

**At the Intersection of Tourism, National Identity and Bad Service:
The Case Study of *The Fergusons of Farm Road*.**

by

Edward Minnis, B.A.

A thesis submitted to
the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

Department of History

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**At the Intersection of Tourism, National Identity and Bad Service:
The Case Study of *The Fergusons of Farm Road***

submitted by

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in partial fulfilment of the requirements

for the degree of Master of Arts

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12 January 2010

Abstract

In 1970s Bahamas, a radio serial *cum* soap opera called *The Fergusons of Farm Road* that ran for almost 190 episodes over a five year period became a cultural phenomenon. Ironically, it was originally a part of a courtesy campaign designed to teach Bahamians the importance of being friendly to tourists. This thesis is the first significant study of the *Fergusons*, basing its insights on original episode scripts, interviews and recently discovered archival audio recordings. It situates the show within the historical and cultural context of the ongoing Bahamian tourism courtesy campaigns to better understand how it transcended the limitations of its pedagogical role into the realm of abiding popular culture. The thesis concludes that, while the *Fergusons of Farm Road* brought an ephemeral improvement to the quality of Bahamian tourism, the program's real legacy lies in its function as midwife of an intrinsic vernacular national cultural consciousness and identity.

For Heather and Tommy

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Chapter 1

"We Are Now Like Gods: A History of Radio, the Soap Opera and Broadcasting in the Bahamas

This project concerns a cultural artifact from the 1970s Bahamas, namely a weekly radio serial, presented with generous elements of the soap-opera aesthetic, called *The Fergusons of Farm Road*. The program was broadcast intermittently over a five year period, from 1970 to 1975, and became extremely popular with the local population. Beyond its status as a fixture of the era's popular culture, what makes *The Fergusons* so immensely fascinating is its location near the center of the Bahamian story and the ways that it overlaps almost every significant facet of Bahamian life.

To begin with, *The Fergusons* was produced during a period of transition. In the early 1970s, the Bahamas was still a British colony and had only recently come out from under centuries long political domination by a white minority and was resolutely heading towards political independence and unfettered democracy. Then, as now, tourism was a monolithic force in the islands, and nearly seventy-five cents of every dollar that the country earned came from the industry. It is significant that *The Fergusons* was originally created as a pedagogical tool of the state tourism apparatus to encourage Bahamians to provide better service to its millions of temporary guests. Despite its origins as propaganda, the show is also remarkable for the speed with which it took on a life of its own. And, as the islands of the Bahamas have historically been in the economic and cultural sway of the United States (US), it is perhaps fitting that the impetus for the creation of this quintessential Bahamian product came from a US advertising agency.

The ephemeral nature of radio broadcasting is an apt metaphor for the *Fergusons* and presents significant challenges for the historian — the program itself has left few tangible traces. While Bahamians alive at the time of its broadcast remember it fondly, these same listeners will be hard-pressed to remember anything more than the boisterous laugh of their favorite character. This ephemeral nature was well understood even at the beginning of work on this project, as it was believed that all of the show's audio had long been destroyed. While a fraction of that audio has recently been recovered because of this work, we will likely never know exactly what Bahamians heard when the show debuted. What is the historian to say when a radio station purges their own archives? What remains are the blueprints for the show, the original scripts with handwritten notes from the writers — and even here there are gaps in the record. Neglected in boxes in garages, closets and file cabinets for over forty years, the material was not deemed worthy of exhuming even by its writers and has never before been permitted to see the light of day.

As Juliette Storr noted in the conclusion of her unpublished dissertation on the history of Bahamian radio, *The Fergusons of Farm Road* presents the researcher with important and fertile ground for study.¹ This project is the result of tilling that soil which has proven to be located at the very heart and centerfield of Bahamian society; at the intersection of tourism, national identity and, interestingly enough, bad service. With such a rich and kaleidoscopic object of study, it is difficult to know where to begin with one's analysis. When faced with such a choice, it is perhaps best to start with the most obvious part of the equation, and, in this case, that would be radio.

¹ Juliette Marie Storr, "Changes and Challenges: A History of the Development of Broadcasting in the Commonwealth of the Bahamas, 1930—1980" (PhD diss., Ohio University, 2000), 371.

A Look at Radio

A century ago, it was assumed that radio technology would be similar to the telephone and the telegraph, in that it would be used primarily for person to person communications, perhaps “for the transmission of business and military information.”² However, the electrical companies which had the means to mass manufacture radio components stumbled upon the idea of simultaneously sending out a signal to “large numbers of anonymous people” and saw this application as a way to stimulate sales for their radio receivers.³ The term “broadcasting” is quite appropriate for the technology they invented, and, according to media scholar Tim Crook, it “is derived from the farming metaphor of casting seeds broadly and widely with one sweep of communication.”⁴ The metaphor of casting seeds is an apt one, and accurately describes the implications of radio transmission — a sound from a single source, spread indiscriminately amongst the masses. A sound containing ideas that can take root where the soil conditions are right. Although we take broadcasting for granted today, it was then a novel concept filled with potential. For example, a speaker at the World Radio Convention of 1938 declared:

Of all the miracles this age has witnessed radio is the most marvellous. It has taken sound, which moved with leaden feet, and given it to the wings of morning. We are now like Gods. We may speak to all mankind⁵

Time has proven the speaker correct. Radio technology has effected profound changes in the culture and society of the global population, from mass societies like the United States,

² Mary Vipond, *The Mass Media in Canada*, 3rd ed. (Toronto: James Lorimer & Co., 2000), 37.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Tim Crook, *Radio Drama: Theory and Practice* (New York: Routledge, 1999), 20.

⁵ Quoted in Douglas B. Craig, *Fireside Politics: Radio and Political Culture in the United States, 1920-1940, Reconfiguring American Political History* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), xi.

down to small island archipelagos like that of the Bahamas. All of mankind has indeed been touched and changed by the god-like power of disembodied sound.⁶

Perhaps the most potent of these transformations occurred during the Great Depression, which has been identified as the birth of the present social order, "in which Western economies underwent a critical transition from the politics of production to the politics of consumption."⁷ The new technology of radio was a crucial component of this transition. Radio scholar Kate Lacey says that:

As far as a history of broadcasting is concerned, this period is pivotal in providing a spur to the production of radio both as consumer good and as one of the vehicles available for the production of needs, both in the form of explicit advertisements for consumer goods and, more generally — even in the anticommercial programming of the BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation) — by contributing to the familiarization of leisure and commodity-oriented way of life.⁸

The god-like power of radio was therefore a tool that moulded society into a pliable, consumerist shape and served to build social cohesion upon which the social welfare state might be built.

In the 1920s, the mass mediums were silent film, newspapers and the magazine, all of which needed massive production and distribution systems in order to succeed. When it

⁶ It should be noted that radio was not the first means devised for the transmission of audio content. The record and the gramophone had already been invented and had achieved acceptance spawning their own industries of content producers and player manufacturers. Although audio recordings were being sold to the public since the early 1900s, audio storage technology took decades to mature. Additionally, as radio scholar Tim Crook points out "it is significant that an entire culture of audio transmission of drama entertainment had been established and funded by a subscriber system in the three decades before the advent of radio." This system was essentially a pay-per-listen service that was delivered via a modified telephone line. It was understandably limited in the content it provided, and its transmission was limited to the persons who paid a premium for the privilege of being able to hear, say for example, the Paris opera house. Thus this service was the exclusive reserve of royalty and the well-heeled and was limited in its impact on society. See Crook, *Radio Drama*, 15, 16 and 22.

⁷ Kate Lacey, "Radio in the Great Depression: Promotional Culture, Public Service and Propaganda," in *Radio Reader: Essays in the Cultural History of Radio*, ed. Michele Hilmes and Jason Loviglio (New York: Routledge, 2002), 23.

appeared late in the decade, radio broadcasting proved to be substantially different in that it allowed for a single point of transmission to cover wide areas, and with the linking of stations and the formation of networks, it allowed for truly national and instantaneous coverage. This immense power and promise led most industrialized nations to view radio technology as being too important a thing to be left solely in the hands of commercial interests and this fear drove them to set up national systems, ostensibly for the public good. This desire to use radio for nation building has even led some states to attempt to prevent their citizens from even listening to foreign stations.⁹

The United States (US) was the notable exception to this nationalizing trend.¹⁰ After a period of initial chaos over its airwaves, the US allowed radio to become the domain of corporate interests.¹¹ Hence, US broadcasting became dominated by several large and sprawling networks. Interestingly though, it was also in the US that much of the innovation in radio programming occurred, leading to the development and maturation of the radio soap opera serial in the 1930s as a form of mass entertainment. This is the form that has since spread around the world and contributed greatly to the creation of our object of study, *The Fergusons of Farm Road*, a radio serial that was produced in the 1970s Bahamas to service an entirely different clientele. We will, therefore, first examine the development of a few national systems that emerged in the early years of radio that directly effected the creation and development of Bahamian broadcasting and also how the system that emerged in the US diverged from what was, essentially, the global norm.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid., 22.

¹⁰ Mary Vipond, *The Mass Media in Canada* (Toronto: J. Lorimer, 1989), 43, 4.

¹¹ Michele Hilmes, "Introduction to Part One: Broadcasting Begins, 1919 — 38," in *N.B.C: America's Network*, ed. Michele Hilmes and Michael Henry (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), 4.

The United Kingdom

Radio broadcasting began simultaneously in the United States and United Kingdom in the early 1920s. Initially, only a few large firms obtained the license to broadcast experimentally. In November 1922, the British government licensed a conglomerate of business interests, the six major radio manufacturers along with other smaller companies, to form the British Broadcasting Company.¹² The business interests, like their counterparts in the US, pursued broadcasting as a means to stimulate the sale of radio receiver sets.¹³ This privately owned company, which had a *de facto* monopoly, was financed by a license fee of 10 shillings paid by the few who at the time owned a radio receiver. On top of the inherent limitation of revenue by this steep entry threshold, only half of the license fee actually got to the company, the rest went to the government treasury. The government retained tight control on every aspect of the operation and anything deemed controversial was not allowed to be broadcast. Advertising was also not permitted, although the company interpreted this clause to rule out only direct advertisements and still allowed advertisers to provide content in return for a mention of their product on the air.¹⁴

There were serious problems with the company's financial model, however, and it was not long before a crisis point was reached. There were also loud complaints coming from smaller competitors that the operation of the company was detrimental to their interests. Consequently, on 24 April 1923, a seven-man committee headed by Sir Frederick Sykes was appointed to look into, not only the financial structure of the company, but also all other aspects of British broadcasting. Their far-ranging report was released in August

¹² John Cain, *The B.B.C: 70 Years of Broadcasting* (London: British Broadcasting Corp., 1992), 9.

¹³ Burton Paulu, *Television and Radio in the United Kingdom* (London: Macmillan, 1981), 6.

¹⁴ Ibid., 6, 7.

and recommended that the private company should eventually be replaced by a public one, noting that "broadcasting holds social and political possibilities as great as any technical attainment of our generation." It continued:

For these reasons we consider that the control of such potential power over public opinion and the life of the nation ought to remain with the State, and that the operation of so important a national service ought not to be allowed to become an unrestricted commercial monopoly.¹⁵

Most of the recommendations were implemented and on January 1, 1927, the company came under the auspices of the British government and became the British Broadcasting Corporation.¹⁶ Even before this pronouncement, the managing director, John Reith, already operated the company as if it were a public service. He established the motto that still serves to guide programming decisions to this day of "educate, inform, entertain." His objectives were to "provide the best programmes for rich and poor alike, and to eschew the shoddy, the sensational, the morally dubious."¹⁷ The new BBC was still a monopoly, but in following the commission's recommendations, it had become public and fully non-commercial. Although now officially a public service, it operated independently of the government and had full control over its own programming schedule.¹⁸

John Reith felt that as a "good parent to the nation" the corporation should play an important role in the formation of good citizens who had a "sound knowledge of [British] culture, both past and present." The performing arts, especially the performance of the works of Shakespeare, the national bard, were considered crucial components of this education and were thus fixtures of the broadcast schedule. In 1924, there was even a

¹⁵ Ibid., 8.

¹⁶ Ibid., 2.

¹⁷ Cain, *The B.B.C: 70 Years of Broadcasting*, 12.

separate division established for the production of plays. Secure in its position as a monopoly and under no obligation to pander to sponsors, the BBC was free to pursue its own ends but this did not mean that it gave no thought to its audience's desires.¹⁹ The BBC still tried to please its audience, but at the same time it tried to "lead them a bit further than they themselves might have originally wished to go."²⁰ With its stated goal of educating the masses gradually, the BBC thus provided a model of radio broadcasting dedicated to the broad public good; an early form of social engineering.

