

C.D. 2. Sbd. 8. Household 34

Powell Benjamin head M.^S. 60 St. Eliz. Col. Angl. X. Farmer

His farm in 1942.

Under oneacre.

- 1 goat.
- 1 ackee = 11 doz.
- 1 avocado = ?
- 3 coconuts = 70 nuts.
- 1 mangoe = 6 doz.

*Yours
/a
pb.*

Interviewed Meresa Bent.

Present household

Monday,
26. 4. 48.
I.D.

Benjamin Powell Head.
Weston Ellington (Only sleep here him eat at him mother)
Merese Bent

~~Family History~~ Family History.

Parents. Celes and Matther Bent. "Mother die 15 years now and father die 16 years now." Mother's parents Margaret and Elisha Ebanks. Father's parents, Margaret and James Bent. ~~Grandparents~~ Merese cannot remember the names of her great grand parents. "Some of them so mix up, them call them funny, funny name."

Children of Celes and Matthew Bent. Mother have 8 for me father, and father have 6 outside one. Clifford (d) Edelias, Ballard's Valley; Alberta, Alberta, Ballard's Valley; Clifton, side man on Witter truck, Clareta, work at Montego Bay; Rodella, a outside one for me father live at Little Pedro. She married now name Elliott.

Father have 2 children by / Josephine Elliott: Icilda and Viris.

Home life.

Me parents use to cuss and quarrel and fight." Asked how her mother got on with her father's other women. Me mother and the woman them quarrel. Them never fight but them keep malice."

Her mother quarrelled with her when she was expecting her first child. "Me mother forsake me. Me father didn't quarrel with me. Him did love me. Me mother did want to put me out a door, and him say no." Asked who she liked better. "Well, according to treatment, some people like mother better. But according to treatment, I prefer my father any day. Me mother cuss me, tell me all wrong word She offer all bad prayer for me." What? "She pray that the baby tu'n cross way."

Merese's children. "Have 4, 2 die." That what me have living, one is 22, and the other 16, so me no have no small baby." One of her children Eric Gordon lives with his mother's sister Alberta Bent. Cyril Gordon the other son lives with Nicholas Elliott "with fe them own children The children's father, Cecil Gordon, is now married and living in Kingston. "Have picknie them for him before him married. We never live together in a house. Him want Cyril now. Him say him want support the picknie here; the picknie must come where him is and the picknie won't consent so me don't force him." Asked if Nicholas adopted Cyril. "Cyril go there as a friend. And you know, them never exactly ask me for him. Him feed and close (clothes) him, so me jus' make him stay. To tell the truth, I don't

have what to give them. I can' even school them. None of them know the school door. I don' even have what to eat. Sometime we have money, and the hungry a kill we - can' get what to buy."

Childhood

Meresa helped in the home. She was taught to wash and clean floors. "That is our trade, you know. One thing, we don' have any husband to look after we, so we have to do every little thing."

Meresa and her mother were not very good friends. They quarrelled often.

Housing.

Before Myrtly started to live with Benjamin, she used to sleep with Myrtle Stephenson. "She did have a baby, and it favour say she ~~is~~ was lonely; so me sleep up there at night time, and go to Valley in the days. The baby dead now." What was wrong? "She did have asthma and it seem as if the baby take it from her."

Asked why she left Myrtle's place. She did spen* about 7 weeks in Manchester with her mother, so she say mus' stay here till she come back. So me stay here. Is good friend, you know. Anything him have him give me to eat, but him don' clothes me." Meresa was not able to say how long she had been at Benjamin's house.

Occupation.

Meresa does washing, cleaning, and straw plaiting for a living. "People send for me all the time to wash for them. If favour say them don' want nobody wash for them but me. After we live so loving. Me go to anybody yard in the district ya and help them, and do me little plaiting, and get me 6d fe help buy one frock." Gereldane Lewis, wife of Levi Lewis taught her to plait. "That time it was 1½d a hat."

~~KAUPANX~~ Poor Relief.

