

# The West Indian American

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## WISC Leads Coordination For PICA's Visit To Connecticut



Above: Portions of scenes of gatherings at the Collin Bennett Building on Sunday, October 10, 2021, accessing services of the PICA Team, first time in Hartford, CT.

By Mark Milward

The Passport Immigration & Citizenship Agency (PICA) conducted a passport renewal and citizenship drive in the Diaspora, October 8 – 10, 2021, this time visiting Hartford, Connecticut, USA.

The PICA team consisting of 17 Jamaicans from the island and led by CEO Andrew Wynter processed over 450 passport applications and saw Jamaicans coming to the Collin Bennett Building in Hartford from as far as Massachusetts, Rhode Island, New York, and New Jersey.

Applications were processed for new passports, passport renewals, lost or stolen passports, and particular cases. More than 70 applicants sought passports for their children and grandchildren born in the US under the Jamaican citizenship by descent provision. The desire of many Jamaicans born US

citizens was to ensure and reinforce the connection of their descendants to their home country.

For a sizable number of applicants renewing their passport was an exhilarating and emotional experience with some openly weeping upon having their Jamaican passport renewed after more than 40 years of being without it.

The appreciation for the PICA visit resonated throughout the 3-day event and the staff who executed brilliantly were reminded each day how much their presence was appreciated.

Visits from Hartford Mayor the Hon. Luke A. Bronin and Connecticut State Senator Doug McCrory were highlights at the event. Each spoke as attendees were being processed and the local television, radio and newspapers provided coverage before and during the event. *Hartford Public Access*



Andrew Wynter (right), CEO, PICA with Mark Milward of Hartford Jamaica Diaspora, livestreamed portions of the PICA event via Hartford Public Access Television (HPATV) to the Global Jamaica Diaspora Show.

Television (HPATV) live streamed portions of the event to the Global Jamaican Diaspora through *The Jamaica Diaspora Show* Facebook page.

Violette Haldane, president of the West Indian Foundation, and its sister organization the West Indian Social Club (WISC) of Hartford, Inc.

led the Hartford teams' planning efforts to coordinate PICA's visit which began in early July. Bloomfield, CT, with Mayor Suzette DeBeatham-Brown, Dr. Gary Rhule, MD, Councilwoman Shirley Surgeon, Beverly Redd, administrator (WISC), WESU radio personality Donovan

Longmore, and Sashan Blake provided needed support.

Grace Kennedy and Western Union were major sponsors, including Victoria Mutual Building Society (VMBS), JN Money (Jamaican National Group) and Integrated Diaspora Services (IDS). IDS is a

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# Jamaica And The Bauxite Tussle

Michael Manley's book, *A Voice at the Workplace*, recounts the history of bauxite mining in Jamaica before he became Prime Minister.

The book is detailed in its report and sheds light on the challenges and opportunities that

were present during the post 1950s period when the country was a colony of Great Britain. Bauxite was discovered in Jamaica in 1942 and the island's proximity to the US, along with the availability of suitable sites for ports, made it ideal for investment.

Bauxite mining companies were the Aluminum Corporation of Canada, Kaiser Bauxite Corporation and Reynolds Metal Company of the US. By 1957 Jamaica had the world's largest deposit of bauxite and it had the greatest appeal in that it was easily accessible because the



Jim Z. Daniels

ore was on the surface of the land.

These companies had many similarities in management style. They were international conglomerates whose profits from their Jamaican operations were kept outside the island. That has not changed. Another drawing card was the cheap and abundant labor available in Jamaica.

In 1953 the unskilled bauxite worker earned an average wage of about \$13 a week, just slightly more than the sugar cane cutter working a 44-hour week. And because there was relatively little skilled labor within Jamaica, the companies could control the training and set wage scales for skilled workers.

From the very outset, the labor unions began to flex their muscles and demanded a fair wage to provide a descent living for the workers. This period of bauxite mining in Jamaica coincided with extreme factionalism and competition for worker representational rights.

The labor union sector was caught up in a warlike confrontational climate that involved protests, lawsuits, and demonstrations—all designed to garner worker support and representation.

From the very beginning of the arrival of the mining companies, protests have been raised regarding two things of equal importance. The first was the waste run off from the curing process that the Canadian company used to transform the bauxite ore into aluminum and the dust that blows the particulates everywhere as part of the drawing process when the ore is loaded onto the ships.

Now, however, the level of sophistication in challenging the harm that the bauxite industry has done to the ecology, the environment, and the lives of the people of Jamaica, these voices are today organized and assertive. And more so even though it was known back

then that managing and disposing of the leaching fields has continued to be an unresolved feature of all mining operations.

The mining of bauxite in Jamaica positioned it strategically because the ore is very near the surface. Plus, Jamaica's proximity to the US mainland and the proximity of the ore to US factories and ultimately the ease manufacturers have in moving merchandise.

