaica and in the world. This has given me a much more rooted understanding of the pervasive repression and omission of the exploitation of African human and physical resources in the development of the British, French, Dutch, Spanish, and Portuguese empires.

I attribute the want of proper acknowledgment to a collective desire – conscious and unconscious – to conceal a very shameful and horrific past. To acknowledge the past would necessarily be to acknowledge the present, and the developed world is largely incapable of that. Even if we concede that the beginnings of the slave trade were in acts of mischief by a few loutish fifteenth-century mariners, it turned into a five-hundred-year nightmare for millions, enormous profits for a few, and a rise in commodities consumerism. Was it the love of sugar, coffee, tea, tobacco, and rum that allowed the Prayer Book pious to keep their values tucked between the covers? The world has paid a price in addictions to these commodities. The exploitation of the central and south Americas has led to commodities trade that has wreaked even worse punishment. The folk in Jamaica would say this was divine retribution. Well and good, except that addiction is no respecter of persons.

To acknowledge culpability in the historical and contemporary abuse of Africa and its peoples would force a revision of all righteous claims of the European civilizing mission, modernity, enlightenment, and white moral supremacy. Notions of aid and development would have to be reframed as acts of reparation and restitution for the plunder of gold, uranium, diamonds, cocoa, rubber, coffee, copper, and people. And so the dark secrets of empire must be repressed, just as were the dark secrets of my family.

8.5 Preliminary Conclusions

The exploration of bodies, memories and empire in my stories have served, I contend, to reveal the territorial, cultural, linguistic and institutional reach of empire. But this is not the totality, and the totality far from wholly bleak. To paraphrase Carolyn Ellis and Arthur Brochner in their article "Autoethnography, personal narrative, reflexivity: Researcher as subject" (2000), I have endeavoured to create the effect of reality and show people embedded in the complexities of their historical and socio-economic legacies. The communities in which I grew up, endeavoured in their own ways, to preserve and restore the continuity and coherence of their lives, in the face of blows of fate and history that called their meaning and values into question (p.744 in Denzin and Lincoln). I, among them struggled to resist the intrusion of chaos, disconnection, fragmentation, marginalization, and incoherence. These struggles must largely be conducted with our own resources, since the developed world does not acknowledge responsibility for its role. But that the effort was and continues to be made is testament to the human vitality and spirit that survived the storms and abuses of the trans-Atlantic.

What have I learned that I would like to underscore for others and for myself? I have been struck by how haunting are the memories of empire, as experienced through the social, educational, and economic processes in the colony of Jamaica, memories that have continually alerted me to their familiarity and persistence even some fifty years after imperial decline. Further, as I searched for my mother, recorded and probed my recollections of family, the larger society, schooling, and landscape, I discovered layers of repressed violence against mostly black bodies. This was begun with the terror of the slave trade, and perpetuated by racial hatred and desire in the colony.

First, I want to underscore that I was born into a stream of history that formed the European empires, principally the British Empire. As I described in Chapter II, these forces determined almost everything of significance in my life. I inherited the material condition of the psychic and physical brutality, pain, sorrows, and the miscegenation genes of that stream of history. My identity was forged in that violent fractiousness. I hope that what is written here may keep these memories and this history alive, so that they can be critically examined and discussed, not as self-indulgent narratives, but as catalysts to voice many silenced stories of the descendants of the enslaved and colonized of empire.

Second, as I stated in the introduction, I wrote these stories to understand why I grew up not knowing my mother. That lack has shaped my struggle to understand the concept of motherhood, and to gain some insight into my identity formation. With that knowledge and understanding I had hoped to relieve the pain that growing up as a motherless child has exacted. In this regard I am happy to say that, while I still feel the pain of the loss of my mother, the raw emotions have been tempered by a newfound knowledge that has emerged from the questioning process and giving voice to what formerly was silence. Unfortunately, this was only a temporary state of euphoria. I had lived with the life-long belief that I would not have had such a wretched life had my mother lived. When I examined what I have learned about my mother's life, I realized, as it were in a lightning flash, that she had no chance of surviving the cruel fate she inherited. Madness and subsequent death were inevitable. I also came to the rude awakening that my tears were for me, the motherless child, and now I had to weep for the pain and sorrow that killed my mother. I now have a sombre understanding of how my ancestors, the fruits of black women's wombs, were used and abused in the development of the early capitalist economic system and the associated maritime technologies of Sweden, Holland, Spain, Portugal, France, and England. As noted above, in these respects the British excelled. In the contemporary geopolitics, like my mother, Africa and Africans do not have a chance against the exploitive forces of the many blocs – national and international, financial and industrial – that continue the imperialist traditions.

These systems and technologies were developed to reap large profits from economies of scale in cash crops planted on large plantations situated on the stolen land of exterminated indigenous peoples, in the Americas and the Caribbean. Huge cargo and warships built from the lumber from these conquered lands heralded the carrying trade that enabled the brutal uprooting and transportation of millions of African peoples to the Caribbean and the Americas. I was astonished to learn that this trade in human cargo lasted for some two hundred and fifty years, and involved such an impressive cast of actors including crown, church, merchants, lawyers, and ordinary citizens who constructed a vast economic and legal network. I was so struck by the enormity of the Atlantic slave trade that I have included my review (**Appendix IV**) of Blackburn's book (1997) on the making of New World Slavery. I ask those who have read nothing of significance on the slave trade, to read this work critically, for its examination of the enterprise.

When Africans and the New World are considered at all, the slave trade is usually eclipsed by the study of the overlapping three hundred and fifty years of plantation slavery in Brazil, the United States of America, and the Caribbean. After reading about this aspect of my history, I believe the horror of it is too hard to look at; that most people would rather forget and suppress this event. For three-hundred and fifty years or more in some places in the New World, roughly ten million Africans were forced to labour for sixteen generations to produce such crops as coffee, cotton, indigo, tobacco and most of all sugar, molasses, and rum. My African ancestors laboured under the slave laws of the respective European empires and by the whips of their slave masters.

I was astonished to realize how the sugar lobby in the British parliament determined my life and the life of Jamaicans. The principal reason that the British established the crown colony – indeed the other West Indian Islands, the sugar islands – was for commodity production. Sidney Mintz's study of the history of sugar Sweetness and Power: The place of sugar in modern history (1985) charts its spread from the tables of the European aristocracies to the middle and working classes. Mintz shows how sugar changed the menus and cuisine of the various aristocracies so that they could indulge in the delights of sweetened coffee and tea, with sugar cakes and cinnamon buns:

The part played by sugars in increasing the average total caloric intake make it likely that sugar both complemented the complex carbohydrates and partly supplemented them. The pastries, hasty puddings, jam-smeared breads, treacle puddings, biscuits, tarts, buns, and candy that turned up more and more in the English diet after 1750 and in a deluge after 1850, offered almost unlimited ways in which the sugars could be locked into complex carbohydrates in flour form. (p.50).

Molasses, as a cheap by-product of sugar, was fed to the poor in England and the colonies so they could also invent coarser versions of culinary necessities to provide the energy to do back-breaking work for little or nothing. Crude molasses did more for the British Empire than feed the poor. It was the raw material for the distilleries founded in both New England and Old England to brew alcohol that their slavers traded to Africans, in exchange for their fellow creatures. The British colonizers also used the same spirited beverage to intoxicate Native Americans to dispossess them and leave a deadly addiction in their wake. In referring to the power exerted on the crown and parliament by planters, bankers, slavers, shippers, refiners, grocers to support and favour the extension of the rights

of the planters, the maintenance of slavery, the availability of sugar and its by products (molasses and rum) Sidney Mintz writes:

It is to their efforts that England owed the institutionalization of a rum ration in the Navy (begun "unofficially") after the capture of Jamaica in 1655: half a pint per day from 1731 on. In the late eighteenth century it increased to a pint a day for adult sailors. ...The official allocations of sugar and treacle to the poorhouses in the late eighteenth century were similar support measures (p. 170).

The paradox is that the past is never past. It leaves its memorials as skeletons, traces, and ruins on the landscapes that compel the curious to ask questions and to seek answers. The past writes itself in the human body, the memory being the most obvious. Long after memory fades, genealogy and lineage, especially in a slave society such as Jamaica, ensures that we do not forget the event of chattel slavery and the illicit mixing of bloods. Historians and archaeologists recreate and reconstruct the big events such as the existence of the original peoples of the Americas and the Caribbean region. They chronicle the big stories of battles of conquest and trade by Portuguese, Spanish, Dutch, French, and British.

The unwritten stories that only elders tell or draw on their individual and collective memories, of the minutia of their lives and struggles, and of the effects of big events on their lives. When the elders die they take their archival memories with them and we are left to imagine and reconstruct the stories they told us and to fill in the gaps from the symbolic archives and the landscape. In so doing we add our own understanding of their lives and how they intertwine with ours. We inherit our social blueprint of trauma, accommodation and resistance. The past lives in the present and plays tricks with our collective unconscious.

There are uncounted numbers of stories such as those I have told, some no doubt more hopeful, and many more doubtless more bitter and tragic. They present themselves as embodied memories suppressed in classrooms. The voices that struggle to be spoken and heard are on a continuum from mute, to stammers, to whispers, to shouts. They mumble and rumble throughout the edifices of Western Civilization. Some few have written, sung, and performed their stories, others are presently writing or performing theirs and, still others readying their voices in words, script, music, and the other creative forms of giving voice.