Canada

The first radio station in Canada was established in Montreal by the Marconi Company in November 1920, and by 1923, there were more than 30 stations in operation.²¹ However, Canadian broadcasting almost until the end of the 1920s remained "the preserve of smaller businesses with other interests and little capital." The first attempt at a national radio coverage was the 'makeshift' Canada National Railway (CNR) Radio network which was the first such network in North America. It began operation in 1923 simply to provide entertainment and information to railway passengers.²²

It was the later formation of two national US networks starting in 1926 and the subsequent popularity of their programming amongst Canadians that led to concern that radio would become another American dominated medium such as film and magazines had

¹⁸ The BBC is still public and non-commercial, however it lost its television monopoly when the ITA began in 1955, and its radio monopoly was lost with the coming of the IBA in 1972. See Paulu, *Television and Radio in the United Kingdom*, 2.

¹⁹ Robert Giddings and Keith Selby, *The Classic Serial on Television and Radio* (Hounds-mill, Basingstoke, Hampshire ; New York: Palgrave, 2001), 2.

²⁰ Ibid., 3.

²¹ Vipond, *The Mass Media in Canada*, 39.

²² Ibid.

already become.²³ This fear sparked parliamentary debates in 1929 that led to Canada's first Royal Commission on Broadcasting, a group chaired by Sir John Aird which came to be known as the Aird Commission. The report they produced "stressed that the destiny of Canada depended upon the ability and willingness to control and utilize internal communications for Canadian purposes."²⁴ The report concluded

that Canadian broadcasting be completely taken over by the government and that a Canadian Radio Broadcasting Commission be set up modelled along the lines of the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) in Great Britain.²⁵

The commissioners' recommendations were not acted upon immediately and the government changed in an election before any action was taken. During this hiatus several of the largest urban Canadian radio stations joined one or the other of the US networks.²⁶ Canadian radio receiver penetration was also growing by leaps and bounds to the point that by 1931 one in three Canadians owned a radio — a ratio even higher in urban areas.

The new government, under the leadership of prime minister Richard Bennett, took up the issue of broadcasting again in 1932. Although US dominance was accepted in the previous mass mediums, radio with its ability to create a truly national discourse and identity was seen as something different and more potent. Canadian media historian Mary Vipond observes that unlike newspapers, magazines and movies, radio had the broadest appeal and could cater to all classes in every corner of the country and could be used to entertain and to educate. Bennett felt that it could serve a function similar to that of the

²³ Ibid., 40.

²⁴ W. I. Romanow and W. C. Soderlund, *Media Canada: An Introductory Analysis* (Mississauga, Ont.: Copp Clark Pitman, 1992), 130.

²⁵ Vipond, *The Mass Media in Canada*, 41.

²⁶ Ibid., 40.

Canadian Public Railway and be a technology that bound the nation together. She concludes:

Thus, like the railway, radio was a special case, necessitating government involvement beyond the normal North American notion of the state's role in economic or cultural matters. American domination of radio was simply not acceptable.²⁷

The government thus set up the Canadian Radio Broadcasting Commission (CRBC) in 1933 to develop this concept of nation over radio or national broadcasting. Contrary to the recommendations of the Aird Commission, however, the already extant private radio stations were left as they were, and thus Canada developed a hybrid public / private radio system.²⁸

The United States

As in Britain and Canada, national priorities were also at play in the United States, but these impulses were manifested differently. In March 1919, General Electric (GE) was in the process of negotiating away the rights to crucial radio technology that would have given the British Marconi company a virtual world-wide monopoly on 'state-of-the-art' radio technology. However, the US government intervened and instead used its "leverage to force the American Marconi company to sell its assets to GE and withdraw from the U.S. market in exchange for key patent rights abroad." This manoeuvre protected the US market from foreign penetration and defined radio as a "crucial national medium."²⁹

With the continued guidance of the US government, in October of that year GE formed a subsidiary company along with many of the other major companies involved in US radio

²⁷ Ibid., 43, 4.

²⁸ The CRBC became the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) in 1936.

research, such as Westinghouse, the American Telephone and Telegraph Corporation (AT&T) and the United Fruit company. The new company was called the Radio Corporation of America (RCA) and it allowed these corporations to pool their patents and guide the development of the technology in the United States.³⁰ Although this effort to maintain the national integrity of radio had an immediate impact on the business of radio equipment and station building, it did not have a similar effect on the content transmitted over the airwaves. Broadcasting in 1919 was a "remote enough concept... that no provisions were made for a national broadcasting service" and since anyone who wanted to get a license to broadcast was able to do so, radio was essentially an unregulated free-for-all.³¹

By 1922, the situation had reached the point where the government was needed again to step in and sort things out. To accomplish this the US Department of Commerce created a 'Class B' license for larger commercial interests, and the 'Class A' license for private citizens and enthusiasts. Working alongside big business interests, the US Government effectively curtailed the growth of citizens radio and simultaneously paved the way for the commercial development of the US radio spectrum. Among the first to receive Class B licenses was the RCA conglomerate. In 1922, it established station WJZ in Newark New Jersey, later moving it to New York City in 1923. Many of the large corporations that comprised the RCA also received licenses; AT&T was one such example and it opened the nearby station, WEAF. Much of the early innovation in American radio programming came from these two stations.

²⁹ Michele Hilmes, "N.B.C. And the Network Idea: Defining The "American System"," in *N.B.C: America's Network*, ed. Michele Hilmes and Michael Henry (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), 10.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid., 11.

As a company that saw the selling of radio receivers as its primary business, RCA viewed broadcasting at WJZ as a means to stimulate the sale of those receivers. Therefore, it did not require the station itself to make a profit.³² Thus, it provided most air time free of charge to anyone with services to promote or products to sell.³³ On the other hand, AT&T's agreements with its RCA partners prevented it from itself selling radios, so it needed WEAF to pay its own way. Perhaps it is not a surprise that AT&T used an economic model it was already familiar with — the telephone — as the basis for its broadcasting effort. In essence, it created "toll broadcasting," whereby it charged sponsors to buy advertising time in fifteen minute or half-hour blocks to deliver direct sales messages or entertainment along with their message, "just as a telephone caller paid a fee to make use of telephone lines."³⁴ Selling advertising time and making profits soon became the predominant radio station business model.

AT&T also used the station to test new technologies, an example of which was the linking of stations via telephone wire to create the first networks in the United States and, by 1924, AT&T was able to connect stations in twelve cities to broadcast the Republican National Convention. RCA also attempted to link stations, but was not permitted to use AT&T's phone lines, and consequently had to use lower quality telegraph lines from Western Union.³⁵

Tensions and disputes amongst the RCA member companies led AT&T to abandon its attempts at radio broadcasting and they sold their station WEAF to RCA in July 1926. Just

³² Robert J. Brown, *Manipulating the Ether: The Power of Broadcast Radio in Thirties America* (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland & Co., 1998), 101-103.

³³ Hilmes, "N.B.C. And the Network Idea," 13.

³⁴ Ibid.

two months later, RCA announced the creation of a new company, the National Broadcasting Company (NBC). Linking stations into nationwide networks over AT&T telephone lines meant that the cost to individual stations of securing the best performers, writers and orchestras was covered by the network. It also increased the amount of money that could be charged for advertising and the large coverage meant that they could attract large national brands.³⁶

From NBC's inception, parent company RCA was anxious not to court the charge of monopoly, and tried to distance itself from the potential accusation as much as possible. Perhaps as a means to short circuit the 'monopoly' label NBC created two networks the following year. WJZ became the flagship of the 'Red' network, which focused on more commercial fare, and was the more popular and profitable venture. The second network was dubbed the 'Blue' network and was a "less commercial network but one that showcased NBC's primary non-sponsored public service (sustaining) cultural and educational programs."³⁷

Competition was also not long in coming. A little more than a year later, in 1927 the Columbia Phonograph Broadcasting System began its network radio service with a performance of the opera *The Kings Henchman*. With the hasty departure of the Columbia Phonograph Company from the business over steep initial losses, the company changed its name to the Columbia Broadcasting System, (CBS) and it soon emerged as a significant rival

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Robert Clyde Allen, *Speaking of Soap Operas* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1985), 101, 2.

³⁷ Hilmes, "N.B.C. And the Network Idea," 14.

to NBC.³⁸ The presence of the networks greatly expanded the role of radio in the lives and culture of the US. Michelle Hilmes observed

By 1937, 74 percent of America's households owned at least one radio set, and radio listening occupied on average more than 4.5 hours per day. The American broadcasting network had emerged as an institutional and cultural form central to national identity and American life.³⁹

Radio thus had not only created the mass audience but it had also become central to the very notion of what America was.

Bahamian Radio History

The radio history of Bahamas is in many ways a reflection of the unique geographical configuration of the islands. The Bahamas is a developing archipelagic nation of seven hundred islands stretching from the tip of Florida to Haiti⁴⁰ that covers over 580,000 square kilometers of the Atlantic ocean. (See figure 1) Unlike most Caribbean islands, it never had a viable plantation economy and for most of its existence as a British possession it has been an isolated and impoverished backwater of the Empire.⁴¹ Due to this scattered geography the islands have faced many challenges in developing an effective communications system. In order for messages, food or other supplies to get from the capital island of New Providence to the more peripheral and rural islands, called Out

³⁸ Michael J. Socolow, "'Always in Friendly Competition': N.B.C. And C.B.S. In the First Decade of National Broadcasting," in *N.B.C: America's Network*, ed. Michele Hilmes and Michael Henry (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), 28.

³⁹ Hilmes, "Introduction to Part One: Broadcasting Begins, 1919 — 38," 5.

⁴⁰ The '700 islands' mantra is mainly marketing speak, as only slightly over 30 islands have significant populations.

⁴¹ More will be said of the Bahamian economy in the following chapter.

Islands, and vice versa, it was necessary to use the 'mailboat' which might take several days to get to its intended destination.⁴²

Itself on the periphery of the British Empire, Nassau acted as the center hub for the islands of the Bahamas and often times the Out Islands became just as peripheral to Nassau's comparatively metropolitan concerns. For example, by the early 1920s Nassau was contemplating ways to deal with the speeding and reckless driving of automobiles while most Out Islands hardly possessed anything that even resembled a road. Similarly, although a telephone system extended fairly widely in Nassau during the 1920s, this technology barely existed even in the major settlements, the equivalent of small villages, on the major Out Islands.⁴³

It was quickly recognized that wireless radio technology had the potential to link the loose island chain more closely together. Newspaper reports indicate that there were radio receivers in the Bahamas as early as 1922 but since the islands had no station of their own, listeners had to tune in to stations in the United States, Canada, Cuba and Britain.⁴⁴ Despite this caveat and perhaps desiring to follow the British example of the state-sponsored BBC to the letter, the Bahamian government imposed license fees on radio set owners. Needless to say this was not a popular measure and by most reports this fee was scarcely enforced. By 1925, rudimentary telegraph stations were installed on five islands other than Nassau. These few stations quickly became important to Out Island residents and provided

⁴² Storr, "Development of Broadcasting in the Bahamas". 182 Colin A. Hughes, *Race and Politics in the Bahamas* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1981), 189. Michael Craton and Gail Saunders, *Islanders in the Stream: A History of the Bahamian People. Volume Two: From the Ending of Slavery to the Twenty-First Century*, vol. 2 (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1992), 243.

⁴³ Craton and Saunders, *Islanders Vol. Two*, 242.

⁴⁴ Yvette Stuart, "The Road from Monopoly to Duopoly: Broadcasting in the Bahamas, 1930—2000" (PhD diss., The University of Alabama, 2003), 22.

invaluable information, such as storm warnings, weather and news reports from Nassau. However, due to unfavorable atmospheric conditions and the Bahama island's limestone composition — itself a poor conductor of transmission signals — service was erratic and prompted constant complaints.⁴⁵

Experiments with Radio

The first radio station in the Bahamas was set up as a short-lived experiment operated by an Englishman visiting from Florida in December 1930.⁴⁶ It proved to be quite popular with local Bahamians and many would come to the broadcast site just to watch the operators man the equipment. The programs on the station ranged from prerecorded music and concerts from prominent local artists to live coverage of rugby games. These were heard clearly on nearby islands.⁴⁷ This station, given the call letters V1-BAX, was in operation until March of the following year and was replaced in December 1931 by another experimental station, this time run by the government of the Bahamas.

By 1930 there were over nineteen point-to-point telegraph stations in the Bahamas but this network had become too expensive for the government to maintain as a public service. It was later suggested that a powerful centrally-located radio station could meet the communication needs of the Out Islands for less money than was presently being expended on the existing telegraph system. The call for a full Bahamian station also went out from the local population whose appetite had been whetted by regular sampling of the programming spilling across from stations in the United States.⁴⁸

⁴⁵ Storr, "Development of Broadcasting in the Bahamas", 70 - 71, 147.

⁴⁶ Stuart, "From Monopoly to Duopoly", 16.

⁴⁷ Storr, "Development of Broadcasting in the Bahamas", 155.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 152.