The second concerning issue was the disposal and if not disposal, then management of the alumina waste product that is now stored in open, leaching fields. The harm that is being done to the country's potable water and especially to the children and youth have not stirred activist community organizations where this is occurring. These two issues continue to this day.

Concerns about bauxite mining are a headline item in Jamaican publications because many believe that it is leveling a punishing economic and social blow to the island. On this topic, the country has seasoned and scholarly advocates who are attacking the somewhat reckless path the government is on. Jamaicans are known world wide for bluster and braggadocio and often times succeed at this style of engagement.

However, occasionally it is not successful because the other side 'has their number.' The US company conducting bauxite-mining operations in Jamaica today is the Noranda Corporation. It is among the world's largest mining enterprises with headquarters in Tennessee.

Beginning in the 1940s, Jamaican farmers signed petitions, wrote letters to newspapers, and held community meetings to discuss and contest the effects of bauxite mining on their communities. The rise and expansion of the industry displaced alternative ways of engaging with the land.

Although the bauxite companies frequently documented and publicized their agricultural initiatives, resettlement programs and land rehabilitation efforts, the industry never acknowledged the pressure from rural communities.

Today, the mining company Noranda with the complicity of the government has embarked on mining in the Cockpit region of the Parish of Portland. This is very troubling to the Maroons who see it as yet another attempt to neutralize their sovereign rights. They are organizing to resist; and we should join them. See more of this at: How a Sovereign Group in Jamaica is fighting a US Mining Company.

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## PICA's Hartford Visit

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business separate from PICA and offered services for those who needed help obtaining their TRN, birth certificates, land and title documentation, and property real estate information. The IDS role is an important one

because PICA does not process TRNs or oversee other matters that an applicant may need to obtain his or her passport.

Hartford, Connecticut is the third largest population of

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# Hartford Celebrates Independence Week With Grand Finale At Bushnell Park

By Mark Milward

Jamaica celebrated its 59<sup>th</sup> Anniversary as an independent nation, and the West Indian Social Club (WISC) of Hartford staged Independence Week 2021 at its facilities in Hartford, Connecticut.

Events happening for the entire week began August 6, 2021 at WISC's 17,000-square foot facilities, bringing special event venues throughout the week, including celebrations for all the Caribbean islands.

Jamaica Night featured reggae superstar SHAM. The culmination of events at the club ended on August 13, 2021 with a stage show that featured Jamaican artist Marcia Griffins.

Much gratitude and appreciation are extended to the West Indian Independence Celebrations Committee, (WIIC). It once again brought a celebratory parade and dance competition to the Hartford stage at Bushnell

Park, Saturday, August 14, 2021.

The featured artist for the Bushnell Park event was reggae superstar Freddie McGregor, who received keys to the city and a Mayor's Proclamation from Mayor Luke Bronin.

Overall sponsors for the event also included the Saint Lucian American Association of Connecticut (SLAAC) and The Taste of the Caribbean & Jerk Festival, Inc., which held its annual event with delicious Caribbean food menus and music on the Waterfront in Downtown Hartford.



# Phoenix Society Honors Hartford's First Black Fireman William Henry Jacklyn With Art Mural

By Mark Milward

The Phoenix Society Inc. of Hartford, CT has honored Hartford's first black firefighter William Henry Jacklyn, with an art mural at its building headquarters on Windsor Street in Hartford.

Art murals have become a popular means for recognizing the accomplishments of community activists in the Greater Hartford areas and also a means for recognizing trailblazing pioneers.

Jacklyn, a resident of North Hartford, served as a volunteer fireman and member of Engine Company #7, which was located at Main and Sanford streets. At that time the Fire Department operated on a voluntary basis and Jacklyn served in that capacity for his community up through 1908. Soon after and when the Fire Department became an official incorporated business of city services,

Jacklyn was told that he could become a fireman, but he could not sleep in the Fire House quarters with the other white firemen. Jacklyn declined the offer for full participation and employment

due to the segregated conditions of the offer but continued to serve as a volunteer fireman and distinguished himself in the Great Hartford Railroad Station Fire of 1914.

It wasn't until 1948 that blacks were "officially" hired as Firemen in Hartford. Six black men took and passed a competitive examination and were appointed October 4, 1948.

Of special note is the fact that the first "official" African American firewoman, Zandra M. Clay (Watley) was appointed almost 40 years later in June 1982. Today, the Hartford Fire Department (HFD) is a culturally diverse agency providing Fire and Emergency services to the city of Hartford covering an area of 18.4 square miles for a population of 124,000, served by 361 fire and emergency service personnel staffed with 17 Fire companies throughout the city. The Fire Department is led by the recent appointment of Rodney Barco as Fire Chief who is African American.