8.6 Implications for Education Practice

To be explicit how this study may contribute to educational practice, as implemented by its practitioners, widely defined – student, teacher, educational administrator, educational policy maker, and curriculum developer – is difficult, since the value of this research depends upon the use to which the stories are put. Their appeal will vary, depending in large part on the readership. I expect that individuals who have origins in British or other colonization and imperial projects might read the stories in a different way than those who have not had such a background. In any event, I have no control over how readers will respond, although I hope that at whatever level, the stories themselves convey their own truth.

Stories convey morals and lessons about the human condition. This means that as readers engage with personal recollections, they may humanize the historical and the global connections that are seen as more important in the pedagogic context. They may think anew about motherless children, colonized identities, the legacy of slavery, the importance of education, and the status of Africa and Black people, locally and globally. The most important lesson for me is the importance of understanding the complexity of knowledge construction and perspectives. I have hinted at some of the implications throughout, especially as regards voice and repression, personal memory and the history of empire in education. I have been overtaken in these recollections by my own pursuit of knowledge for self-understanding and for its wider value. I will therefore cast my implications and recommendation in terms of knowledge and education.

The moral tone of all institutions, particularly social and educational, is determined by the quality of knowledge and information that circulates in texts, images, talk, attitudes and ideologies about the world and our place in it. Indeed the quality of knowledge that is the substance of educational, curricular, and social policies determines the institutions' ability to evaluate their moral and ethical positions with regard to justice and equality. Their very definition of social justice, I argue, is grounded in the legacy of social and racialized inequalities of Empire. The answer to addressing social and racialized inequalities in the curriculum and educational policies in educational institutions is not a benign celebratory multiculturalism, which emphasizes our false socio-historical similarities grounded in imperial cultural and linguistic assimilation, but a critical multiculturalism that begins by

studying and examining the legacy of trauma, accommodation and resistance of the embodied subjects who inhabit the contemporary multicultural classrooms and workplaces.

Colonized subjects of former European empires inhabit educational spaces in which the knowledge regimes that inform their learning, research and teaching were not designed to give them right of place within these social institutions. The colonizers' history and imperial social practices demonstrate to them that they are bodies out of place. Meanwhile, they simultaneously observe the embodied legacy of unquestioned gestures of right of place and expressions of entitlements that the heirs of the colonizers bring to these institutions. Against this revelation there is a silent counter-discourse that frequently happens simultaneously in classrooms, whereby colonized others, just by checking their bodily reactions to being in these spaces, can detect the lies in the partial truths that are imparted, and the unfair practices that are institutionalized to undermine their existence and to mock their ambitions.

From the official knowledge regimes the colonized others learn their inferior worth within the symbolic order. Many of them come to these classrooms with embodied knowledge of imperial oppression in their countries of origin and find within the Western archives official records of deliberate appropriation of their land, destruction of their culture, and attempted genocide of their people. They live out the tensions and confusions of their double consciousness. In order to cope with their lot they mask their feelings, and dissemble their gestures so that their minds can be suitably colonized, knowing that the best that they can become are mimics in a system that rejects mimic men and women. In spite of the contradictions and tensions, they sincerely hope that their life chances will be enhanced.

The questions I pose to educators in this regard are these. Would they use real life stories such as I have written as part of their repertoire of stories they permit to be read and told in their classrooms? If so, what sorts of knowledge and ethical preparation do teachers need in order to receive these stories and begin to make sense of them? At a concrete and commonsense level, what do educators need to be able to hear, feel, see, do and think in order to help the colonized other understand who they are and how they came to be? Are there places for emotional expression and moments of healing for descendants of a wretched colonialism, in their pedagogy? Can these kinds of stories of trauma, accommodation, and resistance be the stuff of multicultural classrooms? In multicultural classrooms I want teachers to think about what might be at stake when they ask children to write or tell their life

histories. I want teachers to think about what knowledge they repress and why. For example, why do teachers ask me if they should be teaching about slavery? I hope that teachers may find in my stories at least some partial answers or leads to confront some of these questions.

8.7 Postscript

While I can say that writing real life stories about growing up in Jamaica has been both personally healing and revealing, I worry about revealing so much of my life history to public view. I pondered long and hard, and took the risk. I have come to understand how the psychic scars of the brutality of the slave trade and racialized plantation slavery in the Caribbean, the Americas and in Africa have profoundly marked the bodies of Black peoples, both literally and ideologically. I hope that individuals from other colonized locations will also write their stories. I believe that too many of us suppress the colonial legacies of pain, shame, rage, and sorrow that cause us to live lives of quiet disillusionment. We take on the shame of the enslavement of ancestors and our contemporary oppression and become sick with rage. I hope readers will find the stories engaging and have their credibility sufficiently tested to undertake their own investigation into the issues surrounding the stories of black people in the history of empire.

I have written these stories in the endeavour to find my mother, to retrieve details of people, scenes, and the social flavour of my youth in Jamaica. I have aimed at delineating the historical specificity of how commodity productions, slavery, racism, sexism, the reproductive capacity of women were all harnessed to build empire. The weaving of recollections, imagination, and history has given me many intellectual insights and serendipitous moments of self-discovery. Pleasure and pain, mirth and tears have been mine, in solitude, and among friends. A shift has occurred in my deeper self, which I cannot put into words. It is akin perhaps to hearing a strange music, the melodies of many ages, played on an instrument with numberless keys of ivory and ebony.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Adey, L. (1988). Class and idol in the English hymn. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press.
- _____. (1986). Hymns and Christian "myth". Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press.
- Adibe, P. (1999 October). The beauty of being black – celebrating 50 years of achievement. Retrieved September 20, 1999, from <http://africasia.com/icpubs/na/oct99/naft1004.htm>.
- Ahmed, S. Stacey, J. (Eds.). (2001). Thinking through the skin. London: Routledge.
- Allen, Carolin F. (1998). Caribbean bodies: Representation and practice. In Christine Barrow (Ed.), Caribbean portraits: Essays on gender ideologies and identities (pp.276-293). Kingston, Jamaica: Ian Randle Publishers.
- Alleyne, M. (1988) Roots of Jamaican culture. London: Pluto Press.
- Allsopp, Richard (Ed.). (1996). Dictionary of Caribbean English usage. Oxford, London: Oxford University Press.
- Armstrong, D.V. (1990). The Old Village and the great house: An archaeological and historical examination of Drax Hall plantation St. Anne's Bay, Jamaica. Chicago: University of Illinois Press.
- Austin, D. (1984). Urban life in Kingston, Jamaica: The culture and class ideology of two neighborhoods. New York: Gordon & Breach Science Publishers.
- Bacchus, M.K. (1993) Consensus and conflict over the provision of elementary education. In Beckles, H., & Shepherd, V. (Eds). Caribbean freedom: Society and economy from emancipation to the present. Kingston: Ian Randle.
- Bakare-Yusuf, B. (1999). The economy of violence: Black bodies and the unspeakable terror. In Price, J & Shildrick, M. (Eds). Feminist theory and the body: A reader. (pp.311-323). New York: Routledge.
- Banks, J. (1993). The canon debate, knowledge construction, and multicultural education. Educational Researcher. Jun-July, (pp.4-13).
- Barrington, J. (1997). Writing the memoir. Portland, Oregon: Eighth Mountain Press.
- Beattie, M. (1995). New prospects for teacher education: Narrative ways of knowing teaching and teacher learning. Educational Research, 37(1), (pp.53-70).

- Beckles, H. (1995). Sex and gender in the historiography of Caribbean slavery. In Shepherd, V., Brereton, B., & Bailey, B. Engendering history: Caribbean women in historical perspective (pp.125-140). Kingston: Ian Randle.
- Bennett, L. (1966). Jamaica Labrish: Jamaica dialect poems. Jamaica: Montrose Printery Ltd.
- Benstock, S. (1998). Authorizing the autobiographical. In Sidonie Smith & Julia Watson (Eds.), Women, Autobiography, Theory: A Reader (pp.145-155). Madison, Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press.
- Bisnauth, D. (1989). History of religions in the Caribbean (pp.204- 09). Kingston: Kingston Publishers Limited.
- Blackburn, R (1997) The making of New World slavery: From the baroque to the modern 1492-1800. London, New York: Verso
- Blake, C. N. (1999). The Usable Past, the Comfortable Past, and the Civic Past: Memory in Contemporary America. Cultural Anthrolopology, 14(3), (pp.423-435).
- "Boy with hoop" Islands: An international magazine October 1989. Photograph by Bob Krist (p.76)
- Brathwaite, E. (1971). The development of Creole society in Jamaica 1770-1820. Oxford, Britain: Clarendon Press.
- "Bridge to the 21st Century: Internationalization at UBC". September 1996
http://www.trek2000.ubc.ca/supp_docs/bridge.html
- Brown, A. (1979). From canefield to classroom: Schooling and colonial consolidation. In Lowenthal, D. & Comitas, (Eds). Consequences of class and color: West Indian perspectives. (pp.77-92). New York: Anchor Press.
- Brown, A. (1979). Colour, class, and politics in Jamaica. New Brunswick, New Jersey: Transaction Books.
- Bryan, P. (1991). Childhood youth and education. In The Jamaican people 1880 – 1902. London: Macmillan. Chapter 7. (pp.110-130).
- Bryan, P. (2000). The Jamaican people 1880-1902: Race, class and social control. Kingston, Jamaica: The University of the West Indies Press.
- Buckoll, Rev. H. J. & Viner, W. L. (1843). Lord, behold us with thy blessing. In The General Synod (compiled by), The Book of Common Praise Revised 1938) being the hymn book of the Anglican church of Canada (p.463). Toronto, Ontario: Anglican Book Centre.