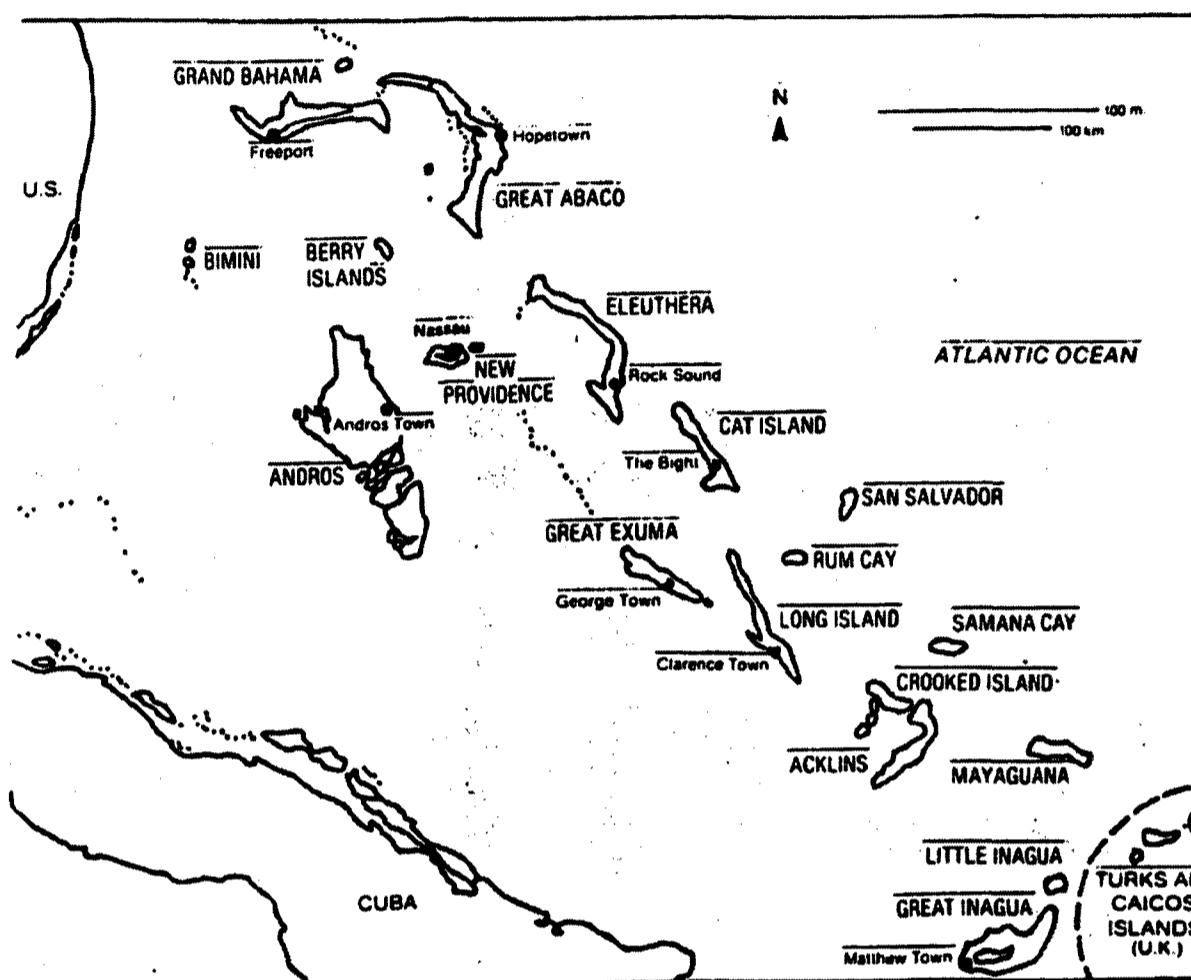


Figure 1. Map of the Bahamas. The island of New Providence surrounded by its satellite Out Islands.

Zephyr Nassau Sunshine Calling

These pressures were soon heeded and Nassau's first radio station began broadcasting in May 11, 1937. The station was dubbed ZNS, for Zephyr Nassau Sunshine; the meaning for the call letters was reportedly conceived by the Colonial Secretary and the Assistant Superintendent of Telegraphs at a party.⁴⁹ The station was funded by government subsidy and radio owners were still being taxed for the privilege of owning a receiver. The

station was thus managed along the lines of the BBC model; advertising was not permitted unless it promoted the colony as a whole for the purposes of tourism.

One of the initial aims of ZNS was to provide a service to Out Island residents and a sense of colonial cohesiveness, and this focus succeeded. The most popular program for Out Islanders was called "Community Announcements" which were a series of news bulletins that gave vital shipping and personal announcements out over the air. Technicians were sent into the rural settlements to set up community radios in schoolrooms and assembly halls or other public spaces to provide service for residents who could not afford their own sets. ZNS quickly became a vital institution in these areas and was a vital link between them and the outside world.⁵⁰

In Nassau, however, the station's prosaic programming was generally despised and very few radio owners in the capital listened to it. The main complaints were the abysmal quality of local programs and the continual interference from other nearby stations in Florida and Cuba who used the same frequencies.⁵¹ These complaints persisted for well over a decade. Interference from adjacent stations was finally resolved in 1946 when the Bahamas joined the North American Regional Broadcasting Agreement (NARBA) and gained frequency protection, but this membership meant that ZNS had to increase the number of hours it broadcast to maintain this status.

The problem of programming was not so easily fixed. In a report on broadcasting in the Bahamas by Ernest Morgan, Program Manager of the Canadian Broadcasting

⁴⁹ Ibid., 163.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 178.

⁵¹ Ibid., 195.

Corporation (CBC) who had come to the colony in 1947 to train Bahamian staff to better manage the station, the Canadian noted:

I am assured that no one listens to ZNS; that the powerful American stations, particularly those situated in Miami, are heard so clearly and that their bill of fare is so exciting, that no one outside the Out Island communities could possibly be naive enough to listen to ZNS.⁵²

A part of the problem was that the station was chronically underfunded, as those who needed it most were on the Out Islands and the Nassau-centric Bahamian government could not be persuaded of its importance.

The issue of funding was resolved in 1950 when the station began accepting advertisements and thus became a commercial operation.⁵³ This change did not come without some resistance as many did not want to see ZNS follow the "American 'soap opera'" path but instead maintain its British inspired insistence on public service. With this provision, the transition went ahead and proved to be a boon for the station. The programming hours increased from nine to fifteen hours a day and within three years the station went from a liability to a healthy source of profit for the colony.⁵⁴ While it was a pariah in the capital, ZNS radio ultimately served to bind the islands closer to its metropolitan core, creating a sense of unity out of the isolated enclaves that had previously existed. With its funding resolved, the quest for local programming that could appeal to a majority of Bahamians continued.

⁵² Ibid., 213.

⁵³ Stuart, "From Monopoly to Duopoly", 16.

⁵⁴ Storr, "Development of Broadcasting in the Bahamas", 228.

Political Manipulations

With the nationalist nature of most state-sponsored radio systems, ruling parties generally had little trouble securing radio time. In the US commercial radio system, such concessions were not necessarily a given. Although President Woodrow Wilson made an experimental broadcast as early as 1919, it took US politicians more than a decade to fully grasp the implications of radio as a political tool. While all saw the populist potential of radio to revolutionize politics and the nature of campaigning, few recognized that they needed a new strategy to deal effectively with the medium. As radio scholar Bruce Lenthall observes, "many politicians tried unsuccessfully to take their formal political speeches to the air."⁵⁵ Radio demanded a more intimate mode of address than most politicians were accustomed to.

The need for this intimacy was seen early on by advertising and marketing pioneers. For example, in 1923 Eugene McDonald, president of the newly formed National Association of Broadcasters (NAB), sent a letter to President Calvin Coolidge a few months after the sudden death of William Harding had ushered him into office.⁵⁶ McDonald argued that due to the vast size of America, few people ever got to meet the president in person and thus the office and the government he represented were remote and abstract things to most. McDonald recommended that Coolidge use radio as a way to draw "close to the American fireside" as it would enable him to "speak... to [his] people as they sit in their

⁵⁵ Bruce Lenthall, *Radio's America: The Great Depression and the Rise of Modern Mass Culture* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 88.

⁵⁶ Craig, *Fireside Politics*, 141, 2.

living room." He believed that this virtual, informal presence would familiarize the electorate with the president and make him "mean more to them than now."⁵⁷

While Coolidge resisted making specialized radio addresses, he did use the medium substantially during his presidency. He was therefore the first US president to use radio as a means of communication and political advancement, although he did not use it to gain broad public support for his policies, nor did he tailor his speeches specifically to radio listeners. His broadcasts were, instead, always speeches to live audiences, using radio as a mere extension of the audience, rather than a substitute for the meeting hall.⁵⁸

The following US president, Herbert Hoover, continued and extended his predecessor's use of radio, and he more than doubled Coolidge's broadcast totals. Quantity in this case, however, did not translate to quality, as Hoover is widely regarded as having been a poor radio speaker. He continued Coolidge's habit of broadcasting mainly live speeches and was not able to adapt his speaking style to the mass audience of radio. He used his large vocabulary to his disadvantage and his complicated arguments "simultaneously demanded and discouraged close listening and attention."⁵⁹ An additional knock against him was that his long dull speeches overran their allotted time, thereby cutting into the primetime schedule and interrupting his audience's favorite radio shows.

McDonald's suggestion to enter the American living room was finally taken up some 10 years later by Hoover's successor, the charismatic Franklin Delano Roosevelt (FDR),

⁵⁷ Ibid., 142.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 150.

who is widely hailed as the first US “radio president.”⁶⁰ Radio network broadcasting had matured greatly since its inception and FDR understood the intimate connections that radio could allow, and perhaps also recognized that the medium allowed him the mobility that his disabled legs denied. The air waves also allowed him to sidestep a largely antagonistic press and the alterations that editors, journalists and reporters were accused of placing on his message.⁶¹

An inherently gifted public speaker, Roosevelt crafted his talks specifically for the mass radio audience. He approached his addresses seriously, practicing ceaselessly, rewording passages until he felt that the language was as simple and effective as possible. His press secretary reported that FDR would give his speeches as if he were speaking directly to “a few people around his fireside.” With this style of intimate address, Roosevelt was able to make listeners imagine that he was talking directly to them, creating a “personal connection” between himself and his listeners.⁶² His flagship brand of radio discourse was therefore dubbed the ‘fireside chat,’ and not all of his radio addresses were thus labeled; of the fifty-five speeches broadcast over national networks in his first year in office, only four were considered ‘chats.’⁶³ Careful of overexposure, FDR guarded his radio voice carefully and built anticipation for each of his special-edition ‘chats.’ The strategy

⁶⁰ Historian Douglas Craig gives the moniker of ‘first radio president’ to Hoover instead. He argues that the designation is given to FDR through ahistoric means, namely by “comparing Hoover’s radio skills to those of his successor.” See *Ibid.*

⁶¹ Jason Loviglio, *Radio’s Intimate Public: Network Broadcasting and Mass-Mediated Democracy* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005), 1-3. Brown, *Manipulating the Ether*, 28.

⁶² Lenthall, *Radio’s America*, 88, 9.

⁶³ Loviglio, *Radio’s Intimate Public*, 6, 7.

worked and Roosevelt quickly became a radio celebrity and his 'chats' drew some of the largest audiences to ever listen to a radio broadcast.⁶⁴

The power of the 'fireside' was illustrated right at the start. Roosevelt had been in office for only one week and the nation was deep in the grips of the Depression and this economic disaster was compounded by an extended banking crisis. Banks were rapidly going insolvent thereby provoking a liquidity crisis and people tried to preserve their life savings by withdrawing money, thus deepening the spiral. Using the emergency powers granted him by Congress, Roosevelt called a four-day banking holiday, during which he broadcast his first fireside chat, on March 12, 1933, explaining the crisis and his administration's plans to remedy it in layman's terms, instructing the populace that their money was safer in the banks than at home under the mattress.⁶⁵ The response to the 'chat' was overwhelming; after the banking holiday Americans lined up at the banks ready to make deposits to comply with Roosevelt's request.⁶⁶ The crisis was thereby averted; the power of both radio and Roosevelt were affirmed.

Despite the image in the popular imagination that FDR entered into the homes of millions of US citizens during his chats, we must remember that this impression was an illusion. The term 'fireside chat' is itself misleading because they "neither took place around a shared fireside nor involved the two-way exchange of a chat."⁶⁷ Regardless of the warmth of his tone, Roosevelt was talking *to* the citizens of the US and not *with* them. The reasons for this illusion of intimacy are multiple. Comparing radio to the later invention of

⁶⁴ Craig, *Fireside Politics*, 156.

⁶⁵ Loviglio, *Radio's Intimate Public*, 8-13.

⁶⁶ Brown, *Manipulating the Ether*, 65.

⁶⁷ Lenthall, *Radio's America*, 112.

television, scholar Tim Crook argues that "radio is a more psychological medium."⁶⁸ Agreeing with this assessment, cultural historian Wolfgang Schivelbusch goes further, saying that since they received "in effect, only half the reality, the audience would supply the other half according to their own wishes, fantasies and convictions." He goes on to compare radio to the other mass media of the era, silent film, saying:

The wireless was the acoustic equivalent of film, the first great dream factory and media intoxicant that gave audiences the illusion of being at the center of things. Audiences perceived the solitude of the darkened cinema and the cozy spot in front of the radio not as isolation but as involvement.⁶⁹

This passive form of involvement began a process of reducing the democratic citizen to a spectator, a process that was further accelerated by the introduction of television. In the intimate comfort of their own homes, US citizens became more informed about the processes and personalities of government, and, for the most part, equated information with involvement.⁷⁰

At the same time, this process further empowered the central establishment, especially the presidential executive branch in its ability to manipulate the citizenry through the delivery of carefully groomed and pitched messages. Ironically this form of radio democracy was simultaneously viewed by the populace as being better and more democratic, and in this light, the voice of the president was re-imagined as the sound of their own will — radio was thus a two-edged medium. Searching for personal meaning and a voice in the impersonal bureaucracy of mass society, the soothing tones of FDR coming

⁶⁸ Crook, *Radio Drama*, 105.