When Meresa's foot was very bad, she was given aid from Poor Relief funds. "I get lots of money from Mr. Thomas~~on~~. I get shillings (1/-) a week. Afterward I start to get the ticket for 9d. I get the ticket and I had to go for the money. If I want anything to eat, I give the shop keeper the ticket, and them write Mr. Thomas~~on~~, and ~~then~~ send the money to them. Sometime Salvation Army give rice, flour, milk, sugar, meal, but long time now, it never come." Merese is no longer on the "poor list."

Ulcer.

She had an ulcer for a number of years. "Them put me 'pon the very poor list. Government give we water free,

xx him

2 pans a day. Her sister was also on the "poor list." "A box did drop on the foot, and the box did have on a piece of tinish. (tin) Some time it better and leave a scar the size of a hapenny, and it fbroke out again. I was at Santa Cruz with it for 6 months." In hospital? "Not exactly hospital, was in the Alms House. Them dress it there 3 times a day."

I put all sort of things on it. Simicontract never 'gree with it. Another bush, red ballard, one them call ver-vine, one poison one, night shade." These were boiled together. "I take it make a lotion. I rub up the vervine and put it in the foot." Another bush she used was "catch bur."

"I couldn' walk, whatsoever in the world I want to do, father have to carry me. Sometime me brother carry me. Only so so vervine get it better. The bush them'gree with you sometime and don' 'gree with me. So as them give you a little advice, you have to try it, I use coconandi." (supposed to be the bulb of the night shade. "I use all the white stick cassava; grater it and put on the foot." The ulcer has been healed 4 years ago, she does not think it will "break out" again.

Father's death.

Meresa was in the Alms House when her father died. She did not know until 2 weeks after he was buried. "A young man from here come to doctor at Santa Cruz, and hi tell me that me father dead," Asked why they did not ~~see~~ inform her before. "Perhaps them think I would come out before I better."

Land

She owns a sq. chain of land. It was inherited from her father. Him did have plenty land, but you know, little worries, - him sell it out. Him only leave a chain square for every one a we, so that we can help we self after the death of him." Clifton, her brother, cultivates the land. "Whatever him work, him give me equal, like what him take for himself."

Meresa does not know anything about Benjamin's relatives. "Him did have a concubine name Behala Dyer, but him dead."

House

The interview took place in the house. Meresa was patching her dress all the time. There was a big board bed covered with ~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~ a sheet made of hessia, and a blanket. The bed was neatly made. One box, one wooden bowl, a barrel with a trunk on top of it, and on the trunk a tin lamp. On the table were 2 spoons, 1 fork, 6 empty aerated water bottles. The aerated water was used at Christmas. There was also a 1/4 pint bottle of

cola wine bottle. It was bought for 9d. The wine was

/ I
also used at Christmas. There was a small bottle of bay rum, and a small bottle with coconut oil. The table was covered with brown paper. "Sunday day put on table clooth and put out the corckery ware. When/put them out sometime, the picknie them draw it down." Meresa saw tha I was looking on the table and she gave this bit of information without being asked.

"Some people them don' have no money, nor clothes, adn then tu'n down themself. Not be cause you poor, because you poverty, you mus' tu'n down you'self. If you have one frock, you can rub it out. Some people may see you X looking fat, is not because you don' poor, but you contented of mind. You don' make things worry you,"

Interviewed Benjamin Powell.

Tuesday.
27. 4. 48.
I.D.

Family History.

Mother Martha Powell, Father James Powell. Mother's mother? "Don't remember what granny name." Mother's father William Powell. Born in Thatch Walk ~~sist~~ brother to Eliza Powell and Andrew Brooks.

"Esther Roy raise me and me grow till me buy piece a lan' and put up the little hut ya. That is how me get to be living in Bull Savannah," Benjamin used to work in Esther's home. He was not sent to school. "Never sen' to school by me mother, never sen' to school by me adopted mother. I sorry I did not go to school, I can't say I regret it for is not me do it meself, but I really sorry. If is even a a little more ~~mannerx~~, I would be better.

Land.

