

C.D. 22. Sbd. 12. Household 68.

Witter Hubert	Head	M.M.56.	St.El.	Col.	Angl.	Ill.	Farmer
,, Lydia	Wife	F.M.48.11.11.	,,	,,	,,	W.	Homemaker
,, Bazil	Son	M.S.25.	,,	,,	,,	W.3.	Shoemaker
,, Ruel	,,	M.S.19.	,,	,,	,,	,,	None/yes/
,, Vivian	,,	M.S.16.	,,	,,	,,	,,	None/yes/
,, Eric	,,	M.S.14.	,,	,,	,,	W.3.4E	
,, Dolores	Dau	F.S.12.	,,	,,	,,	W.2.	
,, Laurel	Son	M.S. 7.	,,	,,	,,	W.1.4E.	
,, Simson	,,	M.S. 3.	,,	,,	,,		

9

18 1/2 acres in 3 pieces

p. 10.

Interview with Hubert Witter.
10.1.48.
J.O.

~~Family history.~~
Ruel Witter - prospective emigrant to U.S.

I met Ruel Witter in his tomato garden adjoining his father's house. Was introduced to him by Claston Holness, who accompanied me on my way to William Rochester's gardens on Shaddock Hill.

Witter was very kind and ready to explain everything about his ~~work~~ occupations in Bull Savannah. He has a lot of time, ~~left~~ since he is leaving Bull Savannah soon. He goes to America with his aunt. ~~xxxxxxx~~ His aunt stays permanently in America. She works there - for many years - as domestic with some good people. ~~xxxxxxx~~ His aunt is not his mother's sister. She is his mother's brother's wife. Her husband - his mother's brother - lives in Kingston. He is in Police Force. They live separately, only from time to time she comes on a visit to Jamaica. She is now on a visit in Bull Savannah and when she will go back to America, she will take him with her. ~~She~~ He will stay in America probably for ever.

He was already twice to America as farm labourer. Once in 1943, when he stayed for about 6 months in U.S. Next time - in 1945 - he spent in America 1 year and 9 months. He likes America. ~~xxxxxxx~~ He volunteered to show me his camera, ~~xxxxxxx~~ which he brought from America. The camera was a cheap mass-produced - he paid for it 25 or 30 dollars. He also brought a periscope, acquired also in America. He did not buy it. He got it from a friend for some services he rendered to him. There were about ~~20~~ 20 photographs in his album - ~~xxxxxxx~~ rather poor. But the album was fine. He confessed that he wants to take up photography as his professional job when in America. His ~~wix~~ aunt will go in one or two months time and he will accompany her to leave ~~xxxxxxx~~ Bull Savannah for good. That's why he is now free ~~max~~ and has little work to do.

Witters' family history.

His family is not from Bull Savannah. They settled here recently. His father's family is from Fairfield. They lived in Fairfield still in slavery times. But they were not slaves. They were slaveholdres.

His mother's homeland is in Pedro Plains. His parents settled down in Bull Savannah some 20 or more years ago, when his father went to Cuba. His mother bought land here in Bull Savannah and before father came back from Cuba, they were settled already here.

His father was 3 times to Cuba. ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~ His mother's family live chiefly "abroad" in Kingston, in New Forest, near Christaina.

Farmland.

His father has 18 acres of land. 2,5 acre are around t the house, 5,5 "on the Ridge", and 10 acres on Duff House. The land in Duff House waw acquired recently, on Gnt Land Settl. scheme. ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~ ~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~ The bulk of their cultivations is in Duff House: "large tomato garden, cassava, gungoo peas. The tomato garden in Duff House counts about 5000 plants. Land on the Ridge is not so good. "Most of that land is guinea grass and lumber tree." "Once the land ~~is~~ was cultiva ted, for a good time, 3 or 4 years, was not planted. My brother plantx now just a small garden over there - some 200 tomato trees." Land around the house is ~~XXXXXX~~ culti- vated intensely. He planted this year a tomato garden on this land with ab. 3000 "trees".

Besides, his brother plants some tomatoes in Bread- nut Wood on Miss Garv.../?/ land. There is about 2500 plants in his garden, but the yield will be shared in half.

Hubert Witter's farm in 1942.

In 1942 Hubert Witter operated the land he occupies now already for 33 years. The ~~xxxx~~ land was in 3 parcels: 2,5; 8 and 5 acres each - ~~xxxxxxx~~ 15,5 acres together. There were 9 persons in his household: 5 males over 14 and 2 under, 1 fem. ~~xx~~ over 14 and 1 under.