⁶⁹ Wolfgang Schivelbusch, *Three New Deals: Reflections on Roosevelt's America, Mussolini's Italy, and Hitler's Germany, 1933-1939*, trans. Jefferson Chase, 1st ed. (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2006), 55.

⁷⁰ Lenthall, *Radio's America*, 98.

over living room radio sets was interpreted by the public as the presence of a reassuring friend telling them that they did, in fact, matter.

Enlightenment & Propaganda

Roosevelt was not the only leader of the era to recognize the political usefulness of radio, and he belongs to a much wider trend during the 1930s in which many world leaders became "constantly more aware of the ether as an essential element of power over men's minds."⁷¹ Historian Robert J. Brown suggests that

radio was also a prominent tool of the European democracies. During the 1930s both the prime minister of Great Britain and the premier of France frequently addressed their people through the airwaves, with varying degrees of success.⁷² This 'power over men's minds' was more fully exploited in the German and Italian dictatorships of the era than in FDR's United States and while modern scholars like Wolfgang Schivelbusch rightly point to the similarities between the New Deal and the European despots, they take pains to stress that "to compare is not to equate."⁷³

The National Socialists (Nazis) of Germany clearly understood that radio was an effective means of persuasion, or in the words of Nazi Enlightenment and Propaganda minister Dr. Josef Goebbels, "the most modern and the most important instrument of mass influence."⁷⁴ Brown even suggests that "no discussion about Hitler's spectacular rise to power is complete without mentioning the critical role of radio."⁷⁵ This is despite

⁷¹ Thomas Burnham Grandin, *The Political Use of the Radio*, History of Broadcasting, Radio to Television (New York: Arno Press, 1939; reprint, 1971), 81. Quoted in Brown, *Manipulating the Ether*, 12.

⁷² Brown, *Manipulating the Ether*, 13.

⁷³ Schivelbusch, *Three New Deals: Reflections on Roosevelt's America, Mussolini's Italy, and Hitler's Germany, 1933-1939*, 15.

⁷⁴ Lisa Pine, *Hitler's 'National Community': Society and Culture in Nazi Germany* (London: Hodder Arnold, 2007), 170. See also William L. Shirer and John Keegan, "*This Is Berlin*": *Radio Broadcasts from Nazi Germany* (Woodstock, N.Y.: Overlook Press, 1999), x.

⁷⁵ Brown, *Manipulating the Ether*, 12.

continental Europe's technological backwardness in developing a mass radio culture like that of the US, illustrated by the fact that in 1932, 80 percent of the world's 20 million wireless receivers were in the United States.⁷⁶

Once in power, the Nazis had to *create* the mass radio audience that their propaganda demanded. To do so they first unified all of German radio into the Reich Radio Company and all previously independent stations became branches of this state controlled company.⁷⁷ Second, they commissioned manufacturers to produce two new types of cheap radios for mass distribution. Neither of these sets were powerful enough to receive foreign radio broadcasts, thus inherently emphasizing the national nature of their radio system and also ensuring a somewhat captive audience.⁷⁸ Their strategy succeeded and by 1935 Hitler's speeches were heard by a radio audience of 56 million people. In 1936, Goebbels boldly declared that

We National Socialist propagandists have transformed the radio into the sharpest of propaganda weapons. Before we took power, the German radio was run by amateurs. What we have now made of it is a tool for ideological education and a top class political force.⁷⁹

This 'tool' was continually sharpened, and by 1939, seventy percent of German homes had a radio, which was three times as many as in 1932.

Interestingly, one of the main targets of this Nazi propaganda was women. Following the broadcasting example of their direct political predecessors from the Weimar era, the Nazis "used stories, dialogues, chat shows and conversations in order to disseminate their ideology" to this demographic, and in a fashion similar to the impulse that inspired the

⁷⁶ Schivelbusch, *Three New Deals: Reflections on Roosevelt's America, Mussolini's Italy, and Hitler's Germany, 1933-1939*, 66.

⁷⁷ Pine, *Hitler's 'National Community': Society and Culture in Nazi Germany*, 170.

⁷⁸ Listening to foreign radio was explicitly forbidden in 1939. See *Ibid.*

'fireside chat,' they brought the voices of political leaders into the home. Part of the reason behind this focus was their desire to make Germany economically self-sufficient, and women, described as 'trustees of the nation's wealth,' were seen as crucial to this objective. A large number of radio programs, on both national and regional radio, were therefore targeted at German women and housewives in an attempt to influence their shopping habits.⁸⁰ The power of radio as a medium of social engineering was becoming evident.

Corporate Messages

In the United States, the airwaves were also used to educate, but programming was mainly designed to "foster consumer values." Radio historian Bruce Lenthall, writes that

Broadcasting spread the gospel of consumerism, dramatically reinforcing ideals that had been rising in the United States since the late 1800s. You are what you buy, the good life exists in goods, people are primarily purchasers, advertisements suggested.⁸¹

And although the two main US networks, NBC and CBS, are generally given much of the credit for innovating many forms of radio programming, like the "variety show, the serial drama, the quiz show, the news commentary, the homemaker talk, the public affairs program, and many more," the actual development of these programs was handled by the advertising agencies and their sponsors. Since the networks sold time to sponsors in fifteen minute or half hour chunks, it was up to sponsors to find something that would attract listeners to their message. In this way the networks functioned more like gate keepers, in charge mainly of the radio schedule, but not its content; this division of labor remained until the mid-1950s. Radio historian Michelle Hilmes says that although the networks may

⁷⁹ Quoted in Ibid., 171.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 171, 2.

⁸¹ Lenthall, *Radio's America*, 63.

have promised the public to develop “quality national programs” for the public, it was really the sponsors who “took that promise and ran with it, all the way to the bank.”⁸²

Perhaps the main challenge for corporate advertisers was how to continually improve and enhance radio’s already demonstrated ability to sell. Continued exposure to advertising messages sold products, thus advertisers wanted to ensure as many exposures as possible to their target demographic on a regular and predictable basis. To succeed in their goals, corporations not only needed to create programs that people wanted to listen to, but also programs that kept the audience returning again and again. In retrospect it seems obvious that a continuing serial was the ideal solution to this problem but, before NBC began airing the *Amos ‘n’ Andy* show in 1929, advertisers and program directors alike believed that people would not be interested in organizing their schedules around a continuing and never-ending story.⁸³ Describing serials, soap opera scholar Robert Allen points out that not only are they “internally self-promoting — each episode is implicitly an advertisement for the next — [they] also advertise and promote the medium through which they are delivered to consumers.”⁸⁴ Thus, by captivating audiences with a never-ending narrative, consumers became habitual radio serial listeners and thus regular receptors of the corporate messages that came along with the programs as advertisements.

⁸² Hilmes, “N.B.C. And the Network Idea.” 18

⁸³ Raymond William Stedman, *The Serials: Suspense and Drama by Installment*, U.S.A. 2nd ed. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1977), 230. Pointing to the serialized novels from the 19th Century to the comic strip and the film serial in the early 20th, Roger Hagedorn observes that when a new “medium needs an audience, it turns to serials.” See Roger Hagedorn, “Doubtless to Be Continued: A Brief History of Serial Narrative,” in *To Be Continued...: Soap Operas around the World*, ed. Robert Clyde Allen (London; New York: Routledge, 1995). What was different with the advent of radio serials was that the schedule for consumption was, for the first time, completely out of the public’s hands.

⁸⁴ Robert Clyde Allen, *To Be Continued...: Soap Operas around the World* (London; New York: Routledge, 1995), 12.

Amos 'n' Andy was a serial adventure / comedy that featured the exploits of two rural Southern blacks in urban Chicago, ironically written and performed by two white actors. Episodes were fifteen minutes long and ran six days a week during the early evening hours. At its peak the show had the "highest ratings ever recorded in the history of American broadcasting" with an estimated audience of forty million listeners every week.⁸⁵ The success of the *Amos 'n' Andy* show also did wonders for sales of Pepsodent toothpaste, the show's sponsor, leading *Fortune* magazine to recommend that other advertisers "go out and get [their own] popular serial."⁸⁶ The show's popularity faded quickly, however, and by 1932, it had fallen from its top spot in the ratings and a few years later it fell out of the top ten entirely. *Amos 'n' Andy* may have disappeared but the serial format that it pioneered continued. For the rest of the decade the serial shared the prime-time airwaves and the top rankings with the comedy/variety format, programs that relied on star-power to attract audiences and were hosted by the likes of Eddie Cantor, Jack Benny, Ed Wynn, Edgar Bergen, Fred Allen and George Burns and Gracie Allen — of course, all sponsored by various vestiges of the US corporate world.⁸⁷

Despite austere conditions in the depression-era US, many poor people would prefer to lose "ice boxes or beds" before giving up their radios and would spend a considerable part of their meager income to purchase one. The reason for such loyalty was clear — the radio offered endless free entertainment after the initial investment and in the depression era, people had lots of unplanned free time.⁸⁸ Historian Bruce Lenthal argues that as

⁸⁵ Allen, *Speaking of Soap Operas*, 104., Stedman, *The Serials*, 230., Socolow, "Always in Friendly Competition," 31.

⁸⁶ Allen, *Speaking of Soap Operas*, 105., Socolow, "Always in Friendly Competition," 32.

⁸⁷ Lenthal, *Radio's America*, 62. Hilmes, "N.B.C. And the Network Idea," 19.

⁸⁸ Brown, *Manipulating the Ether*, 3.

traditional communities passed away and were replaced by immense and impersonal corporate structures the intimate imaginative space offered by radio bound people to a national community, however ethereal. He says that listeners "conceived of an abstract social environment in concrete terms, experiencing the voices on the air as friends and integrating those friends into their daily lives."⁸⁹ *Amos 'n' Andy* was important because it made Americans realize "just how significant a role a program could play in listeners' lives."⁹⁰ Therefore, just as Roosevelt's 'fireside chats' built hope in the minds of Americans, the early dramatic serials offered a pleasant escape from the anxieties of depression life.

The Daytime Serial

While the prime time evening hours were being ceded to network radio entertainment, little was known about the potential of the daytime US radio audience in 1930. It was assumed that women were in the home, but it was not known if they listened to radio while they were there. Neither was it known what types of programs would appeal to them. The existing ratings systems were inaccurate and unreliable, and because of the paucity of data, networks and local stations set their advertising rates at half that charged for the prime-time evening hours. That a daytime audience existed and that these people purchased goods was becoming apparent by 1932. The US national grocery chain A&P sponsored several morning shows aimed at women in the home that "featured cooking tips, food preparation ideas, and sample menus tied to products sold at [its] grocery stores." To

⁸⁹ Lenthall, *Radio's America*, 67, 8.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 61.

test the efficacy of these radio advertisements, certain products were promoted exclusively on radio and sales for those items, in some cases, increased 173 percent.⁹¹

Proctor and Gamble (P&G), with their many lines of soaps, cosmetics and laundry detergents, was another large corporation that similarly targeted women. Like A&P it realized that although its desired audience was homebound, that segment controlled a disproportionately large percentage of family expenditure and were the primary purchasers of its products. Between 1930 and 1932, the daytime programs P&G sponsored were of the self-help and advice variety. These advice programs were part of a much larger programming trend that reflected the severe economic and social pressures many US families felt that were brought on by the Great Depression. Anxieties were exploited by advertisers eager to tie 'solutions' to the products they peddled.⁹²

The early focus on self-help and advice programming gradually faded as marketing surveys revealed that "women at home during the day preferred to be entertained, rather than instructed, by the radio." In line with these findings, P&G began experimenting with daytime dramatic programs for women starting in 1932. The goal was for their entertainment to create positive associations between the consumer and their products, leading to increased sales.⁹³ The experiments worked, and in 1933 they introduced US housewives to *Ma Perkins*, the story of a "self-reliant widow whose family and friends were constantly in need of her advice." *Ma Perkins* successfully merged the self-help genre with entertainment, pioneering the open serial format. The program was a coup for P&G and many other companies followed their lead and began producing their own daytime

⁹¹ Allen, *Speaking of Soap Operas*, 106.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 109, 10.

dramatic serials for women. By 1940, the US airwaves were so saturated with serials that they constituted over 90 percent of all daytime sponsored hours.⁹⁴ Serials had thus become the base of the daytime radio network schedule and were efficient profit-makers for both the sponsors and the networks.⁹⁵

Defining the Form

It was not until the late 1930s that daytime dramatic serials received the pejorative moniker of "soap opera." The label carries with it a great deal of negative historical baggage, to the point that many regular viewers will today not publicly admit watching them. Additionally, the term has become a generic brand name for any kind of melodrama.⁹⁶ Media studies scholar Dorothy Hobson points out that a reason for the seeming confusion over what a soap opera is is that the object of study has not been a static target but has continually changed to maintain relevance to its target audience. Once strictly the domain of the daytime, the narrative techniques of the soap have been appropriated by primetime television and popular shows starting in the 80s, like *Dallas* and *Dynasty*, are also commonly referred to as 'soap operas.' Additionally, since the genre has been adapted by numerous countries all over the world, from Mexico to Russia to China, the job of defining a soap has become harder still.⁹⁷ So what exactly are soap operas? Although scholars have yet to agree on a standard definition for soap opera, it is still possible to deduce a few important differentiators of the genre.