- Buckoll, Rev. H. J. & Viner, W. L. (1843). Lord, dismiss us with thy blessing. In The General Synod (compiled by), The Book of Common Praise Revised 1938) being the hymn book of the Anglican church of Canada (p.463). Toronto, Ontario: Anglican Book Centre.
- Bullough, R. V. & Pinnegar, S. (2001). Guidelines for quality in autobiographical forms of self-study research. Educational Researcher, vol, 30, No. 3 (pp.13-21).
- Burnard, T. (2002). The grand mart of the island: The economic function of Kingston, Jamaica in the Mid-Eighteenth Century. In K. E. A. Monteith & G. Richards (Eds.), Jamaica in Slavery and Freedom: History, Heritage and Culture (pp.225-241). Barbados: University of the West Indies Press.
- Campbell, C. (1993). Social and economic obstacles to the development of popular education in post-emancipation Jamaica 1834-1865. In Beckles, H., & Shepherd, V. Caribbean freedom: Economy and society from emancipation to the present. Kingston: Ian Randle Publishers (pp.262-268).
- ____ (1975) Teachers and the training of teachers in the first primary schools: Part 1. Torch: Journal of the Ministry of Education, 24 (2 & 3) (pp.51-58). Kingston, Jamaica: Publications Branch of the Ministry of Education
- ____ (1976) Part 2. Torch: Journal of the Ministry of Education, 25 (1 & 2) (pp.64-72). Kingston, Jamaica: Publications Branch of the Ministry of Education
- Campbell, M. C. (1990). The Maroons of Jamaica 1655-1796. Trenton, New Jersey: Africa World Press, Inc.
- ____ (1993) Back to Africa: George Ross and the maroons from Nova Scotia to Sierra Leone. Trenton, New Jersey: Africa World Press.
- Canot, T. (2002) Adventures of an African slave captain Theodore Canot: An account of the life of Captain Theodore Canot, trader in gold, ivory, and slaves on the coast of Guinea. Written out and edited from the Captain's journals, memoranda and conversations by Brantz Mayer. New York: Dover Publications, Inc.
- Carter, J. (1968). Education in Jamaica: A brief outline 1834-1968. Compiled for Jamaica Library Service Annual Anniversary of Independence Exhibition: "Winds of Change" in Education. Kingston, Jamaica.
- Cassidy, F.G. & Le Page, R.B. (Eds.). (1985). Dictionary of Jamaican English (2nd ed.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Cesaire, A. (1972). Discourse on colonialism. New York: Monthly Review Press.
- “Charles Archibald Reid, OBE”. Appointment as Member of Privy Council of the Island of Jamaica. The London Gazette. 17 February 1942 (p.776)
- “Charles Archibald Reid, OBE” Biography. Who’s Who and Why in Jamaica – 1939-40 (p.152) Kingston, Jamaica.
- “Charles Reid” The Daily Gleaner [Jamaica] 2 Oct. 1944: 6.
- Clairmont, D. and McGill, D. (1974) Africville: The life and death of a Canadian black community. Toronto, Ontario: McClelland and Stewart.
- Clandinin, D. J., Connelly, F. M. (1999). Narrative inquiry: Experience and story in qualitative research. San Francisco: Jossey Bass Publishers.
- Clandinin, D. J., Connelly, F. M. (1996). Teachers’ professional knowledge landscapes: teacher stories-stories of teachers-school stories – stories of schools. Educational Researcher, 25 (pp.24-30).
- Clarke, A. (1980). Growing up stupid under the union jack. Toronto: McClelland & Stewart
- ____ (2002). The polished hoe. Toronto: Thomas Allen Publishers.
- Clarke, C. (1975). The social structure of Kingston on the eve of independence. In Kingston, Jamaica: Urban development and social change, 1692 – 1962. Berkeley: University of California Press. (pp.103-26).
- ____ (1975). Social and economic change, 1944 – 1960. Berkeley: University of California
- Conway, J. K. (1998). When memory speaks: Reflections on autobiography. New York Alfred A. Knopf.
- Conle, C. (2000) Thesis as narrative or “What is the inquiry in narrative inquiry?” Curriculum Inquiry 30.2, (pp.180-210).
- Connelly, F. M., Clandinin, D. J. (1991). Narrative inquiry: Storied experience. In Short, E.C. (Ed.) Forms of curriculum inquiry New York: SUNY Press. (pp.121-153).
- Corbett, Mary Jean. (1998). Literary domesticity and women’s writers subjectivities. In Sidonie Smith & Julia Watson (Eds.), Women, Autobiography, Theory: A Reader (pp. 255-263). Madison, Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press.
- Curtin, P. (1958). Two Jamaicas: The role of ideas in a tropical colony 1830 – 1865. New York: Greenwood Press.
- Daenzer, P. (1993). Regulating class privilege: Immigrant servants in Canada, 1940s – 1990s. Toronto, Ontario: Canadian Scholars Press.

- Davis, O. L. (1991). Historical inquiry: Telling real stories. In E. Short (Ed.), Forms of curriculum inquiry (pp.77-87). New York: SUNY Press.
- Day, G. (1964). Reflections on our local examination. In Torch: Journal of the Ministry of Education Jamaica. Vol. 14 no 2 June. pp. 8-14. Kingston, Jamaica: Publications Branch of the Ministry of Education
- D'Oyley, V.R. (1964). Jamaica: Development of teacher training through the agency of the Lady Mico Charity from 1835 to 1914. Toronto: OISE.
- _____. (1979). Plans and progress in nineteenth-century Jamaican teacher education. In D'Oyley, V & Murray, R. Development and disillusion in Third World education (pp.5-32). Toronto: OISE.
- Du Bois, W. E. B. (1946). Colonies and moral responsibility. Journal of Negro Education, (pp.311-318). Retrieved May 6, 2003, from www.jstor.org/
- Dunn, R. Sugar and slaves: The rise of the planter class in the English West Indies, 1624-1713 (1972) Williamsburg, Virginia: University of North Carolina Press.
- Eakin, P. J. (1999). How our lives become stories: Making selves. Ithaca & London: Cornell University Press.
- "Education" (1945). West India Royal Commission Report: Presented by the Secretary of State for the Colonies to Parliament by Command of His Majesty. (pp.92-133). London: His Majesty's Stationary Office.
- "Education: Training College Examination Results 1965" Jamaica Gazette July–August 1965. (pp.1245-1248)
- Ellis, P. (1986) Education and woman's place in Caribbean society. In Ellis, P (Ed.) Women of the Caribbean. London: Zed Books Ltd. (pp.91-100).
- Ellis, E. and Bochner, A.P. (2000). Autoethnography, personal narrative, reflexivity: Researcher as subject. In Denzin, N.K. and Y.S. Lincoln eds. Handbook of Qualitative Research. Thousand Oakes: Sage Publishers.
- Embassy of Jamaica. The Jamaican national fruit. Retrieved June 13, 2004 at www.emjamusa.org/fruit.htm.
- Errante, A. (2000). But sometimes you're not part of the story: Oral histories and ways of remembering and telling. Educational Researcher, 29(2), (pp.16-27).
- Esso (1983). Jamaica road map. Convent Station, New Jersey: General Drafting Co. Inc.
- Feelings, T. (1995). The middle passage: White ships black cargo. New York: Dial Books.

- Felski, R. (1998). On Confession. In Sidonie Smith & Julia Watson (Eds.), Women, Autobiography, Theory: A Reader (pp. 83-95). Madison, Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press.
- Firestone, W.A. (1987). Meaning in method: The rhetoric of quantitative and qualitative research. Educational Researcher, 16(7), (pp.16-23).
- Firestone, W.A. (1993). Alternative arguments for generalizing from data as applied to qualitative research. Educational Researcher, 22(4), (pp.6-23).
- Foster, C. (1998) Island wings: A memoir. Toronto: Harper Collins.
- _____. (1996) A place called heaven: The meaning of being black in Canada. Toronto: Harper Collins.
- Fulford, R. (1999). The triumph of narrative: Story telling in the age of mass culture. Toronto, ON: House of Anansi Press Limited.
- "Funeral of Hon Chas A. Reid". The Daily Gleaner [Jamaica] 2 Oct. 1944: 1.
- Friedman, S. (1998). Women's autobiographical selves: Theory and practice. In Sidonie Smith S & Watson J. (Eds.), Women, Autobiography, Theory: A Reader (pp. 2-82). Madison, Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press.
- Gleaner, Inc. (2003). Jamaican History 4. Retrieved June 13, 2004, from <http://www.discoverjamaica.com/gleaner/discover/geography/history4.htm>
- Gleaner, Inc. (2003). Jamaican History 6. Retrieved July 30, 2003, from <http://www.discoverjamaica.com/gleaner/discover/geography/history6.htm>
- Goldman, A (1998). Autobiography, ethnography, and history: A Model for reading. In Smith, S & Watson, J. (Eds.), Women, Autobiography, Theory: A Reader Madison, Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press. (pp.288-298).
- Goodwin, J. (1993). Autobiography: The self made text. New York: Twayne Publishers.
- Gordon, S.C. (1963). A century of West Indian education: A sourcebook. London: Longman Group Limited.
- Gray, O. (1991). Radicalism and social change in Jamaica, 1960 - 1972. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press.
- Green, W.A. (1993). The creolization of Caribbean history: The emancipation era and a critique of dialectical analysis. In H.Beckles & V. Shepherd, Caribbean freedom: Society and economy from emancipation to the present. (pp.28-41). Kingston: Ian Randle.