The owner worked for 52 weeks, 5 days per week, 9 hours per day.

3 acres were in cultivation in 1942. 1,5 acre was cul- tivable, but ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ neither cultivated nor used. 8,5 acres were used exclusively for pasture and gra- zing; of this 8 acres were in guinea grass, 0,5 acre in common grass. 2,5 acres described as "other land."

The value of the farm: L250; L60 the value of building.

There was a water tank/catchment/ on hi- farm.

5,5 sq. chains were planted with tomatoes - 1800 lb. Fruit garden: 1 avocado pear /5 doz./; 1 coconut /30 nuts/ 2 mangoes /70 doz./, 1 naseberry /15 doz./.

1 acre under congo peas /12 bushels/; 1 acre under cassava /3800 lb./; 0,25 acre under cocoes ~~xxxx~~ /150 ?/; 0,25 acre under yams /800 lb./.

1 donkey, 4 goats, 4 swines, 7 hens /15 doz. eggs produced, 7 doz. eggs sold.

Inform. Dudley Simpson
dx 13.3.48.
J.O.

Hubert Witter -
"a stranger" from
Cheapside.
Way he acquired
his land.

"Hubert Witter - he is a stranger. He is from
Cheapside. He bought a piece of land from one Simpson.
Old William Simpson bastard child had this piece of
land and him bought it."

"Bebe was his name /William Simpson's bastard
~~child~~ son's name/. He is in Comma Pen now. He settled
in Comma Pen now."

Visit at home. Interv. Mrs. Lydia Witter & partly Vivian Witter.
24.6.48.
T.O.

Present household:				Born	Came to		
				in	live in	B.S.	
Witter	Hubert	head	M.M. 64	Fairfield	29yrs	Ang.	Ill. cultiv.
"	Lydia	wife	F.M. 54	Newell	29	"	W.6 homek.
"	Ruel	son	M.S. 23	Shad.Hill		"	W.6 cult
"	Vivian	son	M.S. 21	"		"	W.6. " les
"	Deloris	dau	F.S. 17	"		"	W.6. takes /
"	Erick	son	M.S. 19	"		"	W.6. cult
"	Laurel	son	M.S. 12	"		"	W.4. school
"	Simeon	son	M.S. 8	"		"	B.st. school
"	Leoline	gdau	F.S. 3	Gr.Ol.			

g Basil's Witter & Clarisse Rochester

Deloris

Mrs. Lydia Witter was sitting on the little verandah in front of her house doing some sewing. Her daughter ~~Lydia~~ was sitting with her. She is a very good looking old lady. Her way of speaking and behaving is dignified sweet and gentle. It struck me as different from the behaviour of all women I met in Bull-Savannah. Her neighbours refer to her as "lady" though they would speak of others as "women". She is an excellent "causeuse" and very willingly told me about her family, her life struggle & her children. She brought me the family photographs and showing them told the story of each.

The house in which they live has 4 rooms. They were added one after the other, so the roof is lower in some parts. Behind the house is another building with one tiny room in it. Half of it is under oof but without walls. The kitchen is in an all thatch hut, but comfortable. Behind the kitchen a very large shed were tobacco was drying.

She told me her husband was from Fairfield. They met and married in Mandeville, where she was working as a young girl.

Lydia was born near Black River in a place called Newell. Both her parents were born there. Her father died when he was 72 years old. He fell from a donkey and the doctor said he broke something in his spine. That was 8 years ago - when her youngest son Simeon was only 2 months old. She got the telegram on Wednesday morning and Teacher Blythe lent her his car. He went even with her, and burried her father. Mrs. Lydia saw her father in the coffin "He looked fresh and young like a man of 40". Her mother is still alive. She used to visit Lydia very often - every few weeks. Now she is growing old so she can't come so often to Bull-Savannah as the travel is too tiresome.

Mrs. Lydia maiden's name is James. She had 2 brothers and 6 sisters. "We all live at home and live lovingly." Although the family scattered they keep with each other in constant contact and Mrs. Lydia speaks very affectionately about her sisters and brother. In this case it is not a conventional way of speaking, from little details, from photographs and letters she showed me I could see they really were very attached to each other.

