

6.1.1948.
T.O.

Fam. Rec. 28

22/12/33

Powell Ernest	head	M.Cl.	52	St.Eliz.	colour.	Jeh.Witn.	R.2.	farmer
Rochester Birdie	wife	F.Cl.	45	10.8.	"	anglican	W.3.	homemak.
Powell Lucille	dau	F.S.	18	1.0.	"	"	W.2.	none
" Neville	son	M.S.	16	"	"	"	W.3.	none
" Ivy	dau	F.S.	13	"	"	"	W.3.	@.E.
" Isaac	son	M.S.	12	"	"	"	W.2.	4.E.
" Ernest	son	M.S.	10	"	"	"	W.2.	4.E.
" Harry	son	M.S.	8	"	"	"	W.1.	4.E.
" Orrett	son	M.S.	7	"	"	"	W.1.	4.E.

owns 37 acres, in ultivation 4 $\frac{1}{2}$, not used cultivable 13 $\frac{1}{2}$
pasture 14 woodland 2 other 3.

40 acres
to B.
 $\frac{1}{2}$ tomatoes = 4,500 lbs, 6 avocados, 1 breadfruit,
4 coconuts, 1 grapes, 35 mangoes, 8 naseberries,
6 pawpaws, 2 cashewnuts.
 $\frac{1}{4}$ corn, 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ @ ngo pas, 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ cassava $\frac{1}{4}$ sweet pot. $\frac{1}{4}$ tob = 450lbs
2 donkeys, 1 cow, 5 goats, 5 swine, 7 hens

Mrs. Birdie is "to call "aban uncle." She is a daughter of Hubert Rochester who was an illegitimate son of Thomas Rochester. Mr. Laban never mentioned by name this half-brother. She is a sister of Eglon Rochester. Her husband Ernest Powell "is to call "George Powell uncle". He is the son of Isaac Powell. Their house is in Green Olive on the parochial road to Dunder Hill opposite the "Mango Tree".

Children.

Mrs. Birdie says she has 8 children. The eldest is a boy and is 21 years old. There was still an older one but he died. She said her eldest daughter was 19 (which obviously is a "diplomatic" ~~age~~ age. Quite often girls are made younger by mothers). The eldest boy "he cultivates here". As to the eldest daughter "A friend in America promised to help to take her to U.S. so I dont worry about her." This friend is Mrs. Birdie aunt, Laban's sister.

The field of tomatoes ~~xxx~~ next to the road is "for myself and my little boy". Would she keep the money she gets from the sale of these tomatoes for herself? Not exactly - parents have to spend on all the family. Does the boy keep his money? No she keeps it for him, but it is spent on his needs, to "help him with school". The child will "get" half of the money although the mother financed the plantation and gave her work too. "It is to teach them from small, to encourage". "Some children more businesslike". It is well to teach children to "begin early". Perhaps the child will buy "a little goat, and then a little cow". (The above is a set pattern if not followed repeated by many persons).

Tomatoes are a good crop. Yams are also a crop. But "When we have cassava and peas we dont fret - yams are only a crop, but cassava you have all the year round." Mrs. Birdie does not sell her cassava, but she bakes the bammies "all the time".

13.1.1948.

Travels.

Ernest Powell has been 7 times abroad: in Panama and 6 times in Cuba. His first journey was to Panama where he stayed about 2 years. It was about 1910. He says in Panama conditions were better but one could earn more in Cuba. He went for the first time to Cuba in 1914. He did not know the language and had only the address of a friend who worked on a farm in the neighbourhood of Matanzas. From the place he landed it was about 300 miles by train. He inquired in the town about the way to this farm, went there, met his friend, who "fixed me allright".