- Griffiths, M. (1995). (Auto)biography and epistemology. Educational Review, 47.1, (pp.75-88).
- Habersham, R. (1998). Education of the colonial woman through the eyes of the novelist. In Barrow, C. (Ed.), Caribbean Portraits: Essays on Gender Ideologies and Identities (pp. 225-233). Kingston, Jamaica: Ian Randle Publishers.
- Hall, Douglas. (Ed) (1989). In miserable slavery: Thomas Thistlewood in Jamaica, 1750-86. London: MacMillan Publishers.
- _____. (1959). Free Jamaica 1838-1865: An Economic History. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Harms, R. (2002). The Diligent: A voyage through the worlds of the slave trade. New York: Basic Books.
- Harris-Marcadiar, J. and Dr. Bonisteel. Recipe and note for lassy bread. Lassy Bread. Personal correspondence: March 26, 2004.
- Henriques, F. (1953). Family and colour in Jamaica. London: Eyre & Spottiswoode.
- Higman, B. W (1988). Jamaica surveyed. Kingston, Jamaica: Institution of Jamaica Publications Limited.
- _____. (1995). Slave population and economy in Jamaica 1807-1834. Kingston, Jamaica: The University Press of the West Indies.
- _____. (1999). Writing West Indian history. Coventry: Warwick University Caribbean Studies.
- "Historical survey". (1945). West India Royal Commission Report: Presented by the Secretary of State for the Colonies to Parliament by Command of His Majesty. (pp.2-8). London: His Majesty's Stationary Office.
- "Hon C. A. Reid mourned". The Daily Gleaner [Jamaica] 2 Oct. 1944: 8.
- Hooks, bell. (1998). writing autobiography. In Smith, S & Watson J.(Eds.), Women, autobiography, theory: A Reader (pp.429-432). Madison, Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press.
- Kazemek, F. E. (2002). Exploring our lives: A writing handbook for senior adults. Santa Monica, California: Santa Monica Press.
- Kihlstrom, J.F. (2002, October 31). The Human Ecology of Memory. Retrieved February 13, 2003, from <http://www.is.socrates.berkeley.edu/~kihlstrm/mnemosyne.htm>
- Kincaid, J. (2002). Mr. Potter. Toronto, Canada: Alfred A Knopf Canada

- ____ (1999). My garden (book). New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux
- ____ (1997a) The autobiography of my mother. New York: Plume.
- ____ (1997b) My brother. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.
- ____ (1990) Lucy. New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux.
- ____ (1988) A small place. New York: Plume
- King, R. (1979) The Jamaica Schools Commission and the development of secondary schooling. In D'Oyley, V & Murray, R. Development and disillusion in Third World education (pp.41-570). Toronto: OISE.
- Kipling, R. (1906). Father in heaven, who lovest all. In The General Synod (compiled by), The Book of Common Praise Revised 1938 being the hymn book of the Anglican church of Canada (p.646). Toronto, Ontario: Anglican Book Centre.
- Klingberg, F.J. (1939). The lady Mico Charity schools in the British West Indies, 1835-1842. The Journal of Negro history, 24(3), (pp.291-344).
- Kurlansky, M. (1997). Cod: A Biography of the Fish that Changed the World. Toronto, Ontario: Alfred A. Knopf Canada.
- "Last journey for privy councillor". The Daily Gleaner Jamaica 2 Oct. 1944: I,
- Leo-Rhynie, E. A. (1998). Socialization and the development of gender identity: Theoretical formulations and Caribbean research. In Christine Barrow (Ed.), Caribbean portraits: Essays on gender ideologies and identities (pp.234-254). Kingston, Jamaica: Ian Randle Publishers.
- Lionnet, F. (1998). The politics and aesthetics of métissage. In S Smith & J. Watson (Eds.), Women, autobiography, theory: A reader (pp.325-336). Madison, Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press.
- Lovelace, Earl. (1997). The schoolmaster. Portsmouth, New Hampshire: Heinemann.
- Manley, D. (1969). The school certificate examination, Jamaica, 1962. Social and Economic Studies. Vol. 18, No 1, March. pp 54 – 71. Kingston, Jamaica: Institute of Social and Economic Research, University of the West Indies.
- "Market Scene" Islands: An international magazine October 1989. Photograph by Bob Krist (p.73)
- Marshall, W.K. (1993) 'We be wise to many more things': Black's hopes and expectations of emancipation.' In Beckles, H., & Shepherd, V. Caribbean freedom: Society and economy from emancipation to the present. Kingston: Ian Randle. (pp12 – 20).

- Mathúna, S.M. (2003). Slavery and London. Retrieved February 14, 2002, from http://www.flamemag.dircon.co.uk/slavery_in_london.html.
- Marthurin-Mair, L. (1998). Women field workers in Jamaica during slavery. In Shobhita Jain and Rhoda Reddock (Eds.), Women Plantation Workers: International Experiences. New York: Oxford (pp.17-28).
- McKay, C. (1961). Banana bottom. San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich Publishers.
- McKay, Nellie Y. (1998). The narrative self: Race politics, and culture in Black American women's Autobiography. In Sidonie Smith & Julia Watson (Eds.), Women, autobiography, theory: A reader (pp.96-107). Madison, Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press.
- Mico College. (June 7th 1965). Student of the year concert programme. Jamaica: Kingston, Little Theatre.
- Mico College. (December 9, 1965) Annual presentation of certificates, dedication of buildings, unveiling of photographs. Jamaica: Kingston
- Miller, P. (1990) Jamaican society and high schooling. Kingston: Institute of Social and Economic Research. United Cooperative Printers.
- Miller, P. (1994). Writing your life: A journey of discovery. Crow's Nest, NSW, Australia: Allen & Unwin.
- Mintz, S. (1985) Sweetness and power: The place of sugar in modern history. New York: Viking Press.
- _____. (1974). Caribbean transformations. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Merriam-Webster's collegiate dictionary (10th ed.). (1993). Springfield, MA: Merriam-Webster.
- Mobley, M. (1993). A different remembering: Memory, history, and meaning in *Beloved*. In Gates, H. & Appiah K. (Eds.). Toni Morrison: Critical perspectives past and present. (pp.356-365). New York: Amistad.
- Moitt, B. (1995) Women, work and resistance in the French Caribbean during slavery, 1700-1848. In Shepherd, V., Brereton, B., & Bailey, B. Engendering history: Caribbean women in historical perspective (pp.155-175). Kingston: Ian Randle.
- Molasses Act: May 17/28, 1733. Retrieved May 25, 2004 at www.multied.com/documents/MOLASSES.html.

- Moore, B. L. & Johnson, M. A. (2002). Celebrating Christmas in Jamaica, 1865-1920: From Creole carnival to 'civilized' convention. In K. E. A. Monteith & G. Richards (Eds.), Jamaica in slavery and freedom: History, heritage and culture (pp.144-178). Barbados: University of the West Indies Press.
- Morris, M. (1999). Is English we speaking and other essays. Kingston: Ian Randle Publishers.
- Morrison, T. (1999). Unspeakable things unspoken: The Afro-American presence in American literature. In James, J. & Sharpley-Whiting, T. The black feminist reader. (pp.24-56). Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.
- _____. (1992). Playing in the dark: Whiteness and the literary imagination. New York. Vintage.
- Mullin, M. (1995). Slave economic strategies: food, markets and property. In Mary Turner (Ed.), From chattel slaves to wage slaves: The dynamics of labour bargaining in the Americas. (pp.68-78). Kingston: Ian Randle
- Munroe, T. (1972). The politics of decolonization: Jamaica 1944-62. Jamaica: Institute of Social and Economic Research, University of the West Indies.
- Murray, R. (1979) Twentieth-century developments in teacher training. In D'Oyley, V. & Murray, R. Development and disillusion in Third World education (pp.33-57). Toronto: OISE.
- _____. (1979) Some later developments in secondary education. In D'Oyley, V. & Murray, R. Development and disillusion in Third World education. (pp.58-63). Toronto: OISE.
- Naipaul, V.S. (1962). The middle passage. New York: Penguin Books.
- Nesfield, J.C. (1942). Manual of English grammar and composition. London: MacMillan and Company.
- Nettleford, R.M. (1972) Identity, race and protest in Jamaica. New York: William Morrow and Company
- New, W.H. (2003). Grandchild of Empire: About irony, mainly in the Commonwealth. Vancouver, British Columbia: Ronsdale Press.
- Ngugi, wa Thiong'o (1992) Decolonizing the mind: The politics of language in African literature. Nairobi: Heinemann Kenya.
- O Chef. O Chef: What is British Treacle?. Retrieved June 1, 2004, from www.ochef.com/316.htm.