⁹³ Ibid., 115.

⁹⁴ Hagedorn, "A Brief History of Serial Narrative," 35, 6.

⁹⁵ Allen, *Speaking of Soap Operas*, 120, 1.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 118.

⁹⁷ Dorothy Hobson, *Soap Opera* (Cambridge, UK: Polity, 2003), xiii.

First, it is helpful to take a closer look at the term soap opera itself. The 'soap' in soap opera makes an obvious reference to the advertisers and producers — often one and the same — of the day time dramatic serials: the household product manufacturers, mainly those that produce soaps and detergents. This keeps to the fore the economic imperatives that the genre was designed to serve. A quick glance at popular 1940 daytime dramatic serials and their respective sponsors bears this point out:

Ma Perkins (Oxydol), *The Story of Mary Marlin* (Ivory Soap), *The O'Neils* (also Ivory), *Pepper Young's Family* (Camay Soap), *Stella Dallas* (Phillips), *Vic and Sade* (Crisco), and *The Guiding Light* (White Naptha).⁹⁸

'Opera' is an obvious, yet ironic reference to the most "elite of narrative forms," which like soap operas tends to accentuate the emotional.⁹⁹ It should be noted, though, that opera has a far broader class appeal in Europe than it does in the US.

Soap scholar Robert C. Allen argues that critics have denied the soap opera currency as 'art' in aesthetic discourse partly because it targets women — this was seen as a clear negative in the audience research of the 1940s — and partly because of its explicit commercial orientation.¹⁰⁰ Allen observes that

the television critic writing in magazines and newspapers has shown about as much interest in writing about soap operas as the restaurant critic has in writing about McDonald's — and for much the same reason: they are both regarded as 'junk.'¹⁰¹

Allen describes the soap opera as a form of mass-produced entertainment that has a purely economic *raison d'être* which, of course, is not unlike any other mass-produced form of entertainment, whether a novel, or a movie, that exists as a vehicle to make profit for its

⁹⁸ Hilmes, "N.B.C. And the Network Idea," 19.

⁹⁹ Allen, *Speaking of Soap Operas*, 8, 9.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 91. Robert Clyde Allen, "Introduction," in *To Be Continued...: Soap Operas around the World*, ed. Robert Clyde Allen (London; New York: Routledge, 1995), 3 - 5.

¹⁰¹ Allen, "Introduction," 5.

producers.¹⁰² In a private radio system where there is no state tax on the ownership of a radio, advertising is necessary to generate revenue. The introduction of advertising makes commercial radio (and later television) a three-way market.¹⁰³ This means that the advertiser pays the network a fee to gain access to the audience consuming radio programming. The audience is thus commodified as a product to be sold to the advertiser and the ratings points — the quantifiable size of the audience — determines the price that the advertiser pays.¹⁰⁴

The soap opera, then, reflects the outcome of a careful segmentation of listener sensibilities and desires. For in the soap opera

advertisers and broadcasters have found the ideal vehicle for the reinforcement of advertising impressions and the best means yet devised for assuring regular viewing.¹⁰⁵

We should remember that in return for its commodification the audience is able to consume entertainment that it clearly enjoys. This enjoyment can be measured in terms of soap opera longevity. Allen puts it this way: "for a prime-time series to last ten years is considered extraordinary, but for a soap opera, it is the norm."¹⁰⁶ Take, for example, the recently cancelled soap opera, *The Guiding Light*, which was one of the few radio soaps to successfully make the transition to television and was in nearly continuous production since 1937. It recently ended its run in 2009 after 72 seasons making it the longest story ever told.¹⁰⁷ Similarly, *The Archers*, a radio soap opera on the BBC in Britain has been in

¹⁰² Allen, *Speaking of Soap Operas*, 45.

¹⁰³ These models are also called three-party markets or two-sided markets.

¹⁰⁴ Chris Anderson, *Free: The Past and Future of a Radical Price* (New York: Hyperion, 2009), 24, 5.

¹⁰⁵ Allen, *Speaking of Soap Operas*, 47.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Michael James Intintoli, *Taking Soaps Seriously: The World of Guiding Light* (New York: Praeger, 1984), 34.

continuous production since 1951.¹⁰⁸ No other genre of programming inspires this kind of loyalty.

Critics of the soap opera have long wondered why fans of the genre are so loyal. Much of their critique comes from the seeming redundancy of a typical episode. Additionally they find that the pace of a soap can be glacially slow, especially when compared with other forms of narrative — plots can take weeks or months to unfold, and plot information is repeated between episodes and even within the same episode. We can analyze this repetition in several ways: first it can be said that this narrative technique reflects the rhythms of real life; and second, repeating information keeps irregular viewers updated on plot developments.

Going even further, and borrowing from structural linguistics, Allen explains the seemingly repetitive structure of the soap opera narrative as the productive tension between two axes — the syntagmatic (combinatory) and the paradigmatic (associative) axis. Unlike a novel or a film that due to time or page constraints must focus on one person or a small group of characters, a soap opera can have up to forty regularly recurring characters. Therefore if the soap opera is ‘about’ anything, it is about its *community* of characters and their relationships to one another, and these interconnections have taken years, even decades to unfold. This interconnected web of character relationships is the paradigmatic axis of the soap opera and it is a dimension that can only be grasped by regular viewers. While very little may happen syntagmatically, (actual events) from episode to episode in a soap opera, seemingly insignificant events within an episode when

¹⁰⁸ Lyn Thomas, *Fans, Feminisms, and 'Quality' Media*, Media, Education and Culture. (London; New York: Routledge, 2002), 4.

understood paradigmatically (in the context of the community of characters) can have profound significance.¹⁰⁹ Allen describes it like this:

One character overhears someone telling someone else, who then tells another character, who telephones yet another with the news, etc., etc. This reiteration does nothing to advance the plot, and the uninitiated viewer might well regard it as redundant. However, to the experienced viewer, who tells whom is just as important as what is being related: each retelling affects relations among the community of characters.¹¹⁰

This line of argument would seem to forever lift the soap opera above the attacks of casual critics who can now only claim to be properly initiated after many years of viewing.

Soap Opera as Teacher

The move of the soap opera from entertainment to educational vehicle is not clearly defined in the literature, and a direct cause to effect telemetry is perhaps not possible to identify. A few events, however, seem to elucidate this gradual evolution. By the early 1940s there was already wide-spread fear that radio could be used as an "effective instrument of mass persuasion and propaganda," and that it could "directly influence behavior and attitudes" especially of the "more susceptible members of the audience." A 1942 speech by New York psychiatrist Louis Berg did not help the matter. He stated that soap operas caused an assortment of "emotional and physical disturbances" for regular listeners. It was later revealed that his findings were merely his subjective conclusion after he had spent a brief period listening to soap operas, but his views had already gained vast media circulation as scientific fact. Actual scientific studies conducted throughout the decade tended to agree with Berg, despite the fact that these same studies collected overwhelming evidence to the contrary. These 'studies' were then used to argue that the

¹⁰⁹ Allen, *Speaking of Soap Operas*, 69 - 75.

¹¹⁰ Allen, "Introduction," 20.

soap opera phenomenon fed off some deficiency in its mainly female audience. Thus, the typical soap opera listener was constructed as

an intellectually and imaginatively impoverished 'lower-class housewife' whose interests extended only as far as her own front door and whose life of mindless tedium was relieved only by her daily immersion into a fantasy soap world which she frequently mistook for reality.¹¹¹

It is ironic, and perhaps not surprising, that this image of the soap opera audience was maintained by those on both sides of the soap debate since it was in broadcaster's financial interests to present their radio listeners — and by extension the soap opera addict — as being malleable. Indeed, the entire financial model of advertiser-supported radio broadcasting would collapse if the radio audience was proven to be resistant to persuasion. Therefore, in radio industry communications and less critical scholarly work the manipulator / manipulated dichotomy became the less ominous and more palatable teacher / student relationship.¹¹² Soaps were thus a type of "remedial ethics and civics lesson[s] for the socially retarded."¹¹³ Unable to explain the enormous success of a form that they did not understand, critics envisioned the soap audience as an anomalous subgroup of listeners prone to delusion and easy to manipulate. While this perspective cast soap operas in a negative light, to the point where many fans to this day will not admit to watching them in public, it also simultaneously presented the form as an ideal conduit for disseminating information.

It was not long before this kind of thinking bore fruit in the form of soap opera story lines designed to 'educate' the audience. During World War II the US War Department

¹¹¹ Allen, *Speaking of Soap Operas*, 25.

¹¹² Ibid., 26.

¹¹³ Ibid.

wanted to use soap operas to temper racism towards blacks since it was believed that 'conservative whites' were 'amongst the most fervent addicts of soap operas.' An example of this sort of soap education occurred in the then popular radio serial, *The Romance of Helen Trent*, which introduced a storyline whereby a black doctor saved the titular character's life. This story, and Helen's gratitude to the doctor, was "stretched over several weeks, and gave rise to many discussions of black patriotism, blacks' qualities and capabilities, and their patience in the face of white persecution."¹¹⁴

On the other side of the Atlantic, the BBC also experimented with soap opera style education and in the 1950s introduced Britain to *The Archers*, a 15 minute radio soap opera that was "originally designed to educate farmers in post-war Britain." With the cancellation of *Guiding Light* in 2009, the *Archers* are now the longest running soap in current production. It is "less overtly didactic" than it was when it began almost sixty years ago, but it continues to play the role of educator, still exploring social issues and particularly those that affect rural communities.¹¹⁵

As the longevity of *the Archers* suggests, the soap opera form has taken firm root in the United Kingdom. The soaps produced there are not all aimed at 'educating' the public and, for the most part, they have mostly migrated to television. In the process of translating the soap opera for a different audience, the genre evolved to reflect British national identity. British soap scholar Dorothy Hobson describes this reflection of "British character and regional identity" as a "strength."¹¹⁶ This is seen in programs like *Coronation Street* and

¹¹⁴ Carol T. Williams, *It's Time for My Story: Soap Opera Sources, Structure, and Response*, Media and Society Series. (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 1992). 20-21

¹¹⁵ Thomas, *Fans, Feminisms, and 'Quality' Media*, 4.

¹¹⁶ Hobson, *Soap Opera*, xii.

East Enders that “celebrate the strength of the ordinary working man and woman.” The focus on so-called ‘kitchen-sink realism’ and the lower classes in these British soap operas is in stark contrast to its US soap antecedents which are only vaguely concerned with outside geography and focus mainly on the travails of the wealthy.

Since Britain actually has royalty, that there is no soap focusing on the upper classes, is at first glance, an odd point of departure.¹¹⁷ However, scholar Dorothy Anger argues that this absence can be explained as a difference in national ideologies, the difference between “the American Dream in which anyone can achieve anything and go anywhere, versus the British John Bull ethos of strength of character and loyalty to origins.” She argues that because of this ideological difference, American soaps focus on the “personal and the emotional” emphasizing their culture of individualism, while British serials “look outward to the community and the means of daily existence, such as work or the lack thereof.”¹¹⁸ Indeed, a defining trait of the soap opera form is that it is easily adaptable to different cultures and this is evident wherever it has spread.

The Novela and Pro-development

A persistent and extremely popular variant of the soap opera genre is the *novela*, which by all accounts began on Cuban radio in the late 1940s with hits like *El Derecho de Nace*.¹¹⁹ Even though episodes in a *novela* are broadcast with frequency similar to US soap opera, for example, every weekday over the course of a year or more, the *novela* differs significantly in that it has a final moment of narrative climax. In this respect, the *novela* is

¹¹⁷ Dorothy C. Anger, *Other Worlds: Society Seen through Soap Opera* (Peterborough, Ont.: Broadview Press, 1999), 120-2.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 115.

more like a very long mini-series than it is a never-ending soap opera and is thus closer in execution to the serialized novels that appeared in newspapers in the nineteenth century. After the 1959 Cuban Revolution, the *novela* was literally transported throughout Central and South America as many of the refugees that fled the country were also writers, directors and producers of Cuban *novelas*. They in turn developed and adapted the genre for audiences in Argentina, Peru and Colombia, and increased its use in Brazil, Venezuela and Mexico.¹²⁰ Similar to their US radio soap opera cousins the *novela* made the jump to television and became the *telenovela*, while still maintaining its immense popularity.