It was falling trees, clearing the ground - which the Jamaicans were working most at that time in Cuba. They undertook it as task work - so much for a job. They could earn as much as \$15 (Cuban) per day. (A Cuban dollar = 20 cents). Life was cheap there, at that time. Labourers from other countries used to come to Cuba too. For instance Haitians. "Haitians - they are uncivilized people, simple people. The shopkeepers in Cuba say: 'The Haitians work cheap in the bush and buy dear in the shop, good customers.' When the Haitians were in the shop the shopkeeper didnt want other people to buy. Because when something costs \$3.50 and you tell a Haitian it is \$5 and let him 50 cents, he is glad he made a good bargain. They ~~xxxx~~ cant read or write. They live like savages in their country. Perhaps one came first to Cuba, then he went back and hunt them in the bush and brought them to Cuba to work. ~~ifxxxxxxx~~ He has may be 12 of them, they work and he goes around and collect money from them. They are very ignorant people, they never keep their money in the bank. They give to the Chinsman, money and perhaps some clothes they buy. One day the Chinsman dissapears and they loose everything. They work cheaper too. If they had to fall tree they would kill each other, dont understand how to go about the work. They do cheaper work, not so responsible. They dont know good food or good things, - so they live cheaper than Jamaicans. Very simple."

Once - when going to Cuba - Ernest Powell stayed for 3 days on the Cayman Island. "Very civilized people - the Caymanians". Why are they so civilized? "They don't have a policeman there. They sent one from Kingston, and as for 3 months no one was reported they sent the policeman back. They said they can do without a policeman, and if ~~xxx~~ anything happens they will write to Kingston"

"Cubans are nice people, they dont trouble you if you dont trouble them." (stereotype)

Jamaicans could earn good wages in Cuba as long as the sugar industry prospered. Ernest went for the last time to Cuba in 1926. After that it was not a good business.

While he was in Cuba - round 1920 - he sent his father money to build a house for him (Ernest) Father built the house - but not according to the plans Ernest left. Ernest wanted the house to be much bigger, but his father thought this will do. Besides in those days it was very difficult to get lumber. There were no roads in Bull Savannah. Boards had to be brought ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~ in carts, and sometimes no carts were available, one had to ask people to carry them on their heads. It was difficult and expensive.

On Monday January 12th Mr. Ernest Powell invited Uncle Fred and us. The reception followed the usual pattern (see Fam. Rec. 1. p.11) At the table were: Ernest Powell, Fred Andrews, Obrebki and myself. Mrs. Birdie Powell was most of the time in the kitchen. After the table has been cleared, younger men - who were all the time outside the house - came. About 4 of them.

During the meal the conversation centered about life in New York (a subject uncle Fred tackles with gusto) about the first Powell who built the old home in Green Olive, about the port of Alligator Pond and boats which used come here for cargo of castor oil, log wood, pimento and coffee. When the young men came they sung - at uncle Fred request - some songs "Donkey turn over", "Portland Disaster" "Train Wreck" some seafaring songs "Sing Sailor" "Cocaine Murder". The last one refers to a murder committed in Kingston by some Cuban gangsterson some of their gang. Mr. Ernest Powell recounted in detail the murder, how a house in Kingston was rented and "fixed nicely" the victims lured there under the pretext of some business and killed and cut into pieces in order to be disposed of. Somebody heard a cry and sent police and the murders left in a hurry Jamaica. Two went on a ship and were caught in Porto Rico, brought to Kingston, tried and hung. The chief one took a plane to Cuba - he flew "according to Mr. Powell" - in his pyjamas pretending his father was very ill. He succeeded in escaping. The very long song is an "objective" description of murder, trial and punishment and very popular in Jamaica. I asked whether there are any love songs, but no one seemed to know any. When Mrs. Powell came I asked her and she sung "Go away false deceiver" She said she sung it when she was a young a beautiful girl (she is still very good looking) at a function at school Everybody liked it so much that she had to sing it three times. After that the whole party was invited to the two ~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~ Misses Powell, who live "in the old home". Mr. Andrews made a little speach, we took some pictures on the steps of the house. After that Mrs. Powell took Mr. Andrews apart and they talked for about 15 minutes. I believe it was about sending the elder daughter of Mr. and Mrs Powell to America, as the other day Mrs. Birdie told me that the Andrews promised her to take the daughter to USA.

