

## **Photographs by Alberta Bonsu of slave fort on Cape Coast, Ghana, 2007**

European trading posts stretched along the coast of West Africa from Senegal down to Angola. The British followed the Portuguese example and built forts on the coast to secure their trading bases and to overawe the Africans, and as a place for hundreds of white traders to live as well as a place to keep enslaved Africans before the commerce was complete and the ships were ready to sail.

Alberta comes from a Ghanaian family and lives in east London. She visited the fort in 2007.

**Alberta Bonsu lives in east London and was born to Ghanaian parents. She visited a former slave fort on the Cape Coast of Ghana in 2007.**

**She told Redbridge Museum about her visit:**

"The male dungeon was the first room I entered. I walked into darkness, the only lights came from the whole at the top of the room.

I stood in front of the cell in which they would put the most rebellious slaves to die. This was very emotional because to give us a feeling for how they felt, they closed the cell door.

Overall I enjoyed this trip. I went with my cousin who said he had been before yet every visit made him cry. On the contrary to that I was more proud of my country [Ghana]. I felt that even though the country came on the map because of this horrendous activity the country has grown from strength to strength due to the love that is shared by all citizens.

The tour guide always made the point that the forefathers did not give in even though it got harder. He would talk about the intelligent tricks they played on the slave traders.

I also pointed out that some of the trade slavers were black Ghanaian, which was shocking. There were some children who we so fascinated that they kept asking questions. I was just happy to have seen this piece of history. It brought to life everything I had heard about the slave trade."

## **Pass it on...**

**Kenneth Williams lives in Woodford Green and was born in Britain to Jamaican parents. He has painted this portrait of his grand uncle 'Babes'.**

Early this year, he approached Redbridge Museum as he was interested in the commemorations for the abolition of the slave trade in 1807.

After discussions, the Museum asked him to think about his own personal responses to how families have survived difficult times in the Caribbean.

As an amateur artist, Kenneth decided to paint this portrait of his grand uncle 'Uncle Babes'.

Uncle Babes was very important in passing on the history of Kenneth's family and was greatly respected by Kenneth.

## **Portrait of Uncle Babes, 2007**

"The portrait is of my grand uncle 'Uncle Babes' who was brother to my grandfather Joseph Williams, who unfortunately died on my first visit to Jamaica in the late 1970s. We did talk briefly before he died but in actual fact Uncle Babes played his role I'm fortunate to say.

Uncle Babes as everyone called him was Herbert Williams. The portrait depicts him outside his residence in Jamaica a two bedroom wooden house where he told me many a story. His mother was Elizabeth Heron.

My great- great grandmother was quite a character, she smoked a pipe and was very strict with her children. This, Uncle Babes insisted, is what gave him control and discipline in his conduct in life.

Uncle did not discuss his father much. Our conversation was about Elizabeth and her domestic chores that included cultivation of food and caring for live stock such as chickens, goat, and other foods such as yams, green bananas, mangoes, ginnep, etc that her sons had to help her with.

My mother, Inez Gertrude Williams daughter to Joseph Williams and Charlotte Wagstaff. Charlotte's mother, called Elizabeth Wagstaff had twelve children. I was fortunate to meet most of them before they died. Stupid as it seems, whenever I returned to Jamaica I expected to see them.

Both of my great grandmothers lived into their hundreds, Elizabeth Wagstaff lived to be 120 years old. Great-grandfather Lewis they say died young at the age of 88 years. Uncle Babes taught me quite a lot that caused me to change and recognise different values in life. Uncle Babes died last year aged 95. "

**Kenneth Williams, September 2007**

## **Landmarks**

**Landmarks** is a short film which documents residents of London, Liverpool and Bristol in 2005 as they map the route of the slavery walk in their cities and go on a journey of discovery to learn more about the history of the transatlantic slave trade and Britain's connections with it.

20 minutes approx running time

The film is part of **Understanding Slavery**, a national education project developed by National Maritime Museum, National Museums Liverpool, the British Empire and Commonwealth Museum, Bristol City's Museums, Galleries and Archives, and Hull Museums and Art Gallery. It is funded by the Department for Culture Media and Sport and the Department for Education and Skills.

## **Music**

The music you can hear are work songs recorded in the Caribbean island of Dominica in 1962.

The songs and music of Dominica reflect West African, French and English influences.

*Caribbean Voyage: The 1962 Field Recordings: Dominica  
(Rounder Records)*

The Alan Lomax Collection