The 1969 Peruvian *telenovela* entitled *Simplemente María* (Just Simple Mary) has been credited with sparking what has become known as the education-entertainment (E-E or Enter-Educate) soap opera, although it itself was not designed to educate. This *telenovela* told the rags-to-riches story of María, a poor domestic servant who achieved wealth because of her hard work and self-taught skills as a seamstress.¹²¹ The program became a phenomenal success and, perhaps most intriguingly, encouraged many of its viewers to sign up for adult literacy classes, advance their education and begin small businesses like María had done.¹²² The positive effect that *Simplemente María* had on the Peruvian society caught the attention of Miguel Sabido, then vice-president of research for Televisa, Mexico's private national television network.

Sabido recognized that, while conventional soap operas presented values unconsciously and, therefore, sometimes incoherently, it would be possible to

¹¹⁹ This translates to *The Right to be Born*. See Marilyn J. Matelski, *Soap Operas Worldwide: Cultural and Serial Realities* (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland & Co., 1999), 27.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ William J. Brown, "Sociocultural Influences of Prodevelopment Soap Operas in the Third World," *Journal of Popular Film & Television* 19, no. 4 (1992).

¹²² Ibid.: 2.

create value-coherent serials that encouraged pro-social behavior such as adult literacy or family planning without being boring, pedantic, or moralistic.¹²³

Sabido developed a formalized theoretical framework based on *Maria* that could consciously exploit the social potential of the soap opera / *novela* format. Key to Sabido's strategy was his belief that the pro-development program should be just as entertaining as a normal soap opera. He created six *telenovelas* following these guidelines during the 70s and 80s, all with educational and developmental messages. All of his programs were popularly received and drew large audiences while also demonstrating measurable positive change in the population. These Education-Entertainment (E-E) programs have been defined as the "systematic embedding of pro-social educational messages in popular entertainment formats."¹²⁴ The pro-social and pro-development focus of these programs means that they attempt to provide information and guidance that intends to solve some perceived social, cultural, or economic problem.¹²⁵

Another key distinction of the soap opera is its narrative indeterminacy or lack of ultimate closure. How else can a single story unfold for over 70 years? Scholars generally agree that this is a key difference between true soap operas and other versions of the form. Take, for example, the very popular South American *Telenovela* serials that are heavily influenced by US soap operas and follow many of their narrative principles yet have a definite ending. Allen calls *telenovelas* 'closed' serials as opposed to the 'open' soap operas, like *Guiding Light*, that are designed to go on indefinitely.

¹²³ Esta de Fossard, *How to Write a Radio Serial Drama for Social Development: A Script Writer's Manual* (Baltimore: Center Publications, 1996), 3.

¹²⁴ Vibert Compton Cambridge, "Milestones in Communication in National Development," in *Global Communication*, ed. Yahya R. Kamalipour (Belmont, Calif.: Wadsworth Thomson Learning., 2002), 156.

Open serials lack a moment of final narrative closure that also prevents them from having ideological or moral closure. This works in the interest of a soap opera's commercial orientation by ensuring its appeal to the broadest possible audience. However this trait "probably makes the open serial a poor vehicle for the inculcation of particular values, but it does mean that open serial writers and producers can raise any number of potentially controversial and contentious social issues without having to make any ideological commitment to them."¹²⁶ Despite this drawback the soap opera has been seen as an excellent vehicle for imparting exactly these kinds of direct messages and has been co-opted by governments and organizations around the world for disseminating a host of so-called pro-development messages.

Jamaican Pro-development

Even before the tenets of pro-development were codified and theorized by Sabido for the Mexican *telenovela*, a similar movement was underway in Jamaica. This was influenced in part by the penetration that US and Australian radio soap operas had already made in the Caribbean.¹²⁷ Vibert Cambridge reports that by "1949 the imported soap opera from Australian and American sources had a prominent place in Caribbean entertainment programming." With the appetite for such programming stimulated, Jamaicans soon began creating their own soap operas, the first of which aired in 1959, just as Jamaica and other British West Indian colonies were contemplating federation. The program was entitled

¹²⁵ Vibert Compton Cambridge, "Mass Media Entertainment and Human Resources Development: Radio Serials in Jamaica from 1962" (Ph.D., Ohio University, 1989), 144. Brown, "Sociocultural Influences of Prodevelopment Soap Operas in the Third World."

¹²⁶ Allen, "Introduction," 21.

¹²⁷ The Australian productions of soaps like *Portia Faces Life* and *Dr. Paul* originally reproduced American scripts with Aussie actors, however when they eventually ran out of American scripts they had to extend the narrative themselves, at which point they became more thoroughly Australian.

Shadows of the Great House and was written by the daughter-in-law of the chief minister Norman Manley and seemed to address issues that “dominated the Jamaican psyche” at the time, namely issues of class, independence and the conflict between traditionalism and modernism.¹²⁸

The West Indies Federation eventually failed and Jamaica pursued its own independence from Great Britain, achieving it in 1962. The following year the government information services were reorganized to keep Jamaicans informed about the “plans, policies and ... thinking of Government about the major problems of the country and how [it] plan[ned] to solve these problems.”¹²⁹ Of specific importance to the government was its 1962-1970 Jamaican Development plan that included as priorities the modernization of agriculture and industry. This plan was informed by ‘Operation Bootstrap,’ a Puerto Rican project of the late 1940s that transformed that island’s economy from an agrarian base to one of industrial development. Radio drama was deemed to be an important tool in delivering this message of modernization to the Jamaican people.

The strategy was refined by Elaine Perkins, Acting Broadcasting Officer at the Jamaican Information Services (JIS), who had recently completed studies in drama production at the BBC. She was charged with creating programs that advanced aspects of the development plan, namely instructing Jamaicans about issues like proper health care, literacy and agriculture. Perkins’ activities culminated in the creation of *Life in Hopeful Village* in 1963, which was the first explicitly pro-development Jamaican radio soap opera. This program utilized credible locales, characters and authentic Jamaican creole to educate

¹²⁸ Cambridge, “Mass Media Entertainment”, 133, 4.

¹²⁹ Quoted in Ibid.

people in rural areas about literacy and modern farming techniques. It was enormously successful and lasted 12 years and launched an era of continuous radio serial production in Jamaica by which commercial soaps often co-existed with their pro-development brethren.¹³⁰

Results of Development Drama

But can soap operas really teach audiences anything? Or more precisely can they teach audiences the specific things that their producers intend? Soap opera scholar Dorothy Anger writing in her book *Other Worlds* questions the entire premise of the exercise:

We often speak as though the soaps, or any other form of media, have one monolithic, determinate message to impart. We have no reason to assume this, and every reason not to. Consider the intricacy of much smaller units of communication, for example words, and how they function in language: multifaceted to begin with, varying and flowing in sense with the smallest shift in context or nuance. Against this, a vehicle employing linguistic, visual, and auditory elements of meaning might well take on great complexity. What sort of message or messages is it that soaps supposedly convey?¹³¹

The premise of the pro-development soap opera is that it is possible to create a "value-coherent" whole, while Anger contends that such coherence in the multifaceted and inherently complex world of cultural production is virtually impossible. Her argument suggests that even the most coherent of soap operas will contain a multiplicity of messages that the audience can receive and many of these messages may in fact contradict each other.

Despite Anger's concerns, studies have shown that many of the intended messages from pro-development soaps have had the desired effect, or at least have had results that

¹³⁰ Ibid., 137, 8.

¹³¹ Anger, *Other Worlds: Society Seen through Soap Opera*, 106.

have satisfied their producers. Take, for example, Sabido's first pro-development soap opera, *Ven Conmigo*¹³² which was broadcast in 1975 - 6. Its goal was to increase adult literacy and during the program's first year, enrollment in adult literacy classes in Mexico increased by 600,000 people, or 63 percent. Similar results occurred in 1977 with another program called *Accompaname*,¹³³ designed to promote family planning. This *telenovela* resulted in an increase of 560,000 adopters of family planning practices.¹³⁴

Perhaps it is best to think of the pro-development soap opera in terms of advertising. The US soap opera that spawned it was designed, in fact optimized, to encourage habitual listening and viewing to give advertisers predictable schedules to expose a target audience to corporate messages. This feature of soap operas has obviously been retained in pro-development incarnations and fits well with the toolbox of the educator and social activist¹³⁵ wishing to reach the largest possible audience. Both the commercial and the pro-development soap opera are, at heart, conduits for advertising. The classic commercial soap contains two counter balancing textual systems, the first is of course the soap opera narrative, in all its resplendent 'incoherence,' and the second is the messages from sponsors that regularly interrupt the flow of the former in the form of 30 to 60 second spot ads.¹³⁶ In the pro-development soap opera, however, there is really only one textual system as the message of the sponsor is incorporated within the story itself, or, in other words, the show *itself* is the ad. This perhaps makes the pro-development soap the purest distillation yet of the market logic that created the soap opera in the first place.

¹³² Come With Me

¹³³ Come Along With Me

¹³⁴ Brown, "Sociocultural Influences of Prodevelopment Soap Operas in the Third World."

¹³⁵ Not to mention the kindred spirited propagandist.

¹³⁶ Allen, *Speaking of Soap Operas*, 153.

Soap Opera in the Bahamas

For its part, the Bahamian audience was long familiar with radio serials and soap operas, having had access to spillover signals from Florida since 1922 and were likely listening to the first radio soap operas when they were first carried over US network radio. By 1970, the national radio station, ZNS, featured at least two and a half hours of daily programming of Australian radio recycles of such soap operas as *Portia Faces Life*, *Dr. Paul* and the *Guiding Light*. US soaps had long since made the jump to television and Bahamian audiences had made the jump with them, creating an environment where TV soaps were being viewed while their radio ancestors were also being listened to. Radio penetration in the country was high — a population of 168,000 owned 100,000 radio receivers — and television was already past the stage of novelty.¹³⁷ All that was needed for adequate television reception was a tall antenna and a 'booster' to receive and amplify the American spillover signals and these had become a relatively common sight in New Providence. Despite the 'boosters,' though, television reception was still dependent on atmospheric conditions and many tales are told of adjusting antennae direction during a soap opera in an attempt to improve image quality on the days when the weather interfered with reception.¹³⁸ With such local appreciation of the soap opera genre, and a mass radio apparatus in place, the ground was well prepared for a local program in the soap opera style — in other words, the Bahamas was ready for *The Fergusons of Farm Road*.

¹³⁷ John A. Lent, *Third World Mass Media and Their Search for Modernity: The Case of Commonwealth Caribbean, 1717 — 1976* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1977), 236.

¹³⁸ Eddie Minnis, telephone interview by author, Nassau, Bahamas, July 28, 2009.

Chapter 2

Labor in Paradise: A Socio-economic History of the Bahamas 1640 — 1967

The typical colonial Caribbean economy was dominated by the plantation which entails the production of tropical agricultural staples, such as sugar and coffee, by coerced labor for export to and consumption by the colonizing country. Ian Strachan, Bahamian cultural critic and scholar, describes the plantation economy as one that is dominated by an institution, namely the plantation, which is

created by metropolitan capital to serve the requirements of metropolitan enterprise. It is a monopolizing institution: the plantation hoards all the best land and deploys it in the production of cash crops; the plantation also smothers forms of production that threaten to sap its potential labor supply, causing a monoculture wherever the plantation is in operation.¹

Historically, the Bahamas differs significantly from this pattern of economic production. Geographically isolated from the West Indies proper as an 'Atlantic Outpost,' the plantation was never successful in the Bahamas.² This is partly because the soils on these limestone islands are shallow and nutrient poor, and are quickly exhausted by agriculture. In addition, the scattered nature of the islands has made transportation and communication amongst them difficult. (See figure 1) The geography of the Bahamas has thus consistently worked against its agricultural exploitation.

Tourism, on the other hand, has been a profitable business in the Bahamas for over one hundred years, and mass tourism has continued uninterrupted as the number one industry for over fifty years and has made the Bahamas one of the most prosperous nations

¹ Ian Gregory Strachan, *Paradise and Plantation: Tourism and Culture in the Anglophone Caribbean* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2002), 6.

in the region. For an insignificant British colony that bordered on poverty for essentially its entire existence, this transformation represents a complete reversal of fortune.

To understand the importance of tourism to the Bahamian economy, it is imperative that we review its origins and the context in which it developed. Only by comprehending the magnitude of tourism's impact on the Bahamas can we understand the broader scope of Bahamian social development, such as the crucial achievement of representative government in the mid-twentieth century or the need for a program such as *The Fergusons of Farm Road* to maintain acceptable levels of courtesy in the tourist industry. This economic story is a tale with a tragic twist, for, as Strachan points out, "the irony of Bahamian economic history is that although Caribbean tourism is the offspring of the plantation economy, the plantation economy never flourished in the Bahamas until tourism."³

Early Bahamian Economy

After the decimation of the indigenous Taino by the Spanish successors of Columbus in the fifteenth century, the islands of the Bahamas remained virtually isolated and unpopulated until they were settled in the 1640s by companies of Bermudian Puritans who called themselves the Eleutherian Adventurers. They settled on the northern islands of the Bahamas, namely New Providence, Eleuthera, Harbour Island and Spanish Wells and duplicated strategies for survival that they had brought with them from Bermuda.