"My mother had 9 children - 7 fair and 2 dark ones: myself and my sister Catherine. (Mrs. Lydia is not black, she has the features and complexion of a gipsy.) "I always wanted to go abroad - but it didn't come my way. ~~xxxx~~ I had some offers (to go abroad) but not good ones." When the girls were still young an aunt came from Panama and took one, the eldest Catherine. After a while Catherine sent for Marion. Marion went to Panama met a young man Mr Lyde and married him. She had two children with him. Died in Panama a few years ago. She used to write quite often to Lydia. But her two sons "big men now" don't write to their aunt. They write still to their maternal grandmother whom they never met. Marion, after she married, sent for Bertha. Bertha and Catherine went from Panama to U.S.A. So Marion sent for a fourth sister Laurraine. She went to Panama but got ill with fever there. She was sent back home to Newell. She also had her tonsils extracted but "they did it rough, so the neck was all swollen, she couldn't swallow, they had to give her water through nostrils". Laurraine died in Newell. Lydia couldn't go to Panama because the immigration was stopped at the time her turn came. Two of her sisters Tilda and Collis stay at home in Newell with the mother. Collis married a man, but he was not good and left her. "She didn't have children so she didn't worry". "Tilda never marry - she is sickly, always a delicate child she was."

Bertha went to U.S.A. and married Mr. Beans. I saw her picture with her husband. She is an extremely good looking person of very fair complexion. So is her husband. "She pass for white, they both pass for white. Have 3 children." Bertha is writing often to Lydia, though it is now 18 years they haven't seen each other. Her last letter was dated February. She writes she has a sore finger and asks to be excused if she doesn't write often, but will do it as soon as her finger is better.

Catherine didn't marry. She works as a nurse for children in private home. Lydia showed me the picture of her employers. Catherine came to pay a visit to Jamaica last year. She is 50 now. She told Lydia she will not marry. The reason she gives is: "I work so hard for my money and after I die I couldn't bear the money goes to a stranger. I want to leave it for the family." Catherine is particularly fond of her brother Simeon, who is in Kingston. He made her promise she will come back to Jamaica and live with him. If she doesn't come he will go and join her in America. "That's an agreement they made." said Lydia.

Arthur

Arthur

The two brothers of Lydia: Simeon and ~~James~~ joined the police force in Kingston when they were still young. Lydia showed me their pictures as young men in uniforms. ~~Simeon~~ didn't marry. He died of cancer. "The doctors said he got it because he was such a selfish man, he kept every thing to himself." I asked whether he was a good brother. "I lost a brother and a father in him," said Lydia. (Selfish meant secretive and not egoist.) The other brother Simeon ~~didn't marry~~ married a teacher. They didn't have children so he asked Lydia to give him one. "It's really a boy he wanted, but the wife said she preferred a girl. A boy is difficult to manage." So Lydia gave them her daughter Merille, who was at the time 3 years old, and is now about 15. Merille visited her mother in Bull Savannah only once after a 10 years absence. She takes lessons in Kingston to pass her exams. She also takes music lessons.

Mrs. Lydia had 11 children: 4 girls and 7 boys. Each time she was expecting a child she felt very sick. "From the first day all the 9 months, sick and couldn't eat a thing." However her deliveries were easy. When she was pregnant and ill she would go and consult doctors. She gave me their names. The doctors said "every one of them" that she was ill because of the winds in Bull-Savannah. At the delivery of her few last children Mrs. Francella Simpson helped her. Mrs. Witter praise Francella, how clever and able she is. Some doctors would give up, but "Miss Francella she boils the bush tea, she rubb and sh she try - will e verything is through." With her first children some other "grandy" was called in. At that time the husband of Francella was still alive and "he didn't like the wife to go out." Mrs. Lydia says there was a government nurse here who wanted stop Francella from helping people, but the judge looked at the papers (Francella produced) and said "she can't harm that woman". All Lydia's children were born healthy. People wondered: "Miss Lydia so sick and the child so strong." Only when her son Erick was born Lydia was afraid he won't live. "He come 3 days early." I asked her how she knew it was 3 days early? "I expect him to come this side of the week, and he come that side of the week." Couldn't she be mistaken? I asked her. "Judging by constitution and everything and the doctor said he was early." Anyhow the child after three days "was kicking and happy". When Lydia had her 11th and last child she felt even more sick than usual. she went to the doctor to Mandeville and he said: "How many children you have? - 'Ten' And do you have a bed to put them all?" "I will try to find one" said Lydia. "Poor woman she will try to find a bed." Then the doctor suggested that Lydia must have an operation. "I knew what kind of operation it is, I said no doctor I won't have any operation." And she had her last son Simeon. "After that I thought I must close up." She didn't have any more children, but whether it was planned or not I couldn't get.