- Olney, J. (1998) Memory and narrative: The weave of life-writing. Chicago: University of Chicago Press
- Orchard, D. B. & Fuller, Revd R.C. (Eds.). (1966). The Holy Bible: Revised Standard Version, Catholic Edition. London: Catholic Truth Society.
- Pack Obe Rn , Captain J. (1982). Nelson's blood: The story of naval rum. Annapolis, Maryland: Alan Sutton Publishing Limited.
- Perrault, J. (1998). Autography/transformation/asymmetry. In Sidonie Smith & Julia Watson (Eds.), Women, Autobiography, Theory: A Reader (pp.190-196). Madison, Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press.
- Prince, A. (2001) Being black: Essays by Althea Prince. Toronto, Ontario: Insomniac Press.
- Prosser, J. (2001). Skin memories. In S. Ahmed and J. Stacey (Eds.), Thinking through the skin (pp.52-68). New York: Routledge.
- Raiskin, J L. (1996). Snow on the cane fields: Women's writing and creole subjectivity. Minneapolis, Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press.
- Religious Tract Society (Great Britain) (1799). Jamaica: Enslaved and free. London: The Religious Tract Society .
- Richardson, L. (2000). Writing: A method of inquiry. In N. Denzin & Y. Lincoln (Eds.), Handbook of Qualitative Research 2nd Ed. (pp.923-948). Thousand Oaks, C.A: Sage.
- Rhys, J. (1993). Wide Sargasso sea. London, Britain: Penguin Books.
- Richards, G. (2002). Race, class and labour politics in colonial Jamaica, 1900-1934. In K. E. A. Monteith & G. Richards (Eds.), Jamaica in slavery and freedom: History, heritage and culture (pp.340-362). Barbados: University of the West Indies Press.
- Roberts, P. (1988). West Indians and their language. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Robinson, C. (1969). The iron thorn: The defeat of the British by the Jamaican maroons. Kingston, Jamaica: LMH Publishing.
- Robotham, D. (1984) The emergence of sociology in Jamaica. Social and economic studies. Vol. 33, No 1, March. Pp 88 – 115. Kingston, Jamaica: Institute of social and economic research, University of the West Indies.
- Rodney, W. (1982) How Europe underdeveloped Africa. Washington, D.C.: Howard University Press.

- Ross, E. (1946). The role of Christian missions in education and development in dependant territories. The Journal of Negro Education, 15.3, (pp.319-335). Retrieved 7 May 2003, from <http://www.jstor.org/>
- Saul, J. R. (Winter 1999-2000). What it means to be Canadian. Chapter One: The Members' Almanac, 1, 5.
- Salkind, N.J. (2000). Exploring research. Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Prentice Hall.
- Schwartz-Bart, S. (1982). The bridge of beyond. Portsmouth, New Hampshire: Heinemann.
- Scott, J. W. (1998). Experience. In Sidonie Smith & Julia Watson (Eds.), Women, Autobiography, Theory: A Reader (pp.57-71). Madison, Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press.
- Seaga, E. (1973) Parent-teacher relationships in a Jamaican village. In Lowenthal D. & Comitas, L. Consequences of class and color: West Indian perspectives. (pp.169-189). New York: Anchor Press.
- Senoir, O. (1983). A-Z of Jamaican Heritage. Kingston, Jamaica: Heinemann Educational Books Ltd.
- _____. (1991) Working miracles: Women's lives in the English-speaking Caribbean. London: James Curry and Bloomingdale, Indiana: Indiana University Press.
- Shepard, R. (1997) Deemed unsuitable. Toronto: Umbrella Press.
- Sheridan, R.B. (1995). Strategies of slave subsistence. In Mary Turner (Ed.), From chattel slaves to wage slaves: The dynamics of labour bargaining in the Americas. Kingston: Ian Randle (pp.48-67).
- Sherlock, P. & Bennett, H. (1998). The story of the Jamaican people. Kingston, Jamaica: Ian Randle Publishers.
- Shohat, E and Stam, R. (1994) Unthinking Eurocentrism: Multiculturalism and the media. London and New York: Routledge.
- Short, E.C. (1991). Introduction: Understanding Curriculum Inquiry. In E.C. Short (Ed.), Forms of Curriculum Inquiry (pp.1-26). New York: SUNY Press.
- Simmonds, L. E. (2002). The Afro-Jamaican and the internal marketing system: Kingston, 1780-1834. In K. E. A. Monteith & G. Richards (Eds.), Jamaica in Slavery and Freedom: History, Heritage and Culture (pp.274-290). Barbados: University of the West Indies Press.

- Smith, M. G. (1973) Education and occupational choice in rural Jamaica. In Lowenthal, D. & Comitas, L. Consequences of class and color: West Indian perspectives. New York: Anchor Press.
- Smith, L.M. (1994). Biographical method. In N.K. Denzin and Y.S. Lincoln (Eds.), Handbook of Qualitative Research (pp.286-305). Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications.
- Smith, L. T. (1999). Decolonizing methodologies: Research and indigenous peoples. New York: Zed Books.
- Smith, L.T. (1992). Ko Taku Ko Ta Te Maori: The dilemma of a Maori Academic. In NZARE/AARE Conference, Deakin University, Geelong, Victoria, Australia November 1992 (pp.1-25).
- Smith, S. (1998). Performativity, autobiographical practice, resistance. In Sidonie Smith & Julia Watson (Eds.), Women, Autobiography, Theory: A Reader (pp.108-115). Madison, Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press.
- Spillers, H. (1999) Mama's baby, papa's maybe: An American grammar book. In James, J. & Sharpley-Whiting, T. The black feminist reader. (pp.57-87). Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.
- Spurr, D. (1993). The rhetoric of empire: Colonial discourse in journalism, travel writing, and imperial administration. Durham & London: Duke University Press.
- Stanfield, J.H. (1994). Ethnic modeling in qualitative research. In N.K. Denzin and Y.S. Lincoln (Eds.), Handbook of Qualitative Research (pp.175-188). Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications.
- Steedman, C. (1998). Stories. In Sidonie Smith & Julia Watson (Eds.), Women, autobiography, theory: A reader (pp.243-254). Madison, Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press.
- "Social structure and conditions". (1945) West India Royal Commission Report: Presented by the Secretary of State for the Colonies to Parliament by Command of His Majesty. (pp.29-36). London: His Majesty's Stationary Office.
- Stone, P. and Edwards S. (1976). 1776. New York: Penguin Plays.
- Suleri, S. (1998). Woman skin deep: Feminism and the postcolonial condition. In Sidonie Smith & Julia Watson (Eds.), Women, autobiography, theory: A reader (pp.116-130). Madison, Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press.

- Tamke, S. (1978). Make joyful noise unto the lord. Athens: Ohio University Press.
- "The Very Highest Quality Gold Guineas. The story of the gold guinea: a brief history."
Retrieved December 12, 2003 at <http://www.24carat.co.uk/guineastory.html>
- The West Indies year book including also the Bermudas, The Bahamas. British Guiana and British Honduras. Montreal, Canada: Thomas Skinner of Canada Limited.
- Thompson, A.O. (1997). The haunting past: Politics, economics and race in Caribbean life. New York: M.E. Sharpe.
- Tiffin, H. (1993). Cold hearts and (foreign) tongues: recitation and reclamation of the female body in the works of Erna Brodber and Jamaica Kincaid. Callaloo, 16.3 (pp.909-921). Retrieved May 6, 2003 at <http://www.jstor.org/>
- Tortello, R. (October 29, 2001). Our parishes. In Jamaica Gleaner: Pieces of the past. Retrieved June 13, 2004 at www.jamaica-gleaner.com/pages/history/story0013.html.
- Tortello, R. (June 7, 2004). Out of many cultures: the people who came. In Jamaica Gleaner: Pieces of the past. Retrieved June 13, 2004 at www.jamaica-gleaner.com/pages/history.html.
- Trouillot, M-R. (1995). Silencing the past: Power and the production of history. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Tuchman, G. (1994). Historical social science: Methodologies, methods, and meanings. In N. K. Denzin & Y. Lincoln. (Eds.), Handbook of qualitative research (pp.306-323). Thousand Oaks, C.A.: Sage.
- Turner. T. (1977 Reprinted 2001). The socialization intent in colonial Jamaican Education 1867 – 1911. In Barrow, C. & Reddock, R. Caribbean Sociology: Introductory readings. Kingston: Ian Randle Publishers.
- Turner, M. (1995). Chattel slaves into wages slaves: A Jamaican case study. In Turner, M. (Ed.), From Chattel Slaves to wage slaves: the dynamics of labour bargaining in the Americas. Kingston: Ian Randle (pp.33-47).
- Una and the Lion: British Gold Coins Exhibit. Retrieved December 12, 2003 at <http://www.money.org/una/Charles2.html>
- Walker, J. (1992) The black loyalists: The search for a promised land in Nova Scotia and Sierra Leone 1783 – 1870. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Walvin, J. (2001). Black ivory: Slavery in the British Empire. Oxford: Blackwell.

West India Royal Commission Report: Presented by the Secretary of State for the Colonies to Parliament by Command of His Majesty (July 1945). London: His Majesty's Stationary Office. (Also referred to as the Moyne Report.)

Whyte, M. (1977). A short history of education in Jamaica. London: Hodder & Stoughton.

Williams, E. (1973). Education in the British West Indies. In Lowenthal, D. & Comitas, L. Consequences of class and color: West Indian perspectives. (pp.148-167). New York: Anchor Press.

____ (1984). From Columbus to Castro: The history of the Caribbean:1942-1969. New York: Random House.

____ (1944). Capitalism and slavery. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press.

Williams, Rev. I. & Monk, W.H. (1842). Lord, in this thy mercy's day. In The General Synod (compiled by), The Book of Common Praise Revised 1938 being the hymn book of the Anglican church of Canada (p.120). Toronto, Ontario: Anglican Book Centre.

Wright, P. (Ed.) (1966). Lady Nugent's Jamaica Journal (4th ed.). Kingston, Jamaica: Institute of Jamaica.

Zach, P. (Ed.) (1983). Jamaica. Hong Kong, Singapore: APA Productions.

Zinsser, William. (1998). On writing well: The classic guide to writing nonfiction. (6th ed.). New York: Harper Collins Publishers.

Zinsser, W. (1995). Inventing the truth: The art and craft of memoir. New York: Houghton Mifflin Company.