"Is only the 1/2 a cre I live on." Land was bought from David Roye for £2. "David buy land from Susan Henighan and I buy it from David." He works Maria Miller's land on share. "Don't plant tomatoe, too much load, and I can't manage it. Me no have the strength to carry mould and manure to manure the place. Plenty in it, but that is why I never attempt tomatoe. Plant ~~tomatoe~~ cassava, potatoe, gongo peas. "Is just as much to feed meself. I raise a little dumb t'ing, goat or pig to help meself with clothes. Have one pig the other day, sell it for 30/-." He bought it for 14/- and kept it for 7 months before he sold. it.

Meresa. only stop here, same as how Ethel did stop here by feeling. She come from Ballard's Valley, and it favour say she did not have any place to stop.

Mehala Dyer "had lots of children but they was not mine." Benjamin does not have any children. "We live together long time. When we jus about to married, she dead. Now me get old, can't manage woman again, so me'n noh force after it.

Fishing.

Ben. did not make much money from fishing. "But it keep me a going, today you make 4/- tomorrow 5/- another day 10/-." James Smith, Allan Smith's father taught him to fish. Asked if he sang plenty. "Work was hard a couldn't sing. If me did have strength a would a still in it. Sea work want strong something, for him strong."

Ethel's illness - Ben showed me wire received from the Matron of the Black River hospital saying Ethel was much better. He sent a wire to the Matron "Monday gone week" asking how she was, and he paid for a reply. "It cost me 1/6. "

xxx polite

Top Bull Savannah.

Family Record 209.

Interviewed Benjamin Powell and Laban Banton.

I saw Benjamin at his home twisting thatch. He said he was going in his fields and could not spare the time to talk with me. I should call on him tomorrow.

Laban said D.B. had visited him, and he would not be giving his name to any other person.

The Government.

Thursday
22. 7.48.
I.D.

"Me no have nothing a ~~kel~~ give Government for them not giving me nothing. All the book that you hear them going to print, now we same one have to buy it. How we must make book and them turn round buy it again. I know the Government must make something off it. The book may come to sell for 2/- and then the Government put on 6d. What you call that, don' is the Government getting the 6d?" The Government not doing one single thing for me. I have to do everything for myself."

Benjamin told Laban that he should not talk like that, because the Government is responsible for the people, and they have done a lot. If a person is ill in Bull Savannah the ambulance can easily be sent for, and he or she will be well taken care of in the Black River hospital. Laban did not agree with this. "The little time you spend in a the hospital is you pay for it. From you was a young man until now, you count up how much Government get from you." Benjamin said the amount he paid in taxes did not amount to "anything much."

Laban said the people of Bull Savannah are independent. "Them say Black River is our hospital. The other day some people here have typhoid, and them pay them money and go to Mandeville. Search through the whole Bull Savannah and you won' find one pauper. I tell you the Government don' have to do one thing for this district."

The path leading to Ballard's Valley should be fixed long ago. Benjamin said one of his teachers who was Member of the Parochial Board recommended to the Government that the road should not be fixed. "Him say nobody naa use the road, I hear when a road condem, is the hardest thing to get it fix again." Laban said a road was being cut "down the bottom" behind Phipp Thompson's house. They are not working on the road again. "See how much money them throw 'way. That would just be a waist for nobody naa use that road. I hear it was to go right out to Yardly Chase. Half of that money could use to fix this road. See how they fix out at the factory. All that road did want was to widen and put marl on it. But you see them fix it de, as white a come and white a go round that sied."

Marriage.

Marriage, Laban said is a man made law. "St. Paul said it is

Marriage

better to be married than to burn. And then he said. Every man to his own order. I wonder why him differ so quick. Well the Bible say that Christ attended a marriage feast." Laban is not yet married because he does not have any money "All the same first time married is not like now. Those time it would cost you £20, now perhaps only £5. All them time you have to have pig and goat, now you don' have to get all that."

Marriage, is not in any way different from concubinage. I want to know now, a man and woman go to the Parson. Them pay him 7/6, him say a few words and married them. Them come home and about a week after, them start to cuss and fight. He now, living in sweetheart life as them call it. Me and the girl live good, we noh quarrel or anything. I want to know which one better? You believe when we dead, the married one going to go to heaven, just because them married? Me caan read, but nobody caan put that over me."