Her eldest daughter Edna married Algonan Byer in Ridge. Mrs. Lydia spent a lot on her education. She was taking for 3 years piano lessons. (I got mixed up with the second daughter. I believe she married and lives in Clarendon, but I am not quite sure). Her eldest boy Basil became deaf when he was a young boy so he couldn't take the lessons. His hearing improved later on. Her son Glanville was taking lessons for a few years. He tried to pass the examinations twice but failed. He told his mother he won't study any more. "My son I told him I am not happy about you." Glanville said he wanted to travel. He went to St. James where he works as a foreman in an sugar estate. He has his own home in the Blue Mountains. It is a small estate he is working in. He writes his mother from time to time. Ruel has been to America twice. Now he expects to go there again. Lydia's sister Catherine, who was recently on a visit here from America, promised to help him "to get the papers". "I am worried about him. He left with some fellows to Mandeville last week and didn't come back yet." Vivian would like to America too, but he hasn't got the opportunity yet. He is a young boy. Vivian is building his home on a piece of land near the 7 day Adventist church. This land belongs to the father and he let the boy to built the house there. Deloris is also taking lessons. It is already 3 years she is taking lessons and teacher Millard won't let her take the EXAMINATION. Lydia went to see teacher Millard a few days ago. He promised Deloris will soon be ready for the exams. Mrs. Lydia asked teacher why is it that her daughter who is in Kingston can pass the examination and Deloris is not ready yet? Lydia supposes they teach better in Kingston.

Lydia had first two daughters and then 5 boys. She wished very much for a daughter. "When I was in that way again I was so sick. I thought it can't be a girl that makes me so sick, but when the child was born - it was a girl." After the third girl she had a fourth one and afterwards two more boys, who are still at school (Simon and Laurel.) "Boys are rough, for a mother the girl is nearer." While we were talking she told Deloris to go into the house and see whether her granny was still asleep. After a while Deloris brought the little Leoline. Leoline was nicely dressed (I suppose for my benefit) her hair was in lovely long curls and she was strikingly clean. (All other children eat mangoes now and are sticky and dirty more than ever.) Leoline is Basil's child. The mother is Clarisse Rochester the daughter of James and Annie Rochester. As I know Basil is living now with Maisie Rochester (sister of Clarisse) I asked whether it was Maisie's child. Mrs. Lydia said "No" with what seemed to me a little indignation. I don't think she approves of Basil living with Maisie. Anyhow she doesn't consider it ~~an arrangement for good.~~ an arrangement for good. "they will have their way" but she was reluctant to speak about it.

Her settling in Bull-Savannah. After her marriage to Witter Lydia was living in Fairfield. Her first 3 children were born there. But the husband's family, especially parents didn't treat her "nice". She determined to have a place of her own. "I wouldn't have that I set to have my own place." In what the ill treatment consisted she did not tell and I did not want to interrupt her story. Once she was at her brother's in law and there was a man from Bull-Savannah who said he was selling some land here. The brother in law "he was very good to me helped me a lot" said it would be worth while to go and see the place. At that time Witter was in Cuba for the third time. Lydia was alone with the three children. Witter used to send money from Cuba "It wasn't much to buy a home". Lydia remembers how she came for the first time to Bull Savannah. "It was in 1919, November and a wind like to-day." Lydia her brother in law and Mr. ~~Mura~~ who was selling the land came here. She stopped at the place where Claston Simpson's shop is now. "Is there a car road?" She asked. "No we don't have a car road - but times change" said the owner of the land. Lydia decided she can't live here. No road, no water the place so empty. The land wasn't cultivated. "It was just savannah as we call it." But at all price she wanted to have her own place. So finally she decided to settle here till her husband comes back from Cuba. He built a little hut, but the rain would come through and it crumbled almost every week. She had no food of her own and had to buy it. And all the time repair the little home. "A shelter but it wouldn't protect us even from sun and rain". She used to go to the market to sell things in order to earn a little money. It was in December 1919 and the husband came from Cuba in May 1921. "And he didn't like the place. So I told him you are the man if you don't like it we can sell." So Witter decided to go back to Cuba to earn more money. He stayed only very shortly at home and returned to Cuba. But this time he didn't earn much money there. There were ~~xxxxx~~ ricts, a slump in sugar industry and he soon returned from his fourth voyage to Cuba. And somehow they stayed in Bull-Savannah. "I was 26 when I came here and I am 54 now".

Simpson

The people of Bull-Savannah received Lydia very friendly. "At that time my sister Catherine was staying with an aunt in Wallards Valley. The aunt it was my father's sister. We have a lot of family round here." This sister would come and stay with Lydia. "The first friend I made here was Mrs. Sarah Simpson and Mr. Willy - Mr. Laban's brother. He has his land here and my son work with him." All the neighbours were friendly. People used to come from other parts of Bull-Savannah "To see and greet the stranger. Very friendly they were." They came to see the woman who was living in the little house.