15.1.1948.
T.O.

Asked Mrs. Birdie to give me the words of the song, she sung the other day "Go away false deceiver". She promised to write the words and send them, and I promised to send her a typed copy. She told me how the song was composed. "I was friends with a young boy and he deceive me, went with a fair girl, just like you. She was a teacher at the school. I had a son for him, my first child, Joslyn Roy. I composed the song afterwards."

22.3.48.

D.B.

Interview with Ivy Powell.

Ivy is from Bull Savannah. She is the daughter of Birdie and Ernest Powell. She is 18. At school she read to 6th. She failed her 1st year Pupil Teacher's Exam. and passed her 2nd year (Pupil Teacher's Exam.)

This is her first year at the factory. She applied to Mr. Hastings the manager for the post as Supervisor. She got it and started to work in February. She is paid weekly. "That is private". She would not say how much she gets weekly.

Her father cultivates largely. She is expecting to go to Kingston in August for a Commercial Course at Durham School of Commerce. Her mother looks after the home. She sews for the home. Ivy has not a boy friend. "She is young you know" - her cousin Leovaughn said.

Visit at home. Int. Ernest Powell and Birdie Rochester.
19.6.48.
T.O.

Ernest Powell was in his yard. He just intended to go to see his ground in Herring, but stopped because of my visit. Birdie, seeing me coming run into the house. He came about 10 minutes later obviously having changed into better clothes.

His land. Ernest has his land - "well over 40 acres" in 8 pieces: 2 in Herring. This place is between the factory and Fibi. The name was given by his grandfather Joseph Powell, who used to cultivate there. Ernest Powell acquired this land by "buying it in the family". 1 piece is "beyond the road, not far from here". 1 piece in Down, this is the largest piece about 16 acres. Down is adjoining to Fibi. 1 is in Cotton Ground, this is near the New Forest. It is a very good land as it is flat and Ernest has most of his cultivations there. He explained that long ago the property used to cultivate cotton there - hence the name. 1 piece is in Ridge 1 in Ribbit Town and one the "home land". All his sons help him to cultivate, none of them has his own land.

Present household:

Powell Ernest	head	M.Cl.	"over 50"	band'
Rochester Birdie	wife	F.Cl.	"some 10 years younger than hus"	
Powell Lucy	dau	F.S.	more than 20	
" Neville	son	M.S.	22	
" Ivy	dau	F.S.	19	
" Isaac	son	M.S.	18	
" Ernest	son	M.S.	15	
" Harry	son	M.S.	13	
" Fred	son	M.S.	12	

small child

I asked whether there was any ~~xxxx~~ at their home (thinking of Lucy's child) but they said there wasn't.

Children. All the sons were away from the house "working in the grounds" Ernest said Neville was the best cultivator "being the oldest he has ~~xxxx~~ most experience" Isaac is learning ~~xxxxxxx~~ masonry, Neville carpentry. Ernest is "taking lessons", which means that after having finished the elementary school here he is taking private lessons with the teacher. The parents do not yet know for what career he is preparing, but since he is the most intelligent of all the boys they make take him lessons instead of learning a trade or being only a cultivator. Harry and Fred (Orrett in Census) are still ~~in~~ school.

The two girls were at home, but they only greeted me from the kitchen door. The younger Ivy is to go to America soon. A few months ago a Mr. Fred Andrews came on a visit to Bull-Savannah. He is the husband of Mr. Laban Rochester's sister. He promised to Ernest Powell to "help with the daughter" and "send papers for her to come to America". On a previous occasion I asked Ernest why he was sending his younger daughter and not the older. He said that the older was more handy around the house and has to stay to help the other with the housework

