

23rd April 1947.
Wednesday.
E.C.

PD. 27. SD.22 Household 17.

Davis. Percival.	Head.	M.M.33.	Farmer. Mixed Farm.
" Sybil.	Wife.	F.M.26.	Homemaker..
" Winston.	Son.	M.S. 8.	
" Josetta	Dau.	F.S. 5.	
" Ena	Dau.	F.S. 3.	

I met Mrs Davis carrying her baby in her arms at the home of Mrs Theobald Ruddy, who is her next door neighbour. In the course of conversation I learned that Mrs Ruddy's daughter, Elvie, has her third child, a five-day old infant, by Kenneth Murray, Mrs Davis' brother.

Mrs Davis is a young, neatly dressed, intelligent woman who would be a good informant. (See Mrs Ruddy's C.H. No 53) Father: Samuel Murray. Has land beside Tailor Murray's. Has a son called Kenneth Murray.

Land: The Bananas have died out with Panama disease. P.D. is worse than Leaf spot. It is in the ground. You can control Leaf Spot by spraying. You cannot do anything about P.D. It rots the root. You have to give up the land and then plant something else..

Cane is the best crop to plant. Cane is always in rotation.. You can keep the same plants for over ten years. Whilst they are cared they will come back as good.

Mrs Davis said her husband was working on their farm. They had had two good rains and he was planting yam. I arranged to call back and see her.

By the time I had gone down the parochial road however it was mid-day and I wished to write up my notes before adding to my material. I called in and found her with a hand kerchief tied round her head in her kitchen. Her old mother a well-dressed old lady in a wide hat, well-set up and also intelligent looking was in the yard and introduced herself to me. I explained that as it was now dinner time I would prefer to come back in the evening. ~~xxx~~/said she would be pleased to see me any time.

Mrs Davis/

cf. I.C.H. No 53.

11th May 1947.

Mr and Mrs Percival Davis. (continued)

(Sunday 10 a.m. to 12.15 a.m.)

Visit.

was o (hair)

At my arrival Mr Davis was lying in a rope hammock on the verandh. He greeted me and invited me in. Mrs Davis came out of the kitchen with a handkerchief on her head and in working clothes. Mr Davis was in his Sunday clothes without a jacket.

I started by taking a snap-shot of the two of them sitting in the hammock while Mr Davis stepped. There was a mahogany chair on the verandh and a general rough mahogany chair. The latter he had made himself. For some of the Mrs D. came and stood on the verandh. Later she came to be excused if she got on with the shelling of the peas which were crying on a zinc sheet outside the house. We worked on this together until I had to make notes.

arms and drops. Mr Davis owns two pieces of land and besides in addition he owns the house in which they live on 1/4 acre and round it.

(1) House and 1/4 acre around it. This was bought by him in 1937 from Lucille Nutty for £54, including the house. The house was to be repaired. It is at present a three room house with a verandh. It is built of native wood, well built, and with glass wash windows. Two rooms are bedrooms. In one there is an iron double bed which fills nearly the full width of the room. In it is also a dressing table and chair. The other bedroom has a wooden double bed. On it the baby was sleeping. The centre room is the living room. In it is a small round mahogany table with a cloth and with a vase of flowers on it. There is another small table also with flowers. In addition there is an old mahogany side table with glass, china etc. This piece of furniture was "old Jamaica furniture" given her by her mother. It once belonged to her mother's father. Her mother had a lot of nice old furniture like that. She would not sell it. She was hoping it to give to her grandchildren.

Mr Davis to write - 5/2

Repairs to house: These consisted of following items which cost in 1937:

- (a) re-shingling: 600 head cut shingles for 35/- (these were now cost 35. per thousand).
- (b) 1 New Sillir 4K' and 22 ft long. He bought the paint for this for 5/- and the dressing cost 1/-
- (c) The step he had put up himself -- cost about 1/-
- (d) The verandh had been repaired and boards replaced.

Furniture purchased after return from the U.S. last year.