APPENDIX I Glossary of Patois Speech

CHAPTER III

Me wa' fe sleep, me tyad.	<i>I want to sleep.</i>
You too young fe tyad. Put on yuh clothes and go outside to tek in de fresh morning air.	<i>You are too young to be tired. Put on your clothes and go outside to take in the fresh morning air.</i>
Drink yuh cerasee tea. It good fe clean out yu blood.	<i>Drink your cerasse tea. It is good to clean out your blood.</i>
Oats porridge good fe you. It mek you bones strong.	<i>Oats porridge is good for you. It makes your bone strong.</i>
Yu going to sit dere til yu drink dat tea and dat porridge.	<i>You are going to sit there until you drink that tea and that porridge.</i>
Harold yuh breakfast ready.	<i>H. your breakfast is ready.</i>
Harold, chew with your mout shut. You sound like a striking hog. Yuh mek me stomach sick.	<i>H. chew with your mouth shut. You sound like a striking hog. You make my stomach sick.</i>
You red kin bitch! You tink yuh betta ah me.	<i>You red skin bitch! You think you are better than me.</i>
See you laata	<i>See you later.</i>
Eat up. If yuh don't eat now yuh nat getting anyting to eat for the rest of de day.	<i>Eat up. If you do not eat now you will not get anything to eat for the rest of the day.</i>
Yuh stubborn like a mule, yuh are de bebil pickney!	<i>You are stubborn like a mule. You are the devil's child!</i>
Leave de chile alone wid me. Yu cyant look after har.	<i>Leave the child alone. You can't look after her.</i>
Yu comin wid daddy.	<i>You are coming with Daddy.</i>
People don't have dem pickney and give dem whey like chickens.	<i>People do not have children and give them away like chickens.</i>

If yuh want pickney, yuh have yuh big pussy, go have yuh own pickney.	<i>If you want a child, you have your big pussy, go and have your own child.</i>
de likkle girl	<i>the little girl</i>
Faader Chrismus	<i>Father Christmas</i>
Praise de lawd Jesus me deliva de byaby ahright. Me hab a bununus byaby bwoy.	<i>Praise the Lord Jesus I delivered a the baby alright. I have the healthiest and most handsome baby boy</i>
Him look like parson.	<i>He looks like parson.</i>
De pickney too ripe.	<i>The child is too grown up for her age.</i>
Oonu free papa soon bun.	<i>Your free paper will soon burn.</i>
Yuh gwan wid you mishavin, teacha a go fix yuh.	<i>You can carry on your misbehaving now because the teacher will punish you when school starts.</i>
You wah fe drowned pickney?	<i>Do you want to drown the child?</i>
CHAPTER IV	
One day, de obeah man ah go tun yu mout back a yu.	<i>One day the obeah man is going to turn your mouth behind you</i>
Rain a come.	<i>The rain is coming in</i>
Set out de drum dem.	<i>Set out the drums</i>
Put out de wash pan	<i>Put out the washpan</i>
Lawd! tek up de close dem ahfa de line. Quick! Quick! befo rain wet dem up.	<i>Lord! Take up the clothes off the line. Quick! Quick! Before the rain wets them.</i>
Shet de winda dem, ar else de rain a go blow een.	<i>Shut the windows or the rain will blow in.</i>

Missa Shaata gaan mad!	<i>Mr Shorter has gone mad!</i>
Him a tek disadvantage a de poor dead ooman pickney dem.	<i>He is abusing the poor dead woman's children.</i>
dem kinda cigaret	<i>those kinds of cigarettes</i>
Go wash yuh stinkin so' foot.	<i>Go and wash your stinking sore foot.</i>
Clear aaf wid yu syphilis!	<i>Clear off with your syphilis!</i>
Yu too stink feh anybody feh want yu	<i>You stink too much for anybody to want you.</i>
Hap aan.	<i>Hop on.</i>
wooligans	<i>hooligans</i>
dem wutliss mumma	<i>their worthless mothers</i>
no-good black naygas	<i>no good black negroes</i>
de lickle thief dem	<i>the little thieves</i>
pap dem neck if dem couda catch dem. But dem gaan like de bloody rat dem.	<i>They would break their necks if they could catch them. But they have escaped like bloody cane rats.</i>
tief de game	<i>who stole the game (or who cheated)</i>
Me win de mos steelies mon.	<i>I won the most steelies, man</i>
Me nah go no whey. If anybody tink dem bad, dem cyaan come tek me out.	<i>I'm not going, if anyone thinks they are strong enough they can come and take me out.</i>
Lawd gad Hartense baggie drop offa har!	<i>Lord God, Hortense's baggy undergarment have fallen off!</i>

Do teacha no lick me! Me na do it again.	<i>Please teacher, I beg you, do not hit me! I won't do it again.</i>
fe tek bad tings mek laff.	<i>to make comedy out of a tragic incident.</i>
How Big Boy late de teacha man!	<i>How Big Boy made a fool of the head teacher!</i>
Yes mon, de bwoy dem late teacha, good good.	<i>Yes man, the boy made a fool of the teacher(very cleverly)!</i>
Teacha tek disadvantage of de likkle bway.	<i>Teacher mistreated the little defenseless boy.</i>
Teacher so bex im beat de bwoy til im neckstring naly bus.	<i>Teacher was so vexed that he beat the boy until his neck vein nearly burst</i>
Ah how come de teacha man so wicked?	<i>Why is teacher so wicked?</i>
If ah coulda, ah woulda jump up an grab teacha by im seed and drag im aafa de platfaam.	<i>If I could have, I would have jumped up and grabbed teacher by his balls and drag him off the platform</i>
Me woulda jump back ah im an lick im in ah im neck back.	<i>I would have jumped up and hit him in the back of his neck.</i>
Ah woulda give 'im a tump ina 'im sola plexus.	<i>I would have given him a thump in his solar plexus.</i>
Ah would ah trow a rock stone in ah im winda.	<i>I would have thrown a rock stone in his window</i>
What no cost life no cost nuttin.	<i>What does not cost life, does not cost anything.</i>
Feesh, fresh feesh. dacta fish. Buy yuh daccta feesh, parat feesh an goat feesh. Buy yuh feesh, me wih scale it feh yuh.	<i>Fish, fresh fish, doctor fish. Buy your doctor fish, parrotfish, and goatfish. Buy your fish; I will scale it for you</i>
bakra tek de meat an doh pay far it.	<i>White men take the meat and don't pay for it.</i>
De meat married to de bone.	<i>(You have to take the bone with the flesh.)</i>
yuh smellin high	<i>you are smelling bad</i>

yuh smell like seven-day cabbage wata

You smell like seven-day cabbage water

CHAPTER V

Come mek we go tek de tes.

Come, let's go and take the test.

CHAPTER VI

Ah who de hell yuh tink a go do de housewuk and help in a de shap? Meh na pay one red cent fe yuh ga a dat school.

Who the hell do you think is going to do the housework and help in the shop? I won't pay one red cent for you to go to that school

You just like yuh black mooma. She did tink seh she betta am me. An ah it mek me get me bredda feh box har dung. Ah hav a mine fe box yuh dung, jus like how yu faader box yu mooma dung.

You are just like your black mother. She thought that she was better than me. And that's why I had to get my brother to box her down. I have a good mind to box you down just like how your father boxed your mother down

Yuh draw me blood!

You've drawn my blood!

Put yuh name pon it.

Put your name on it.

See yah, yuh put yuh name pon it far when me ded and gaane me no have nobody fe inherit de fruits af me laaba.

See here, you put your name on it, for when I am dead and gone I won't have any one to inherit the fruits of my labour.)

Poor me dead woman pickney.

Pity me, I am the child of a dead woman. or Pity me, I am suffering because my mother is dead and cannot protect me.

CHAPTER VII

Lawd missis me no wah feh married nobody. Me no wa feh mash up like Mistress (So and So). Me no wah no husban feh tun crassses pan me yah.

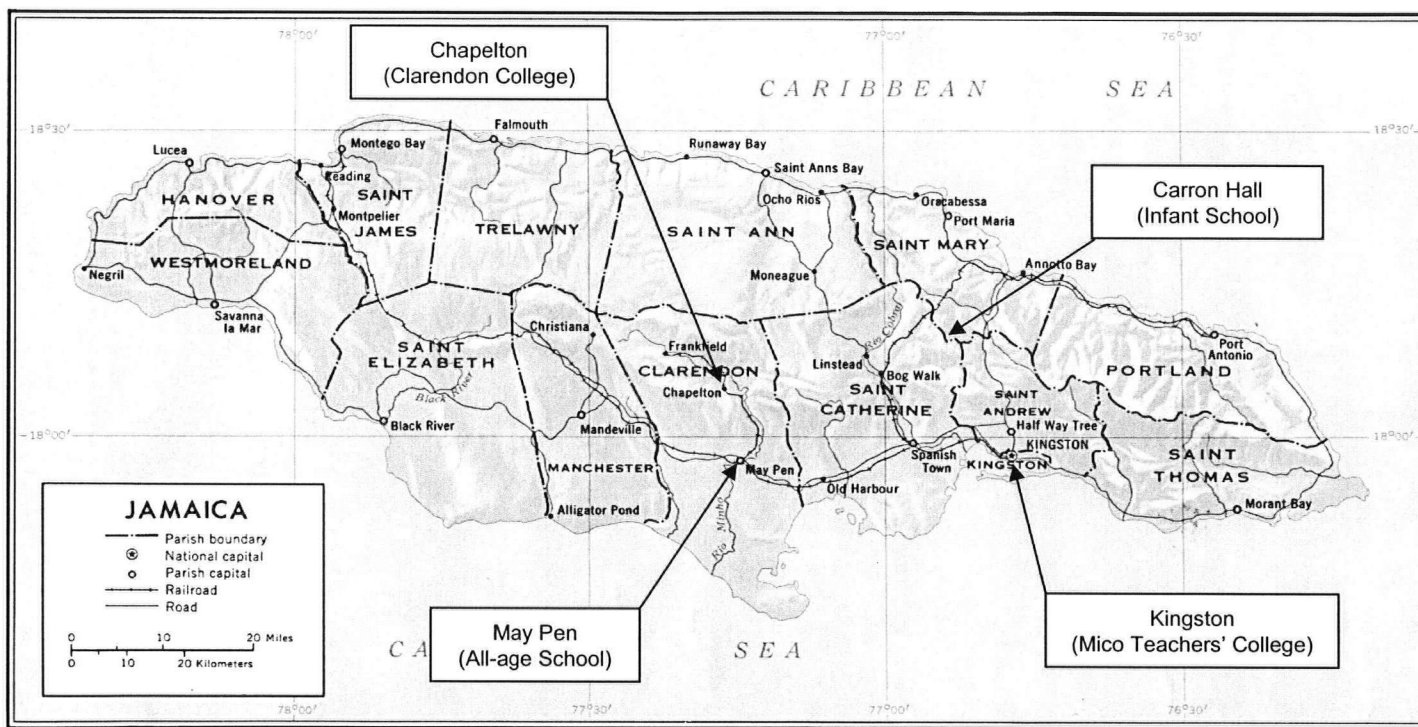
Lord, my friend, I do not want to marry anybody. I do not want to look emaciated like Mistress (So and So). I do not want to have a husband to become a cross on my back.

