

Visit at home. Interv. Lena and Alfred Holness.
16.7.48.
T.O.

Fam. Rec. 233.

When I visited this home on a previous occasion I found there only the lodger Daisy Powell with her children. (See F.R. 234) To-day Lena was at home. Her brother Alfred came on a bicycle at the end of our conversation.

Present household:

Holness Lena head 20
" Alfred brother 29
" Hazan brother 15

Activities in the yard.

Lena was washing. A big metal pan and another one made of wood were standing on the earth under a tree. ~~She~~ In both there were clothes soaking in water. She would either bent over them, or ~~squat~~ squat in a way characteristic here: with both feet flat on the ground and the bottom neither touching ground nor heels. (I have never seen in Europe anybody squatting this way which is common here.) It seemed to me that this position must be very uncomfortable to do the work, but of course that might be a matter of habit. On many occasions I noticed that women here wash keeping the vessel on the ground, and not as women in my country do i.e. having it at the level of their hands.

Lena is well advanced in her pregnancy. When asked whether this work isn't detrimental in her present state she said "Exercise do me good."

In the kitchen Daisy Powell was scraping cassava. Her younger sister Turnica came to help her. Turnica was peeling the cassava. Although the building itself is rather shaky, made of palm leaves and sticks, the inside is well equipped spacious and cool. On the cement "fire table" there is permanent iron construction to put the pots over the fire. Usually pots are put on the burning sticks, or a few big nails are fixed into the cement to support the pot. After greeting the two Powell girls I returned to ~~Turnica~~ Lena Holness. I learnt that to-day Daisy is cooking for the whole household while Lena is washing for everybody.

Lena spent her childhood and girlhood moving between Bull-Savannah where her parents lived, Mandeville where her sister lived and May Pen where another of her sisters lives. For ~~her~~ members of her family etc. See F.R. of her brother Claston Holness.

Out of ~~many~~ the thirteen children (two dead) of her parents only her brother Claston Holness lives permanently in Bull-Savannah. All other are settled in Manchester or May-Pen. She herself isn't really settled here. She moves "up and down" (a favourite expression here) between Mandeville and Bull-Sav

annah. She stayed with the sister in Mandeville who is a dressmaker there. Lena learned dressmaking and needle work. He took me to her room and showed me a sweater she is making. This trade doesn't pay here. She had a sewing machine but it got "mashed up". She thinks of buying a new one, but only if she goes to live in Mandeville. She is doing a little sewing here for "companions like myself"

Economically she is dependent partly upon her elder sisters and partly on her brother Claston Holness. Claston manages the whole family land. The brother Alfred who stays at present with her also moves all the time between Bull-Savannah and Manchester where he lives in the home of one of the sisters.

The father of the baby Lena is expecting is Louis Rochester the son of James and Ann Rochester. Louis is at present in America as contract farm labour. He writes to her and she expects he will help her when the baby is born. However she is not sure whether he will marry her when he comes back. She didn't make any plans for her future (at least she told me so). She would prefer to live in a city.

Hazan Holness the youngest brother is learning masonry with Julius Simpson. To-day he is working in the woods with the two elder brothers. Alfred and Hazan always work together with Claston in the woods.

Alfred Holness came while we were talking. He was pushing his bicycle, as the hill on which their house stands is very steep. He drove a part of the way. Hazan stayed for breakfast at Claston's house.

The arrangement concerning the working of the family land and the division of crops is very fluid but works satisfactorily. There are no set principles. Claston Holness takes care of everything. He also collects for instance the rent which is paid by Daisy Powell who rents a room in this house. The rent is 7/- per month. Alfred Holness does not intend to settle here for good. They expect that the "old house" i.e. this house will be eventually for the youngest brother Hazan. He is still a "young boy" and Claston is "responsible" for him.

Mother's death and burial.

Lena told me that her mother died in Mandeville. She was in the Mandeville hospital, then stayed with her daughter who lives in Mandeville and died there. She died of a "stroke". The body was carried to Bull-Savannah to be buried here. There is no tomb yet made, - she died three years ago and she stayed 5 months in Mandeville before her death. The father died shortly before.

The little Bezrik Linton came bringing a few things from the shop. He is the son of the late sister Lilian and Ezra Linton (outside son) who lives just below. Bezrik was taken after Lilian's death by his father and lives now with him. Another child of Lilian Orrett (with local Rochester also dead) stays with his great aunt Annie Powell.