- 3 mahogany, french-polished chairs and the round table in the sitting room for \$7.10 from Mr a son at Spring Garden.
- 1 Lion bed with a spring (double size) from the "Standard Furnishing Co. Kingston for \$15. The mattress cost an additional \$5.7.5. delivered from Palisades, and was bought about 5 years ago.
- 1 mahogany chair of imported wood, 7/-
- ditto
- the wooden bed in the children's room was made by ...

The Kitchen. This is a patch-work quilt of boards nailed together. It was built by Mr Davis in November when he returned from the States and cost about £4.10. without including cost of labour. It took him about 3 days working 3 hours a day about. I asked what he would reckon his day worth and he said 3/- per day.

Land round House: This $\frac{1}{4}$ acre contains the house and kitchen. There is a roomy path from the road to the buildings. There is a small scattered flower garden.

Asked how many roots of Bananas he said he did not know but he calculated probably about 100 plants. (It is odd that I have not yet found a cultivator who knew exactly the number of trees of any one crop growing on his holding). He has about 50 coffee trees. He grows tomatoes but the drought and heavy rains alternately killed them out. (There are some fair ones growing there now).

(ii) One square Chain "bottom side the Post Office near Tailor Murrays. He bought this in 1945 from Kenneth Murray who is his wife's brother. He paid £22.10/. It is good land "along the road".

Work : Chiefly works on it in the mornings and evenings as it is near his home. The wife waters the cabbages.

Crops Grown: Bananas, Yams Cabbages.

Bananas: 25 roots
Yams (negro) 15 hills.
Cabbages, 500.

Economic Trees: 2 Breadfruit; 2 Coffee; 2 Pimento.

(iii) $1\frac{1}{2}$ acres at Bottom Yard -- down Bottom Warsop on Parochial road leading to Hector's River. One acre of this land (all of which belonged to his father) was given as a "deed of gift" to him his first grandchild -- Davis' son Winston. The other $\frac{1}{2}$ acre Davis bought from his father (Refford Davis, who lives there) for £10. (Note: This is clearly not an economic price. Worth looking into any brothers or sister with claim on father's land).

Crops: Cane and Bananas.
200 Roots Bananas. No Panama disease there.

Economic trees: "Plenty of Mangoes." 2 Pimento; 2 Jackfruit; Bamboos. (These he sells for Yam sticks. 20/- per 100. When ripe they last two or three years. (Doubt this). ~~He said he cut them when the moon was dark~~ and then they Mr Davis was convinced that it was important to cut bamboos when the moon was dark if they were to last. "If you cut in the moonshine worms (termites) eat it when dark nights they don't eat it". I asked why? He said "Maybe when it is dark nights the worms sleep, and don't eat; when it is bright moon they see and eat." He then hesitated, as if not sure of his reasoning and said: "Or maybe it is just nature."

11v) 2 acres rented on Allsides: This piece is about $1\frac{1}{2}$ to 2 miles from his home, on the left hand side of the road through Allsides in Durham.

Crops: $\frac{3}{4}$ acre
in Cane.
550 Yam hills in 6 square chains.

Work: He employs hired labour all the year round -- one man whom he pays either 3/- per day or by the task. He weeds, chops grass, cleans, hoes, digs yam hills, works the sugar mill.

This labourer works for him on Monday to Thursday and on his own ground on Fridays and Saturdays.

Information:
of cane reaped,
produced;
hip of mill;
of planting
ane.

Experience as a F a m Labourer in the U.S.

Davis said he had worked in the States for six months last year. His wife gave the exact dates : 14th May to 15th November. He had enjoyed it. When it became cold he longed to get home. He would like to go again. He made money and had put it to good use. He talked freely and circumstantially about it and I needed to put very few questions.

He had been first to Indiana, (picking peas) then after five weeks to Beaver Dam in Wisconsin (also picking peas). Then to Sturgeon Bay, picking cherries. Asked if they eat a lot of the cherries he said No, they prevented that, because they sprayed the trees. It was not done to prevent their eating them though. Here his wife laughed and said They couldn't let them eat them!

After Sturgeon Bay back to Beaver Dam, reaping sweet corn. (He had not been tempted to try and grow sweet corn since he came back). Then to Michigan, reaping carrots and celery.

In all places he had been in Camps with other Jamaicans. At Sturgeon Bay there were 600 of us in large soldier camp.