Missa Shaata nat home. You fambilly?

Mr Shorter is not at home. Are you family?

Just like yuh black mumma who thought she was better than me.	<i>Just like your black mother who thought she was better than me</i>
On a pint of aada. Mr President, a pint of aada.	<i>On a point of order, Mr President, a point of order</i>
On a pint of privilege Mr President, a pint of privilege.	<i>On a point of privilege Mr President, a point of privilege.</i>
Ah jus so im baan. Yuh cyant do nuttin bout it.	<i>That's the way the child is. You can't do anything about it (the character trait).</i>
Im have brain fe tek book learning.	<i>He has sthe brain for book learning. (The child is bright enough to study).</i>
Lawd Gad, teacha so sumall dat dem no see har!	<i>Lord God, teacher is so small that they can't see her!</i>

APPENDIX II Map of Jamaica



Shown are the locations of Yvonne's schooling

APPENDIX III Letter to Mrs Vinette Elliott

November 28, 2002

Dear Mrs Elliott,

Thank you for agreeing to correspond with me on matters of my very early schooling. I was Yvonne Shorter. I would first like to explain why it has become necessary to seek out people such as you. In this late stage of my life I have the opportunity to study for my doctorate in education. In looking around for what I would like to write my thesis on I discovered that it has been over 50 years since I entered school and I have not left. I became a teacher. I want to write my educational memoir. My recollection is that I started infant school in 1948 at Carron Hall. Since I am the only one remaining of my family, and I live all the way in B.C., I do not have anyone with whom to check my memory of my past schooling in Jamaica. My older brother and sister, Trevor and Sonia Shorter, attended the Carron Hall big school as we children called it then, under Mr. Whiteman. My father Cyril Shorter, who used to work with the Public Works Department, has also passed on. When I started school in 1948, I was a motherless child whom my father brought to live at Windsor Castle with one of his latest common law wives. My estimation is that I arrived close to Christmas in 1947 and then sent to school in January 1948, which was the beginning of the school year then.

I remember the first morning, I arrived at school having an asthma attack, from which I was recovering under the care of my aunt Joyce, one of my father's sisters. Looking back now the separation from my aunt who had become my surrogate mother was very traumatic.

I do not remember you then but I remember coming to see you in Carron Hall in 1965, to obtain a letter of confirmation of when I started (*sic*) school so that I could get my name entered on my birth certificate. I had won the Mico Teachers College Student of the Year Prize and went to get my passport in order to take up my prize trip, and discovered then that my birth certificate had no name on it. In the deep recesses of my memory I must have overheard my father and his common-law wife arguing over my not having an "age-paper" with which to start school but he insisted on sending me off with every confidence that I would be admitted without it. I also remember being teased about my "free paper being burned." My poor mother seemed to have passed before she could register me properly. I do

remember my first teacher as Miss Rose. She was a kind gentle Christian lady who had great patience and who was a great artist on the chalkboard. She taught us infant school kids all the stanzas to "All things bright and beautiful." She did so with the aid of beautiful pictures, which she drew on the black board. I carry the memory of the scene on the board of the "purple headed mountains with the rivers running by and the sunset in the garden..."

I have been in education, in various capacities since moving to Canada in 1969. In doing the proposal for my thesis, I need to come up with some details of my memory. I would really appreciate if you could verify my memory by answering the following questions for me. Please elaborate or add other details, which you think would be useful to my purpose.

1. What was the name of that imposing church which was located opposite the Carron Hall Domestic Science Centre where the infant school was located?
2. Was the infant school in fact located and attached to the Carron Hall School of Domestic Science?
3. Under whose auspices was the Domestic Science Centre? Please give me as much details as you can about this project.
4. Was there a dairy farm near by which we would have encountered when we went for nature walks or when walking to Carron Hall from Windsor Castle?
5. Did we in fact collect fresh clay in the vicinity for use in artwork?
6. Was there a "stagger back" factory located just beyond the Big School on the road to a place called Hazard?
7. Who were some of the prominent colonial families who settled at Carron Hall? Any details about them? I remember impressive harvest services at the church. Was there a white parson?
8. How was the Carron Hall School connected to the Infant School?
9. What was the philosophy of infant schools at that time and who started them?
10. Do you have pictures of yourself and the school in those days? Do you have any samples of books or other materials of your time as a teacher in Jamaica? I am afraid I do not have one of me before I was 15 years old when I went on my own to a studio to take one on my own initiative.
11. Was there a water reservoir near by? On the road to John Crow Spring?

12. Could you give me some details of the kind of school supplies you had at that time? I remember such things as the lined registers, red ink pens, indelible pencils, yellow lead pencils, slates and slate pencils(what did you use to make the lines on the slates?), exercise books marked ("On His Majesty's Service; Free Issue; Not to be sold"). Did we have in the Infant School the issue of the Caribbean readers, which had stories about mother hen, Mr. Joe and a Donkey, Percy the Chick? In short what were the primers?
13. For play materials I remember very brightly coloured rubber balls.
14. What was the official infant school curriculum?
15. What kind of furniture did the infant school have besides the blackboard? I cannot remember the infant school furniture.
16. Did you write a weekly scheme? If so what were the components? I would like to be able to compare with what we call lesson plans here?
17. Did we have to wear uniforms for infant school?

As you can tell by now I want to try and recreate the setting in order to tell a very interesting story of this part of my schooling, in a special chapter. Besides I now think that Carron Hall must have been a very important settlement, to put it another way, a missionary or colonial project. I used to walk through cane fields on the way to and from school. Was there a sugar factory close by that bought the canes?

I hope you will derive some pleasure in going down memory lane with me. Thanks for helping me.

Sincerely,

Yvonne Shorter Brown

APPENDIX IV Review: The Making of New World Slavery

The Making of New World Slavery: From the Baroque to the Modern 1492-1800. Robin

Blackburn. London, New York: Verso. 1997, 602 pages, \$30.00 soft cover.

Reviewed by Yvonne Brown, Faculty of Education, Educational Studies 507E. March 2001

New World Slavery is a neglected topic in the study of the relationship of race, nation, citizenship and education. The enslavement of indigenous peoples in the Americas, in the first place, and the subsequent enslavement of Africans, laid the foundations for both the symbolic and material bases for racialized identities. The subject of slavery in the New World is often dismissed as being nothing new. The institution of slavery, it is argued, after all, dates back to the Greeks and Romans. Furthermore, the indigenous peoples of the Americas practiced slavery. Moreover, nations in Africa practiced slavery and engaged in the trading of slaves with the Arabs before the Europeans came on the scene.

Robin Blackburn's book shows clearly the historical relationship between race, nation and citizenship. His encyclopedic coverage of the making of New World slavery, in symbiosis with the modern imperial histories of North Western Europe begs the question of why the subject is so consistently neglected throughout the education system. Blackburn covers a period of 308 years and provides detailed and comprehensive historical accounts of the role of the Portuguese, Spanish, Dutch, Danes, English and French in the making of racial slavery. He claims that the slavery of the Americas not only provided many novel features but its development was associated with the following ten processes, which have been held to define modernity:

1. the growth of instrumental rationality;
2. the rise of national sentiment and the nation-state;
3. racialized perceptions of identity;
4. the spread of market relations and wage labor;
5. the development of administrative bureaucracies and modern tax systems;
6. the growing sophistication of commerce and communication;
7. the birth of consumer societies;
8. the publication of newspapers and the beginnings of press advertising;
9. action at a distance;

10. individualist sensibility (p.4).

In his own words:

“The Atlantic world of this epoch was subject to rapid but unequal development. People separated by an ocean were brought into vital relationship with one another. The demand for sugar in London or Amsterdam helped to bring into being plantations in the Caribbean, which in turn were supplied with provisions from North America and slaves from Africa. The dynamic of the Atlantic economy was sustained by new webs of social trust, and gave birth to new identities. It required business planning and methods for discounting risk; it was associated with distinctive modern traditions of reflexive self-consciousness” (p. 4).