John B. Stewart, Jr. became the first African American promoted to Chief of the Hartford Fire Department in August 1980.



William Henry Jacklyn, Photo taken 1914

Connecticut history books do not detail the accomplishments of William Henry Jacklyn and now with this art mural representing him and the work of the Phoenix Society, a conversation can be had about Jacklyn's legacy.

According to Steven



William Henry Jacklyn Art Mural The Phoenix Society, 729 Windsor Street, Hartford, CT

Harris, coordinator for the Jacklyn art mural project, an award of recognition is given each year for the Hartford Fire Department's outstanding firefighter of the year in honor of William Henry Jacklyn. It is given to that individual without regard to race, gender or ethnicity.

The artists who created the mural Lindaluz Carrillo and Kayla "Chelu" Farrell have created a wonderful piece of art for the community that represents both the beauty of art and an important contribution capturing a part of the Hartford, Connecticut history.

# PICA's Hartford Visit

Continued from Page 2

Jamaicans in the United States behind Miami and New York. Jamaican immigrant farm workers who came to the area in the 1940s during World War II to work in the tobacco fields, and help fill the labor shortage void that occurred because of the war forged the community.

PICA's CEO, Mr. Wynter commenting on his observations noted the rich Jamaican cultural presence he witnessed in the Hartford community. Ms. Haldane

stated, "It was a much-needed event based on the participation and turnout. We certainly would welcome a return visit to Hartford by the PICA team, because despite the turnout and promotion of the event there were many callers who were unable to attend because they found out about the event too late."

Local Jamaican organizations including the *Cricket Hall of Fame* and *WISC* extended invitations for social gatherings for the PICA team after daily activities,

which had to be declined because of the amount of work being conducted.

The visit to Hartford enabled the PICA team to witness a thriving and progressive Jamaican community whose Diaspora organizations include the *Caribbean American Society*, the *Center for Urban Research, Education and Training (CURET)*, Inc., *Jamaica Progressive League (JPL)* as well as *WISC*.

WISC and JPL are also members of the *National Association of Jamaican and Supportive Organizations (NAJA)*

SO), the umbrella organization for Jamaican organizations in the United States, Bermuda, and the Caribbean, and the brainchild behind what is now known as the "Jamaican Diaspora Movement." Both are also founding member organizations of NAJASO and with this event being held at the Collin Bennett Building, serves as a fitting tribute to Mr. Bennett, a Jamaican, who served as NAJASO's first president in 1977.

The PICA visit to the US Diaspora was its third with previous visits made in Florida and Atlanta, Georgia. According

to Wynter the turnout in Hartford for those applying for passports exceeded the numbers in Atlanta and were just below the numbers processed at the Florida passport and citizenship drive.

In considering that we are still in a COVID-19 pandemic environment, Wynter was impressed and felt the turnout went extremely well. Additionally, the message that he received from the Hartford Jamaican community was a request to return in the near term.

# Dreadlocks: Hair Style Of Rastafarians Once Depreciated, Now Popularized, Rasta Business?



Leon Fraser

When a black person decides to grow his or her natural hair to a point that it becomes 'locks,' this should not imperil the persona, or diminish the ability of the wearer of the style as one who is not productive or a progressive member of society.

The context for the negative view of the hairstyle is important: At one point on our beloved island of Jamaica, at a critical juncture in the island's history, the appearance of the hairstyle was frowned on, ridiculed to a level of derision, totally discouraged, and in the vernacular of the island the saying was this: "Nuh smell bad smaddy wid bushy bushy ragga raga hair can cum eena de place."

And songwriter Ras Karbi wrote in his popular song *Discrimination*, "Long hair freaky

peopl need not apply, nuh want no ole neaga or rastafari."

This was the sentiment of the colonial era and the early days of a newly independent Jamaica. It was a time of serious persecution of dread-locked persons of the Rastafarian communities that lived on the island at that time, forcing them to become almost ostracized in their own country.

There was a watershed moment when the then former Prime Minister Bustamante approved the beating, trimming, and killing of the members of the dread-locked community, just because he could.

In addition, people wearing dread-locks hairstyles and living in secluded communities were viewed as strange due to their different interpretation of the Bible, which was viewed specifically through the lens of the Afro-centric perspective.

There was also scant regard for the dietary concerns of these dread-locked Jamaicans while in custody and were served pork and food kinds that were against their food choices.

There was a time in the annals of the Jamaican story when Bob Marley was considered a reprobate because he utilized the ever-present ganja (marijuana), grew his hair, and practiced playing the local indigenous music instead of the imported and the crave for R&B.

The good thing from this craving was the creation of local singing groups that imitated the styles of the overseas acts.

Of course the impact of Marcus Garvey caused the people of Jamaica, especially the Rastafarians, to begin the observation of certain biblical contexts and their historical roots along with the teachings of the late Emperor of Ethiopia Haile Selassie as well as that of Marcus Garvey.