Historian Howard Johnson tells us that "as early as 1670, the pattern of economic activities

² Diane Gail Saunders, *Bahamian Society after Emancipation*, Rev. ed. (Kingston, Jamaica; Princeton, NJ: Ian Randle Publishers; Markus Wiener Publishers, 2003), 57.

³ Strachan, *Paradise and Plantation*, 94.

in the Bahamas diverged from that of most English Caribbean territories where the plantation of agricultural staples already predominated."⁴

Naturalist Mark Catesby, a visitor to the islands in 1725 - 6, described the economic activities of the early settlers as primarily extractive, describing the sparse soil of the islands as an impediment to agricultural production beyond simple subsistence. These settlers produced salt in several of the drier southern islands to trade with Jamaica and French Hispaniola. Catesby added that

They also supply Carolina with salt, turtle, oranges, lemons, etc. but the greater number of the Bahamians content themselves with fishing, striking of turtle, hunting guanas, cutting brasiletto wood, llathera bark, and that of wild cinnamon or winter's bark, for these purposes they are continually roving from one island to another.⁵

In addition to the constant scavenging of the settlers, their most significant maritime activity was 'wrecking.' This involved salvaging ships and cargoes that were wrecked on the plentiful reefs and shoals surrounding the islands. As the Bahamas was situated on the main shipping routes to and from the Caribbean, shipwrecks were numerous, and wrecking was a lucrative business.⁶

The continual wars, in and over the Caribbean region, between European powers in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries provided the setting for an additional (yet related) Bahamian maritime activity. The Bahamas became a prominent base from which privateers assailed enemy ships and raided coastal settlements.⁷ This activity extended into the peacetime of the early eighteenth century as the Bahamas emerged as the

⁴ Howard Johnson, *The Bahamas from Slavery to Servitude, 1783-1933* (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 1996), 4.

⁵ Quoted in Ibid., 5.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid., 6.

infamous home base of pirates with the island of New Providence as epicenter. The first Royal Governor, Woodes Rogers, was given the task of removing the pirates and restoring legitimate trade and industry in the islands. He succeeded in expelling the pirates but his best efforts to diversify the economy had little effect as Bahamians had little interest in agriculture beyond simple subsistence. The Bahamas remained an insignificant producer of export staples and an even smaller market for British goods. With the resumption of hostilities between European powers in the mid-eighteenth century, the privateering industry revived and created a period of prosperity for the local inhabitants, who at the time numbered less than two thousand people, with three quarters of the population living in New Providence and only one third of those in the colony were black slaves.⁸

The arrival of American Loyalists and their slaves in the 1780s forever changed Bahamian demographics and created a majority black population, raising the black-to-white ratio from one third to three quarters of the total, while simultaneously tripling the overall population. Some of the white Loyalists settled in Nassau and found prosperity as an urban mercantile elite, acting as middlemen in the colony's import-export trade, a trend that continued after Nassau was made a free port and began trading with the Spanish and French colonies in 1787.⁹ For their loyalty to the British crown the refugees were given large land grants on the Bahamian Out Islands. Hailing from Georgia and South Carolina, they attempted to recreate the cotton plantations of the American south in these previously

⁸ Ibid., 9.

⁹ Ibid., 98.

uncultivated islands. They established these plantations with large collections of slaves, placing them under the supervision of resident overseers.¹⁰

The first few crops of cotton gave promising yields, prompting early and short-lived optimism; however, by the late 1790s, the nascent cotton industry was already "experiencing a crisis in production."¹¹ The twin problems of an exhausted Bahamian soil and the chenille caterpillar were a double whammy that devastated any hope of a long lasting cotton agribusiness. Johnson reports that "although cotton was cultivated on a small scale as late as the 1830s, the commercial industry barely survived the eighteenth century."¹² The Loyalists' attempts to start Bahamian cotton plantations also coincided with the production of pineapples for export to North America and Europe by the long time Bermudian settlers, and taken together they represent the efforts of Bahamians in the eighteenth century to respond, however unsuccessfully, to the demands of a commodity-driven world market.¹³

Early Bahamian Tourism

It was also in the eighteenth century that the first reports of tourism in the Bahamas appeared. Peter Henry Bruce, after a four-year residence in the Bahamas between 1741 and 1745, wrote that the Bahama Islands "enjoy the most serene and the most temperate air in all America" and that it was "no wonder that the sick and afflicted of those [colder, northern] climates fly hither for relief, being sure to find a cure."¹⁴ The volume of travel by

¹⁰ Laurie A. Wilke and Paul Farnsworth, "Trade and the Construction of Bahamian Identity: A Multiscalar Exploration," *International Journal of Historical Archaeology* 3, no. 4 (1999): 287.

¹¹ Johnson, *From Slavery to Servitude*, 26.

¹² Ibid., 28.

¹³ Ibid., 12.

¹⁴ Peter Henry Bruce, *Memoirs of Peter Henry Bruce, Esq., a Military Officer, in the Services of Prussia, Russia, and Great Britain* (London: Frank Cass., 1970), 497.

'the sick and afflicted' does not appear to have been substantive, but neither was it insignificant. Tourism scholar Arthur Burkart says that by the middle of the eighteenth century, attention began to be paid to the therapeutic effects of sea water and sea bathing, and the seaside resort began to appear as an alternative to the landlocked spa. That the Bahamas was gaining a reputation for its healthful climate around this time fits into this trend.¹⁵ Attention was not only paid to the Bahamas, however, as other islands in the Caribbean were making similar names for themselves. Dominica, for example, was being described in 1791, as a place "where invalids usually go for the recovery of their health." Strachan reports that "in the 1700s, then, we see talk of the British Caribbean as a place for convalescence and winter residence."¹⁶

It should be noted that this travel by 'invalids' was not *tourism* in the sense that we use the word today. This is because tourism is itself a recent phenomenon, so recent in fact that the very word *tourism* did not appear in English until the early nineteenth century. Prior to the eighteenth century, foreign travel was considered part of an aristocratic man's education. When travel for pleasure began, it was to European spas and seaside resorts, and this travel extended to the West Indies. However, this movement was restricted to a minute fraction of the population that could afford such luxuries, namely a small leisured class.¹⁷ That the West Indies and the Bahamas attracted such attention at all is both interesting and ironic for not long before, disease was so rampant and death so common in the Caribbean that, according to historian Frank Taylor, travel or residence in the region

¹⁵ Arthur John Burkart and S. Medlik, *Tourism: Past, Present and Future* (London: Heinemann, 1974), 10.

¹⁶ Strachan, *Paradise and Plantation*, 35.

¹⁷ Burkart and Medlik, *Tourism*, 3, 4, 10.

was "thought by whites to be quite unwholesome."¹⁸ The image of a pestilence and plague ridden Caribbean was persistent but was gradually transforming into that of a healthful paradise, in essence coming full circle "from Paradise to wasteland and back again."¹⁹

Bay Street and the Conchs

The slow death of the cotton plantation system and the economic depression that followed it in the late eighteenth century prompted a majority of the Loyalist planter class to abandon the Out Islands and move to Nassau where they consolidated the ranks of the existing mercantile elite. The slaves that they could not transfer to other enterprises such as salt-pans, or other West Indian plantation islands, were left "more or less to their own devices," and became what have been termed 'proto-peasants.'²⁰

The dominance of the Loyalist-infused white merchant elite and its control of Nassau's main business and shopping thoroughfare earned them the generic label 'Bay Street.'²¹ Bahamian whites, whether of the oligarchy or of the poorer Out Island Bermudian extract, were referred to as 'conchs.' This somewhat derisive name compared their skin color to the milky off-white flesh of the mollusk sea-food staple of the local diet, and hinted

¹⁸ Frank Taylor, *To Hell with Paradise: A History of the Jamaican Tourist Industry*, Pitt Latin American Series. (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1993).

¹⁹ Phrase quoted by Diane Gail Saunders, "The Impact of Tourism on Bahamian Society and Culture: An Historical Perspective," *Yinna* 1 (2000).

²⁰ Michael Craton, "Bay Street, Black Power and the Conchy Joes: Race and Class in the Colony and Commonwealth of the Bahamas, 1850 — 2000," in *The White Minority in the Caribbean*, ed. Howard Johnson and Karl S. Watson (Kingston; Oxford; Princeton: Ian Randle Publishers; J. Currey Publishers; M. Wiener Publishers, 1998), 74.

²¹ See Alan A. Block, *Masters of Paradise: Organized Crime and the Internal Revenue Service in the Bahamas* (New Brunswick, U.S.A.: Transaction Publishers, 1991), 31.

at the fact that many Bahamian whites were really creoles of mixed heritage and would be classified at best as ‘coloreds’ in the Southern United States.²²

What then emerged in Nassau was a stratified society, with the white (or very near white) elite on top, and black slaves at the bottom. The so-called colored class, which occupied an intermediate position between the two groups, covered a kaleidoscope of hues in between, and ranged from those with mixed European and African heritage, who had secured their freedom from slavery, to ‘full-blooded’ Africans, liberated as a result of British confiscation of slave ships after the abolition of the slave trade in 1807.²³ This colored middle-class tended to emulate white values and distance itself from the working-class black population in an attempt to retain whatever liminal status they possessed.

Even after emancipation in 1838, the black population remained dominated and constrained by the groups above them on the social ladder.²⁴ Not surprisingly then, the colony also practiced racial segregation. Schools, churches and other establishments were often off limits to blacks, although they invariably could be found in basic labor positions in the kitchens, serving meals or providing entertainment.²⁵ While this social segregation was not as severe as that practiced in the Southern United States, the close influence of its northern neighbor provided continued inspiration.²⁶

²² Louis Diston Powles, *The Land of the Pink Pearl, or, Recollections of Life in the Bahamas* (Nassau: Media Enterprises, 1996), 39., Diane Gail Saunders, *Bahamian Loyalists and Their Slaves* (London: Macmillan Caribbean, 1983), 18.

²³ Saunders, *Bahamian Society*, 1.

²⁴ Whittington Bernard Johnson, *Post-Emancipation Race Relations in the Bahamas* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2006), 49, 55. Johnson, *From Slavery to Servitude*, 167, 8.

²⁵ Saunders, *Bahamian Society*, 173, 4 and 181. Johnson, *Post-Emancipation Race Relations*, 124, 5. Angela B. Cleare, *History of Tourism in the Bahamas: A Global Perspective* (Philadelphia: Xlibris, 2007), 147.

²⁶ Saunders, *Bahamian Society*, 113, 4.

By 1834, the white merchant class had extended its control into the colony's political life in the House of Assembly.²⁷ Historians Gail Saunders and Michael Craton tell us that "colored, even black, representatives were elected [to the House] even before the end of slavery," but we should not automatically assume that these men were interested in the plight of the common person. As these colored Members of the House of Assembly (MHA) came from the 'colored' middle class, they tended to be conservative and overly concerned with their own respectability, namely how they appeared to the white elite, and the interests of their small socio-economic group. Before the mid-twentieth century such members never numbered more than a fifth of the MHAs and for the most part were not interested in advancing the causes of the laboring black class. They thus perpetuated and helped extend white hegemony in the colony rather than act as agents of change.²⁸

The Economic Void

With the decline of cotton and the small scale of the pineapple industry, the search began for substitute staples for the export market. Salt increasingly filled this economic void. In the first decade of the nineteenth century, salt became a foundation on which the colony's economy would increasingly depend.²⁹ Salt production was not an easy task for the blacks who processed it, for even in the days of slavery, the production of salt had earned a reputation for harsh and exploitative labor conditions and this trend continued after emancipation.³⁰

²⁷ Johnson, *From Slavery to Servitude*, 98.

²⁸ Craton and Saunders, *Islanders Vol. Two*, 18.

²⁹ Johnson, *From Slavery to Servitude*, 31.

³⁰ Craton and Saunders, *Islanders Vol. Two*, 39.

Commercial agriculture in the Out Islands did not end with the collapse of cotton, as, on the few surviving plantations, "land owners shifted from cultivating cotton to producing provisions and raising stock for the domestic market in an attempt to stabilize their income and provide employment for the slave labor force."³¹ The production of pineapples for export continued as an economic activity but was restricted to the few islands, such as Eleuthera, where the soil was considered suitable for the plant's growth. Efforts were even made at manufacture and for a brief period, the pineapples were canned for export. The industry soon faded, however, once the United States took possession of territories like Hawaii in the late 1800s and perfected alternate supplies of the fruit.³²

The resultant surplus of labor from the still-born plantation system resulted in a restructuring of the relationships between slaves and their owners that was to continue even after emancipation.³³ Although the lack of a rigid plantation system meant that blacks were given more freedom of movement and autonomy than was permitted on other West Indian islands, the merchant class was able to effectively dominate them through other means, most notably by what is called the credit and truck system. In the immediate post-emancipation period, there were few opportunities for wage labor in the Bahamas, thus economic activities were undertaken on a profit-sharing basis. As Howard Johnson notes, "without regular wages, most members of the Bahamian lower classes came to depend on credit." Since the merchants controlled the major economic activities, they would give the laborers advances on their wages in the form of highly overpriced goods. And since the merchants controlled the prices of both the goods and the commodities produced, no

³¹ Johnson, *From Slavery to Servitude*, 28.