Men should not marry, when they are in their early twenties "A man may marry when he is 25 or so. Him don' go anywhere Him don' know people. Him don' know about the-world. When him is 30, him may go to Alligator Pond and meet a girl who him really love. Him come home now and start to make trouble with the wife at home. Sometime she may not do anything wrong, but him just trying to get rid of her, because him just find the person him really love."

Very old men should not marry young girls. "When the wife dress up herself and go out, she going to say what this old man following me around fo', before him stay home to make the fire." ~~Now~~ She will take ~~her~~ ~~man~~ money and ~~mind~~ support a younger man who she really loves. "Him is of no use to her."

xxxxhusband's

Elections.

Laban is not going to vote at all/next year. "Them always a promise all sort a things. The one de Coke from the time him get in, him don' remember a place name Bull Savannah. I don' say them can get everything them ask for but them can try. Them can make we see that them trying, but them don' try at all. Blight is a good man, a very good man with the tomato industry and all that, but I not voting for a soul except Jesus. The only way me will vote is if them bring it to me house. If them say me will go to prison if me don' vote, well me will vote fe escape the prison."

Colour.

He asked why J.O. and T.O. did not visit Top Bull Savannah. "Is because is only black naaga live up ya noh? Laban heard that they were very nice people. "But only the people down the bottom get things, We up here don' get anything. Them believe the people down whe' them de a white? Them noh white, them a quamin. If them want see people like themself them must go to Ballard's Valley.

The Elliott them have high blood." Asked if the Elliotts blood was higher than his. He replied, "No ~~th~~ not that, but if the blood even high you must be able to eat ~~up~~ something to keep up the blood." He was bent on talking of the Elliotts' "high blood." "You see G. down ya (Georgiana Lewis) Well is so the Elliott them stay. But no, she just have a touch of ~~thaxkoadx~~ it. Some of them really white." Benjamin said Mrs. Enego also has very good blood. "But she not eating the right things to keep up the richness of the blood."

Information from Leo Powell,
who interv. Benjamin Powell and MeresaBent
19.6.48.
J.O. 20.7.48.

Present household.

Powell Benjamin, 78.
Bent Meresa, c.l.wife., 52.

Powell Benjamin. Benjamin's father was Jerry Powell, his mother was Martha Powell. His parents were married. They lived in Thatch Walk where he was born. Lives in T.B.S. already for 58 years. He had one full brother: Andrew Powell, dead. /e is known also as Andrew Brooks, in Thatch Walk where he lived. Has also one full sister "Dovvy" Powell /this is Elizabeth Powell in Th.Walk/. Benjamin Powell has no children.

Bent Meresa. She is his c.l. wife. They became friends ab. 9 years ago, started to live together 7 years ago. Meresa is daughter of Mathew ~~Rexix~~ Bent and ~~Sixix~~ ~~gent~~Cilese ~~Rexix~~ Bent. Her parents were married. She was brought in parents' home, in Ballard's Valley. Both her parents are dead. She has a number of brothers and sisters Full brothers: Clifton Bent and Adelas Bent, both living in Ball.Vall.; two brothers are dead: Clifford and Samuel Twomfull sisters: Reberta Bent in Ballards Valley and Claretta Bent in Montego Bay. She has also two halfsisters by father: Iculda and Viris Bent, both living in Ballard's Valley.

She had two children by Cecil Gordon /in Lowlands or in Ballard's Valley/: one is Ezra Gordon /living in Ridge and working for Windy Elliott/, 21 years old. Ezra was supported by father when he was small but now "is supported by the mother". Next son: Cyril Gordon, 16 years old, is "supported by father." /Probably lives with the father.

House, land, farming.

House: 1 room, thatch roof. 1 kitchen /wattle wall, thatch roof/. Furniture: 1 bed, 1 table, 2 chairs. No tank.

Land: 1/2 acre homeland.

Trees: 3 coconuts, 1 c.mango.

Occupations, source of living: they are "supported by people around and by doing jobs like weeding grass for the neighbours."