Savings : Compulsory and Voluntary.

Compulsory:

less \$72.
\$114.

Compulsory: (deducted by Government arrangement at source and paid to the Labourer on his return to Jamaica.
\$186 less £3 or \$12 a month paid to his wife during his absence to care her and the children and look after the cultivations.

Voluntary:

l.
\$235.
£ 89 about.

Voluntary: I had not thought of there being any additional Savings he would tell me about but he volunteered would I like to know about that too. He then referred to his wife, and together they decided that the amounts sent to her by him were, first \$50, then two lots of \$25, then \$10 or \$11

Use put.

1) Repaired House.	approximately £ 4.
2) Built Kitchen.	" 4.10.
3) Bought Furniture.	" 8.10.
4) Bought 2 pigs @ 50/- and 40/	4.10.
5) Lent a friend	10.
Total	31. 0.

n.

In regard to the last item, Loan to friend of £10., he said "It is quite safe -- he will pay me back." I did not ask whether it was on interest, or with security.

s.

In regard to the Pigs: they were barrow pigs, kept for fattening and then sold to the butcher (Nathaniel Copeland). He sold the first one for £6.10. i.e. a profit of £4. The other was not fat yet.

Fowls. There are a number of hens around the yard.

Cows and the J.A.S. He has no cow. He would like to have one. He was a Member of the Agricultural Society. He knew about the Revolving Herd scheme. Teacher (Gayle) had told them all about it at the meeting. But the trouble was that there were 150 members and there was only one cow. Teacher said they would all have to build a cow shed, and plant grass and then the cow would be put to a lottery. Only one of them could get it. But all of them would have to put up the cow house and grow the grass before they would be eligible for the lottery. He did not think it was worth while. He would prefer to ~~have~~/his own cow, but he had not the money yet.

buy/

The Society was a useful thing to belong to though. They could get Forks, hoes and nails through it. They put it up to the meeting and teacher got it for them.

Agricultural Labour in the States.

He wanted to know why there were not so many Jamaicans being taken this year. I said that I only knew what I read in the papers, that the Americans did not need so many. Perhaps they had enough labour with their own men. He said he had noticed that the Americans did not like working in the fields -- that sort of work. It was only the Jamaicans doing it. The American soldiers who came back would work say for a few hours every day for two or three days in the week and then go away and not do any more. He said the Jamaicans needed the \$3 pocket money on arrival but that they would be glad to have it deducted from their wages once they got to their jobs rather than not go at all.

Mrs D. said there were plenty who had done well in Warsop. Her two brothers, Kenneth and Calvin Murray had both gone and done well. Calvin had been twice -- once for a year and next time for six months. Kenneth lived in Corporal's house: Calvin near Mr Record in Bottom Warsop.

Mr D. said plenty had not done well -- had just spread away their money. They thought they could always go back and make more. They saw the way people lived in America and spent their money and thought when they came back to Jamaica they could do the same but they couldn't. Now they could not get back and make more. Mrs D. here said: "It's like a Jamaica saying -- they say Hog sey First water you ketch you mus' wash -- you may never see no more!"

Family, Birth Control and Courtship.

<u>Children:</u>	Winston Davis	aged 12 years
	Josetta	" aged 10 (girl)
	Elaine	" 7 and 10 months
	Norma	" 4.
	Sonia	" 1 and 3 months.

While we were talking Davis suddenly interrupted what he was saying to me to exclaim " Tess, de baby wake!" He turned in the hammock and began to play on the glass with the baby who was stand

ing up in the bed with its nose pressed against the glass. He went in and brought her out. She was looking very serious and half-awake, he very proud and fond. He spoke an aside to the wife and handed her the baby and she took it on the pat and held it down to pee. Then she handed it back to him. They came out and I took some snaps with the new camera which probably wont come out. But they were a pretty picture.