Blackburn states that this is a work of synthesis in which he tries to scrutinize all the various causal links in the chains of American slavery. He points out that:

“At each moment in the construction of the slave systems there were forms of resistance, queries and objections, even proposals that matters be arranged differently. The history reconstructed below will on occasion seek to identify signs and possibilities that other paths of development were considered and might have been chosen. Even if some clues can be detected, we are left with what happened. Yet some daylight is admitted to the modernity-slavery couplet by acknowledging the possibility that there might have been a path to modernity that avoided the enormity of enslavement and its contemporary legacy.” (p. 24).

In my view Blackburn does two things well. He bypasses the clichés of judging the past by contemporary moral sensibilities, to give the reader a good sense of the moral debates within nations in Europe and in kingdoms in Africa (Benin, Congo and the Ashanti, for example). He names monarchs, nobles, priests, popes, merchants, philosophers, investors and planters who engaged in either justifying slavery or repudiating it. We learn, for example, the surprising association of revered philosophers such as Locke, Hobbes, Kant, and Hegel with justifying the enslavement and ‘inferiorization’ of Africans. The second thing he does well is to show how the overemphasis on the economic analysis of slavery submerges the moral questions of the times. In so doing he is able to marshal evidence to argue the possibility that there may have been alternative paths to the slave plantation system. Part of his argument rests on claims that the embryo was in the Portuguese system which offered a mix of labor with many opportunities for manumission and full citizenship. The English and the French systems, he argues, were the most exacting of bondage and

servitude. He shows that had the Portuguese system been developed, instead of the over reliance on slave labor, it would have been less costly to Africa, Europe and the colonies. While economic historians may dispute this claim, I would argue that contemporary labor experts might ponder some lessons yet to be learned, perhaps. Furthermore, he believes that had Europe pursued this path it would not so blatantly violate the "free air policy" which outlawed slavery on its own soil.

The work is divided into two parts, and twelve chapters, an epilogue, subject and author index, and list of maps and illustration. There is no comprehensive bibliography of works cited appearing at the end of the text. Endnotes are extensive and give citations for works cited and archival sources; however, the citations are inconsistent. Sometimes full bibliographical reference is given, at other times, partial when work is not previously cited. Part one comprises eight chapters and covers the period 1492-1713. Here, he confronts the paradox that slavery was almost extinct in Western Europe at the time of the "Discoveries". He then traces country by country, the emergence of forms of colonization and enslavement in the course of which he shows that a new slave trade from Africa was developed. He describes the institutions and articulates the ideologies, which established racial slavery. He shows how forms of commercial organizations were tested, and the slave plantation itself was perfected as a productive enterprise. "Britain's precarious lead in colonial development in 1713 was the prize of challenges to Spain and the Netherlands, alliance with Portugal and an arduous and unfinished struggle with France" (p. 25). The date 1713 is important because it was the year in which, under Queen Anne, Britain obtained the Asiento (a contract for a monopoly on the slave trade) from Spain to supply up to 5,000 Africans annually, to the Spanish colonies, for a period of thirty years. Before this, the Asiento changed hands with the Dutch and Portuguese.

Part two comprises four chapters. In this section Blackburn explores the prodigious growth of the various slave systems, set in the context of the eighteenth century commercial boom at and the onset of the industrial revolution. Then, country by country and colony by colony, he explores how such a destructive system made a vital contribution to industrial and military success, and accumulated many of the social political antagonisms which were to engulf the Americas and Europe in an age of revolution. The following table does a rather inadequate job of synthesizing the commercial processes and institutions that arose during the slave trade, the development of plantation slavery, and the web of new industries, which

emerged as a consequence and in support of colony and empire. The organizing framework is derived from the interplay of land, labor, capital, institutions, technology, and ideologies of the period. The table attempts to capture the complexity of the enormous enterprise of racial slavery and the making of large profits for both the imperial states and the colonial governments. The table also supports the ten claims, which Blackburn makes regarding slavery and modernity. The period marked the beginning of large capital formation and accumulation for the Empires of Northwestern Europe.

Blackburn does not deal with slavery in Canada during the same period. One has to consult other sources for this. Although there is no comprehensive bibliography at the end of the text, the detailed citations and endnotes are often as instructive as the main text. As a history text it is highly readable.

This book is a demanding read. It could form the main text for a course carrying the title of the book. Scholars of post modernism and globalization should find this book an excellent foundation text. Blackburn argues clearly that this period was seminal in the formation of modernity, and by extension, the genesis of global international trade. It is a fine reference for history and social studies teachers. In one book one can find accounts of Portuguese, Dutch, French, English, and Spanish slavery. Finally, I highly recommend this book for descendants of the enslavement experience. In it African descendants will find a comprehensive exposition of how their forbears came to the New World and how they have been racialized to occupy such a low status in the New World social hierarchy. They will also be able to understand more clearly the post-emancipation struggles throughout the Americas and the Caribbean. Descendants of the original peoples of the Americas and the Caribbean will be informed of how they were caught in the processes of New World colonization and slavery through partial extermination, displacement and dispossession of their land and territories, wealth, and kingdoms. Blackburn's text makes clear how Indigenous people and Africans were inserted into the capitalist economic system which they helped develop. This early positioning foretold the contemporary global stratification of racialized labour.

LAND	COLONIAL PERSONNEL	CAPITAL	INSTITUTIONS
<p>The Americas and the Caribbean regarded as terra nullius</p> <p>Appropriation of indigenous land</p> <p>Special land grants to nobles, gentry, and merchants</p> <p>Plunder and mining of gold, silver and other precious stones</p> <p>Felling of Timber for shipbuilding</p> <p>Fishing (The Grand Banks, New Foundland Cod)</p> <p>Salt from Dutch Tortuga</p> <p>TERRITORIES COVERED</p> <p>All of South America (Peru, Brazil, Mexico)</p> <p>The Caribbean Cuba, Hispaniola, Jamaica, Barbados, British North America (Maryland, Virginia, N. Carolina, S. Carolina, Georgia, New York)</p> <p>Along the West Coast of Africa from Senegal to Angola, and on the South East Coast of Africa to Mozambique and Madagascar, the Congo in Central Africa.</p>	<p>1. Monarchs (e.g., Elizabeth 1, James 1, James 11, Prince Rupert, Duke of York)</p> <p>2. Courtiers and gentry</p> <p>1. Legislators in the metropolis and in colonies</p> <p>2. Merchants</p> <p>3. Slavers ship captains</p> <p>4. Planters</p> <p>5. Shipbuilders</p> <p>6. Colonists,</p> <p>7. Capitalists</p> <p>8. Bankers</p> <p>9. Insurance Agents</p> <p>10. Priests</p> <p>11. Philosophers</p> <p>12. Travelers</p> <p>13. Overseers</p> <p>14. Accountants</p> <p>15. Pirates</p> <p>16. Privateers</p> <p>17. African Merchant kings, agents,</p> <p>18. African Middlemen</p> <p>19. Ships surgeon</p> <p>20. European Factors</p> <p>21. Interlopers</p>	<p>1. Mercantile capital</p> <p>2. Marine capital</p> <p>3. Commodity taxation</p> <p>4. Excise and customs</p> <p>5. Racialized consumption & production</p> <p>6. Plantation commodities of sugar, cotton, rum, indigo, coffee, tobacco, cocoa, molasses</p> <p>7. Joint stock ventures</p> <p>8. Inventories of livestock, slaves and machinery</p> <p>9. Forty-three forts and castles to hold captive, along the Gold Coast alone.</p> <p>10. Gold and Silver Bars as currency</p> <p>11. Iron Works</p> <p>12. Textiles industries around wool, cotton, and indigo and dyewood</p>	<p>1. Chartered slaving companies</p> <p>2. Colonial and Overseas Banks, Bank of England in 1694</p> <p>3. Stock Markets</p> <p>4. Insurance Companies</p> <p>5. The institution of the capitalist market and economies to scale</p> <p>6. Colonial governments alongside imperial states</p> <p>7. The church, both Catholic and Protestant</p> <p>8. The Institution of Black Slavery</p> <p>9. Law: the French Code Noir, the English black codes, penal codes and institutions</p> <p>10. Citizenship and private property. Freedom vs. bondage and nationhood</p> <p>11. The Navy especially the British Navy which allowed Britannia to rule the waves.</p> <p>12. Colonial armies</p>

CHARTERED SLAVING COMPANIES	LABOUR	TECHNOLOGIES	IDEOLOGIES
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Virginia Company 2. Guinea Company 3. Dutch West India Company 4. The Brazil Company 5. The Middleburg Company 6. Providence Island Company 7. The Massachusetts Company 8. The Company of Royal Adventurers to Africa (James II in 1663, gave the monopoly on the slave trade for 1,000 years. Rescinded in 1672 and recreated under: 9. The Royal African Company. This company established 17 forts and slave castles on the West Coast of Africa between 1672-1713. 10. The Company of New France 11. The St. Christopher Company 12. The Senegal and Guinea Company 13. The Louisiana Company 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Coerced indigenous peoples 2. Forced and voluntary indentured servants from Portugal, Spain, England (fewer from Holland and France) 3. Immigrants 4. Enslaved Africans 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Shipbuilding and the invention of different vessels to suit the need for transport of goods and human cargo, and for defense 2. Change in design in sugar mills and boilers 3. Invention of an array of instruments of bondage from iron 4. Invention of agricultural instruments 5. Invention of new guns and ammunitions 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1..Noah's Curse 1. The curse of Ham 2. French Laissez-faire 3. Dutch Free Trade 4. Christian mission to Christianize the heathens of the New World 5. Africans need to be enslaved for their own good 6. Doctrines of white superiority 7. Africa has no history or civilization