the housework. Birdie explained to me to-day that they are sending the younger daughter because "she is more intelligent. I keep the older to help with washing and cooking, and Ida she will be able to help me otherwise". She means that Ida being the more intelligent will be able to make a better career for herself in the States and will help the family. Birdie said she had 2 more children who died. She did not mention this time her outside son Joslyn Roy, about whom she told me on a previous occasion. I wanted to talk with her about this outside child and the story of her love affair with the "false deceiver" about whom she composed a song. "he was going to" pull a few cassava" and I volunteered to go and help her, thinking Ernest will go to his ground and leave us alone. However Ernest followed us in a few minutes so the talk about this intimate affair had to be postponed. We pulled about a dozen of nice cassava roots and Ernest came to help to chop off the roots with his machette. afterwards he called a boy (not ~~xxxxxxx~~ any of his sons who were still all away) told him to climb the coconut palm. The boy threw 4 nuts. Ernest, Birdie and myself ~~xxxxx~~ got ~~xxx~~ one each and the boy got also one. While ~~knapping~~ cutting the nuts to get the milk Ernest told about his brother.

Relatives abroad "My brother Tom - he is in Cuba - he chopped off his finger. That was in 1920 when I was there. There was plenty work in Cuba that time." He told me that the fact that his brother had one finger cut did not prevent him from earning money. Workers were needed and his business was to go to the railway station and recruit the workers. For this he would ~~xxxxxx~~ get from the employers \$5 and sometimes \$10 "a piece". The brother Tom stayed in Cuba for good. Ernest haven't heard from him for many years. It is only a few months ago he met a man who has seen his brother in Cuba last year. Ernest wrote to this brother a letter when the war was over, but perhaps the address was not good because he did not get any answer. "People move in Cuba all the time" Ernest explained that in Cuba one can't buy land like in Jamaica. "All the land belong to the government, you can buy the house but not the land." Unless you are in constant correspondence with a person you soon ~~xxxxx~~ get out of touch as "they move all the time". He would like to get news from his brother - just to know how he is getting on.

Other occupations As I mentioned above one son is learning carpentry, another masonry and the third is taking lessons preparing for a white collar career. Ernest Powell is one of the biggest growers (see also list of Growers) beside this he has a shop. He ~~wants~~ the building (which is next to the Brom field shop on the main road) from Johnny Linton at £7 a year he lease is up this months and he intends to rent it in the future. Johnny Linton asks £18 for the year now. The shop is run by Ernest's sister Edith Powell. He did not tell me what or how much he gives her for it. He stays all the day in the shop and goes to Kingston for the goods. He says the shop pays well enough in the season when in good days his turnover amounts to £20-30. He gives credit and collects on

leases

pay days. Ernest Powell is regarded in Bull-Savannah as one of the "big men".

The love-story of Birdie. Unfortunately Ernest followed us all the time, so I couldn't get the details I wanted of the love story of Birdie Rochester. Once when J.O. and myself were invited to Ernest Powell house for a party held for Fre Andrews, Birdie sung a few songs and said she composed them herself. She explained she was in love with a young man, who left her for a "fair girl" a teacher at school. Birdie composed the song and sung it at a party organised for some occasion at school and had a tremendous success. I asked her for the words of the song and some weeks later she brought them to me. I promised to give her a typewritten copy. This is the song in Birdie's spelling:

A Song Entitled Once I Love.

Once I loved with fond affection
One who was so dear to me
But a fair girl came beside him
And he thinks no more of me.

Chrus

Go your ways you false deciever
Go your ways you false young man
Since you think me was not worthy
Go an leave me never mind

2 verse

Many a nights with you I travell
Many an hours vainly spent
When I think your love was constant
Then I find twas only rent

Sing Chrus again

3 verse

One more word an all is over
Why you are so unkind to me
Tell me why you do not love me
Turn away how could it be (sing Chrus)

4 verse

Go an leave me as you wishes
Never let me cross your mind
Since you thinks me was not worthy
Go an leave me never mind

Sing chrus again.

I only got the opportunity to ask Birdie what became of this young man. "He's dead and the wife dead too" said Birdie with some gusto. He married the fair teacher. I have some doubts as to Birdie's authorship, but certainly the song was well suited to the occasion.