This, along with the lifting of the press censorship of the 1960s, opened the gates for more information, periodicals, and books becoming available to the public, the opening up of early childhood education to the population, and an explosion of theses that came out of the University of the West Indies (UWI) as well as overseas students that did graduate research with a more Afro-Centric view.

These eye-openers led to a particular acceptance of the ravages of colonial occupation and the misery of slavery, opening the effort to know about the legacy of this distasteful and terrible tragedy that we as a people had undergone, and the lasting effects of this terrible holocaust that had been perpetrated on the people and ancestors of Africans.

All of the freethinking led individuals to become more independent and they refused to abide with the stated policies of colonial governments. On top of all the thinking and open-mindedness, there was the Nazarene vow as interpreted from the scriptures that these individuals decided to grow their hair.

Along with the growth of hair, a particular lifestyle was designed to be independent of the "Babylon system" to the point that they did not get involved in many of the social norms at the time; this still persists, up to a point in time with practices such as: no consumption of meat, no material made from animal skins, no canned food, no manufactured goods or supplies, no medicine

from the Babylon system, and many other acts and actions that defined the Rastafarians in the society of Jamaican lifestyle.

When the first case of swine flu the thought of hand shaking was a thing of the past, the Rasta Man practiced the fist bump. Now we all talk about being vegan or eating organic, yet the "Dreads," as they were called, practiced this long ago.

The lifestyle of being physically active and doing everything for self is the way of the Bubbo dread.

Many innovations of Rasta individuals have been co-opted into regular life. Think of what drove Reggae music to the pinnacle it is at this point in time. The Afro-Centric views as well as the biblical, prophetic messages that resonated with the downtrodden masses of the globe have been the main stay of the music and generated a global standard.

So now that Bob Marley has gained the love of the planet and the music is readily identified with the small dot on the world's stage, the hairstyle has become en vogue and is now a staple on stage and screen. To see individuals in any position of authority or prominence with their hair in the famous locks is a sign of social acceptance to what was once a derogatory style.

To see many players from any country on national sports teams, in official government circles, even in religious circles, is a true testament to the power of the music that emanated from the poor under-privileged sections of a country that was not of any consequence to the colonial master, except in its ability to produce agricultural products in as least expensive manner as was possible, and the performers of this particular music with their hairstyle, the dread locks.

Many young people of African ancestry are now more willing to embrace their cultural heritage as a result of the powerful message conveyed in the music of

the island, namely Jamaican music. This music like many others have been conveyed to other countries as a result of the infamous immigration that has many Euro-Centric Americans looking at the policies that benefitted them and is being made available to the newer wave of immigrants.

So to each and every one that chooses to adopt the hair styles of the Rastafarians, remember there was a time when it was not a great style to have, and many families were not happy to have their daughters being in a relationship with anyone looking like that with that RAGGA RAGGA BUSHY BUSHY hair, especially if they were known to use marijuana.

Also, the Rastafarian community, like other communities out of Jamaica have not benefitted from the large-scale production of weaves and hair extensions, like the Chinese hair stores have.

The Rastafarian sacrament has also been co-opted with the legalization of marijuana with no benefits towards them. Many of these men and women have been jailed and killed for the use of this weed.

Now many middle class families are being sustained by the weed that Peter Tosh cried to have legalized, and was eventually killed for his views on the topic.

Rasta business is a real thing and everyone who wears the hairstyle should show some modicum of respect to the persons that endured and survived the onslaught of BABYLON SYSTEM, THE VAMPIRE.



Dreadlocks Hairstyle

## Eastern's Canterbury Publishes Book: Development In Caribbean Countries

**WILLIMANTIC, CT:** Eastern Connecticut State University sociology professor Dennis Canterbury recently published a book that tackles capitalism, power and the imperial state within Caribbean countries. Titled "Caribbean Development in the New Multipolar World Order," the book explores "Post-neoliberal, new multipolar world order based on competition and cooperation by the United States, the European Union, China and Russia for natural resources and markets."

Born in Guyana, Canterbury's research interests include extractive studies, Caribbean development, financialization, migration and trade. Because of his specialization in Caribbean countries, many of his previous works and teaching interests revolve around global-

ization, labor and development on islands that are found in the Caribbean Sea.

In his book Canterbury writes of the power the United States has had over other countries; as the years continue, that narrative is changing. "The United States is no longer the sole superpower," said Canterbury, "It now has competitors in the international arena. Since the Caribbean is so dependent on the United States, I wanted to know what the region should and could do given this change."

Consisting of 12 chapters ranging from topics such as "The Caribbean Making America Great Again" to "Theoretical Advances with Caribbean Capitalist Development," Canterbury's book took four years to complete and was published by Routledge, the British multinational publisher.

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