Mrs Davis said she bought 2 pints of milk a day (8d) for the bab children. Both agreed that milk was necessary for them or they would not grow strong and have "brains". Some of the people sent their children to school and they were so poorly fed that they had no brains and could not learn. She did not want to have any more. He said He did not want to either. But he did not know enough how not to. I said had they talked to a doctor. She had, he said when she took the last baby to him, pointing to his wife. She said the doctor had said she looked too young to have any more just now. She thought they had enough to look after properly. If you had too many you could not educate them -- and education is what counts. He said he had two sisters who were nurses in Manchester -- one at Newport in Manchester and another at Wait-a-bit. Both Davis. I suggested they might help his wife with advice. She said the doctor was seeing her again and she wanted to ask him how not to have them.

I asked how they had met and got married. At this moment unfortunately a neighbour passed through and heard him say "She used to come to Albert Town where I lived to visit her sister." The neighbour guffawed and passed on. I said Did the sister help you to meet? He said "No, the sister was very much against me. You see she was too young." Mrs D. volunteered with giggles that she was not 14 and at school. He had proposed to her when she came out of school. "She was a pretty thing then --" he looked at her, while she went on with picking peas very coy, "she was short and broad and -- pretty!" She is now still pretty but evidently thinner than he admires. They were married in 1937. ~~When she was 14 she proposed.~~ (Note: If she was born in 1916 she was 21 in 1937. Their first baby was ~~born in~~ Winston who is now 12, born therefore two years after in 1935. What happened between her 14th and 21st year?)

Farm Produce: Disposal.

They sell everything except what they consume. They live off what they grow. All they buy in the shops is an occasional lb of flour and fish. She said they could get plenty meat here -- the butcher lives next door. They buy mutton mostly. At 11d per lb. She buys about 4 lbs a week. Mr Davis cannot eat meat. He has high blood pressure. He only eats vegetables. They eat their own yams and sweet potatoes and tomatoes. They used to grow kalamu. And their own peas.

Marketing. From 1943-1945 (both concurred in this date but as usual when it came to dates or facts or figures she was accurate while he was indefinite) he was a Speculator in produce.

There was then no truck to Kingston and they went by train. He would buy the yams usually at here or sometimes at Balaclava, and take them into Kingston to the Coronation Market and sell them. There were expenses as follows :

Cart to Balaclava: 1/6 per cwt.

Train from Balaclava to Kingston: 11d per 100 lbs.

Market ticket for self, week season return, 7/6.

Once in Kingston there were further expenses:

Handcart from Railway to Market: 9d per case, of 500lbs.

~~xxxxx~~

N. B. Case. The Speculator has to purchase cases (wood n packing cases) to pack the yams in at Balaclava to send them on the train. These cases he has to pay for. After selling the yams in Kingston he has to send these back empty to Balaclava at 10d each.

Market Dues: 6d per 100 lbs

yams are packed loose
in cart which takes
from Warsop to
Blaclava.

The cases are packed "high" and a crocus bag put over.
The Speculator does not make very much.

Mr Davis calculates that when he used to buy yams here at 15/- per cwt he used to sell them at 25/-. When the local price went to 20/- he got 30/- -- 10/- per cwt. When his purchases amounted to £20, he would nett 25/- to 30/- on the transaction.

Mr Davis asked what sort of yams I liked -- did I eat them? I said I liked all kinds but I thought yellow yams were the nicest. He then inquired whether I was still at "the top house" and whether I would be there on Tuesday -- he had to go to the field on Monday. Puzzled, I said yes. He said he would send me a yam as a present on Tuesday if I would be there. I thanked him.

Mrs D. said she was sorry I had not seen the other children today but they had gone to "school" (Sunday). The said Teacher was "good in religious and good in social" in the village. He had not been there long but he took an interest in the children. Mr D. added he works in the Agricultural society too.

Mr D. agreed that it would be useful to himself to keep an account of his net income from his cultivations. He had never done it. He had thought of it. The "Agricultural" suggested it. The subject arose when we were discussing the cost of his kitchen when he assessed his labour at 3/- per day and his wife protested and said that was what you paid a labourer. I asked what he thought he made per week out of his farms. He agreed to keep a record of ~~income~~ and expenditure for one year, including hours and days worked. I said as it would be of use to the country to know these facts in the case of a number of farmers I would pay 10/- for a complete record if he really kept it for a year. He said he would start it. I think it might be possible to show him how to do it very simply and by encouragement to get something from him.

Receipts/