She bought at the beginning $1\frac{1}{2}$ acres for £12. "And I wouldn't sell it now for £400." Later on they bought an adjoining $\frac{1}{2}$ acre for 16/-. And some more land as the time went on. Mrs. Lydia wanted to spent more on the

education of the children, but her husband spends all the money for buying land. Lydia thinks it is not too bad, at least the sons will have a place to settle. But uptill now the land belongs to the father and the sons work it.

They have 20 acres: 2 at home, 10 in Duff House and the balance in the woodlands. To-day her husband and some of the sons are working in the woodlands. (I met Vivian previously in Claston Simpson's shop and had a short talk with him.)

"It's a hard life I had, often I wonder how I am still alive." Lydia says she was a delicate child and at home she was brought up gently, she never did any rough work at home. When her mother visited her for the first time in Bull-Savannah she was greatly astonished and worried about the conditions her daughter lived in. "Could I imagine you will be that strong woman" she told Lydia. "But what could I do?" said Lydia sweetly fondling her granddaughter.

Inform. Ruel Witter.
April, 1948.
J.O.

Ruel Witter described me ~~found~~ the farm and cultivation of his father. He himself does little work now as he ~~preparax~~ is preparing to leave soon for America.

The land is owned by his father. His land consists of 3 plots: 3 acres in Shaddock Hill, 5,5 - in Ridge, and 10 - in Dunder Hill.

3 acres of homeland in Shaddock Hill are all under cultivation. 1/4 ac. is under tomatoes. A little more than 1/4 ac. is under cassava. There are 700 yam hills - probably about 1/2 acre. Peas take an area of 1/4 ac. The remainder /ab.1 acre/ is planted with corn, cabbages and congo peas.

Out of 5,5 acres in Ridge only about 1/2 acre is under cultivation /cassava and potato/. The rest in grass.

Out of 10 acres in Dunder Hill about 1/3 of the area is cultivated. 2 acres - Guinea grass. Rest - "ruinate." One acre in Dunder Hill was under tomatoes. 5000 holes were planted here and not the whole plot was under this cultivation. /Another plot of 3/4 acres ~~xxxxxxx~~ is under cassava. Congo peas occupy an area of 1/2 to 3/4 acre. There were also some pumpkins planted there and potatoes.

Tomatoes this year "didnt bear to the extent it should." His father planted 6000 holes, Ruel and his ~~brothers~~ two brothers planted 4000 to 5000 together. They got for their tomatoes ~~xxx~~ "50 odd pounds" - which was less than they expected. Droight cuased many losses to their cultivations.

Land. His father bought originally 3 acres from a Simpson in Shaddock Hill. These he ~~bpught~~ bought when he came to settle down in Bull Savannah. 10 acres in Dunder Hill were bought from the Gnt; £2.15 was paid per acre. All this land was acquired still before ~~xxxx~~ the tomato industry was started in B.S. Last plot of 5.5 acres in Ridge was purchased from Edward Jacobs. No more than £3 was paid per acre and this "last piece of land - it was tomatoe money."

Stock. They have: 2 donkeys, 2 pigs. Kepp no cattle no sheep, no goats. His father has always "bad luck with goats - anytime he raise them die." They use only condensed milk, as it is very difficult to obtain milk from people who have milch cows. "When man has a cow there are so many people to it - it wont be sufficient."

~~xxxxxxx father started xxxxx~~
Tomato industry. His father was among the first cultivators of tomatoes. "The first time he sent 716 lbs when it started." It was 1936 or 1937. Ruel Witter

/"through the drought."

Handwritten calculation:
5
10
55

18,5

thinks tomato industry brought a lot of improvement in their life. "It improved the 100%. In the cultivations - you can buy more things to bring the land to better production. And in the money business - you can buy more things. You can buy fertilisers and could buy better implements to work. First of all, we didnt use ~~knak~~ forks when tomatoe come at first. Now we buy and use it more easier too." "Since the tomatoe come in, people build better tanks, could buy better clothing and save much more money." His father's investments - besides the purchas of land - are not very extensive. "He used to have a donkey long before the tomato, now he has two." No new ~~knak~~ tank has so far been constructed by his father.

Tobacco. Previously they used to plant tobacco for sale. on a larger scale. Now they plant "a little tobacco - not very much, just enough to keep himself busy after the tomato."