³² Ibid., 86. Craton and Saunders, *Islanders Vol. Two*, 34, 5.

³³ Johnson, *From Slavery to Servitude*, 32.

matter how successful the endeavor, the accounts never balanced. Thus, the laboring classes were kept in perpetual debt and in a position of financial dependence.³⁴

In the post-emancipation period, Bahamian economic attention also returned to maritime activities. Although cotton had briefly eclipsed it in importance, wrecking remained a key economic activity in the northern islands. However, this industry too began to decline after 1860 with the technological advances that brought an increase of steam-powered shipping and the installation of adequate lighthouses and beacons by the Imperial Lighthouse Service.³⁵

Starting in 1841, sponges from the Great Bahama Bank began to be processed and exported to Europe as they compared favorably with the best sponges from the Mediterranean. Growing world demand for cheaper sponges led to a mass market that the Bahamas could service and the natural supply was plentiful. In the late 1850s, the average annual export of sponges weighed in at a quarter million pounds rising to a million pounds by 1900, a catch worth £100,000.³⁶ According to historians Michael Craton and Gail Saunders, the sponge industry was said to employ "5,967 men and boys fishing from 265 schooners, 322 sloops, and 2,808 open boats" at its peak in 1901.³⁷ Sponging voyages attracted mainly poor Out Island fishermen and lasted anywhere from five to eight weeks. The majority of the boats were owned by the Nassau merchants who supplied food for the men on the voyage and for their wives and families in the Out Islands or in Nassau under the truck credit system. The merchants ensured that the produce was provided at a high

³⁴ Ibid., 98.

³⁵ Craton and Saunders, *Islanders Vol. Two*, 41.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid.

enough expense that the fisherman would be kept in a state of indebtedness and thus kept under their control. By the late nineteenth and into the early twentieth centuries, sponging was the Bahamas' leading industry.³⁸

In the late nineteenth century, with the Bahamian agricultural sector faltering and unsteady, and with the stranglehold that the mercantile oligarchy held on the remaining economic pillars of salt and sponge, Bahamian laborers began migrating to areas such as Key West and Miami, Florida. This trend continued and increased in the early years of the twentieth century. Although these workers may have found improved conditions and a stronger labor market at their destinations, many of these black workers remained oppressed.³⁹ This labor movement was important for two reasons. First, it further depopulated and impoverished the Out Islands, and second, it increased the demand for imported foodstuffs, which ironically strengthened the dominant position of the Bay Street merchants.⁴⁰ A major impediment to the agricultural development of the Out Islands was the lack of roads and reliable transportation links with Nassau and other markets. Although this problem was brought to the attention of the Bay Street run and Nassau-centric Bahamian House of Assembly by a succession of British governors, there was little interest in improving the situation.⁴¹

³⁸ Saunders, *Bahamian Society*, 62. Not mentioned are the brief Bahamian industries of producing tomatoes for the winter markets of the United States and Canada and the even briefer production of sisal for export in the late 1800s. For a small mention of tomato exports in the 1920s see Bede Clifford, *Proconsul, Being Incidents in the Life and Career of the Honourable Sir Bede Clifford* (London: Evans Bros., 1964), 194, 204. For more on the production of sisal in the 1880s and 90s see Craton and Saunders, *Islanders Vol. Two*, 43, 44.

³⁹ Craton and Saunders, *Islanders Vol. Two*, 45. Johnson, *From Slavery to Servitude*, 151.

⁴⁰ Johnson, *From Slavery to Servitude*, 164.

⁴¹ Ibid., 156.

19th Century Tourism

Despite the writings of Peter Henry Bruce that attested to the regular passage of invalids to the Bahamas, Saunders and Craton report that at the beginning of the nineteenth century, "tourism still existed on a very small scale and had limited impact on the economy."⁴² That the number of boarding houses in Nassau reached a grand total of four by the 1840s is evidence of the limited nature of the trade at the time.⁴³ An increase in the popularity of 'climatotherapy' in the nineteenth century — the belief in the power of sunshine and fresh air to heal consumptive diseases — helped increase the popularity of the Caribbean islands among increasing numbers of invalids and those wealthy enough to avoid the cold northern winters.⁴⁴ In the words of historian Frank Taylor, "once tropical plantations purportedly unfit for white residence, these islands were being touted as veritable gardens of Eden."⁴⁵

Adding to the Caribbean's resurrected reputation and new image as health spa were other broader changes occurring throughout western industrialized society. In *Tourism: Past, Present, and Future*, historian Arthur Burkart points out that

throughout the [nineteenth] century, the idea of leisure took hold on the minds of urban man. The railways by making it possible to live at some distance from one's work, to commute in fact, had underlined the distinction between work and leisure; once this distinction had been made on a daily basis, it soon came to be applied to the working year, and the concept of an annual holiday began to be formulated as a condition of work. By the end of the century, the idea was a perfectly understood one.⁴⁶

⁴² Saunders, *Bahamian Society*, 118.

⁴³ Strachan, *Paradise and Plantation*, 95.

⁴⁴ Duncan McDowall, *Another World: Bermuda and the Rise of Modern Tourism* (London: Mcmillan Education., 1999), 20.

⁴⁵ Taylor, *To Hell with Paradise*, 4.

⁴⁶ Burkart and Medlik, *Tourism*, 22.

This idea of the importance of leisure to the urban dweller in addition to the centrifugal influence of the city prompted urban residents to seek out nature in an 'unspoiled' state. In this sense the underdeveloped Caribbean would prove ideal for such sojourns. And as Burkart indicates, the gradual expansion and creation of modern tourism came about through improvements in transport. "Tourism," as Burkart writes, "is a matter of being elsewhere, and to be elsewhere implies the use of transport."⁴⁷

In the Bahamian case, it was steam powered navigation that made tourism practicable. In 1851, the Bahamian government looked into securing a steamship service between the mainland United States and Nassau, although it was not until 1859 that regular service began. The Cunard Line, owned by the Canadian-born steamship innovator Samuel Cunard, provided the service for an annual subsidy of £1,000. It carried mail and passengers to Nassau on a regular monthly trip between New York and Havana. The regularity of the service encouraged the legislature to begin construction of the Royal Victoria Hotel in the summer of 1860. According to an advertisement from 1876, it was built "to meet the demands of invalids and others seeking to avail themselves of the peculiar natural advantages offered by Nassau for a winter residence."⁴⁸ When finished, this elegant stone-built structure was 'easily the largest building in Nassau' at four stories high, with ninety bedrooms and many of the 70 Americans who visited Nassau during the

⁴⁷ Ibid., 3.

⁴⁸ Royal Victoria Hotel and New York Nassau and Savannah Mail Steamship Line, *Nassau, N.P. Bahamas with Illustrations from Photographs* (Nassau: Royal Victoria Hotel, 1876), 3.

1860 - 61 'season' — running from December to April — remained in the colony and became permanent residents.⁴⁹

The investment in the Royal Victoria Hotel was fortuitous for other reasons, for as was the case in Bermuda, the Bahamas was deeply involved as a trans-shipment port during the American Civil War that started in 1861 and its first guests were "colourful Confederate sailors, blockade runners and federal agents."⁵⁰ The Northern states had imposed a blockade on their Southern adversaries from the beginning of the conflict, but were not able to effectively implement their policy. The Northern siege of Charleston and other Southern cities became more potent the following year and accordingly Nassau became seriously engaged in the business of trading war supplies to the South in exchange for cotton.⁵¹ It was an immensely profitable business, mainly for the merchant class elite, and resulted in physical improvements to Bay Street, which was widened and ornamented with kerbstones and lights while the sidewalks were curbed with granite.⁵² But this prosperity lasted only as long as the Southern war effort and when the South finally surrendered to the North, the blockade-running business died and Nassau harbor returned to its relatively barren state.

After the brief blockade-running bonanza, the local elite returned their attentions to advertising tourism abroad. The colony was advertised as "the great sanitarium of the Western Hemisphere" and as "a most desirable winter resort for all who wish to escape the

⁴⁹ Saunders, *Bahamian Society*, 96. Craton and Saunders, *Islanders Vol. Two*, 75. Saunders, "Impact of Tourism."

⁵⁰ For details on Bermuda's parallel involvement see McDowall, *Another World*, 22, 23; Saunders, *Bahamian Society*, 96.

⁵¹ Cleare, *History of Tourism*, 41, 2.

⁵² Saunders, *Bahamian Society*, 98.

rigors of a northern season.”⁵³ (See figure 2) The advertising paid off for in 1870 the Royal Victoria was filled to capacity and, in 1873, a record 500 winter visitors traveled to the Bahamas.⁵⁴ The industry gained further momentum in the 1890s, when Henry Flagler, the Florida oil and railroad tycoon who had brought the Florida East Coast Railway to Miami, extended his hotel empire to the Bahamas and purchased the Royal Victoria Hotel and began building the huge Hotel Colonial in 1899. This hotel offered 400 “opulent suites designed for upscale tourists” and was intended to attract visitors from Florida, “which was becoming a popular resort for American Northerners.”⁵⁵

The passage of the Hotel and Steamship Act in 1898, written in partnership with Flagler, established the model of a private-public partnership in the promotion of Bahamian tourism. The act provided subsidies to foreign companies to create the necessary tourism infrastructure.⁵⁶ Bahamian tourism received yet another boost in 1895 with the outbreak of the second war of independence in Cuba that served to divert to the Bahamas hundreds of Americans who had “been in the habit of visiting Havana.”⁵⁷

In his study of the history of Jamaican tourism, Frank Taylor describes the additional historical factors that contributed to the increase in tourism in the region. He explains it as a result of the passenger traffic that was hitherto confined to a ‘holiday circuit in the North Atlantic.’

Modern tourism owe[s] its gestation to the industrial revolution and the need it engendered for periodic relief from the psychological stresses and strains of the factory system and urbanism. Facilitating this imperative for the occasional

⁵³ Royal Victoria Hotel and New York Nassau and Savannah Mail Steamship Line, *Nassau, N.P. Bahamas with Illustrations from Photographs*, 2.

⁵⁴ Strachan, *Paradise and Plantation*, 95.

⁵⁵ Cleare, *History of Tourism*, 61. Saunders, *Bahamian Society*, 120.

⁵⁶ Craton and Saunders, *Islanders Vol. Two*, 80.

⁵⁷ Taylor, *To Hell with Paradise*, 5.

holiday in quieter and healthier surroundings was the growth of mechanized transport, which was making substantial strides forward at that time. ... Steam, which had played such a dynamic role in the industrial revolution, on being applied to transport in the nineteenth century made it possible for far more people to travel, and travel far more cheaply than before.⁵⁸

Thus, the industrial revolution created both the push and the pull factors that created an increase in the amount of people able and willing to take a vacation — and the Bahamas was a direct beneficiary of this increased traffic. By the late nineteenth century, the Bahamas had found another staple industry, one dependent not on soil or slaves, but on sunshine and the hedonistic urges of North America. Fully exploiting this staple would, however, prove to be a challenge.

The Twentieth Century

By the end of the nineteenth century, the Bahama Islands were demographically fragmented and diverse. In 1891, over three quarters of the total Bahamas population of 47,565 lived in the Out Islands, but these were also the poorest and most isolated regions of the archipelago. The populated areas of the Out Islands, called 'settlements,' varied greatly from each other in size and racial composition. In the northwestern islands, for example, settlements tended to be whiter and were economically geared towards seafaring activities while settlements in the southeastern Bahamas tended to be more densely settled, predominantly black and almost entirely oriented towards agriculture. These settlements were also apt to be self-contained and isolated from one another and had more contact with Nassau than with each other.⁵⁹

⁵⁸ Ibid.

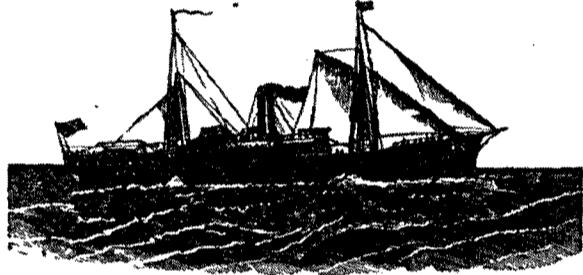
⁵⁹ Saunders, *Bahamian Society*, 59.

NASSAU,
New Providence, Bahamas.

COMMUNICATION EVERY TEN DAYS WITH THIS
FAVORITE WINTER RESORT.

The New York, Nassau and Savannah

Under Contract with the Bahama Government.



And Carrying the British and United States Mails.

MAIL STEAMSHIP LINE.

WILL PERFORM THE SERVICE DURING THE WINTER AND SPRING, AS FOLLOWS:

A First-Class Passenger Steamship will leave New York for Savannah every week from PIER 16, East River, foot of Wall Street.

Connecting at Savannah with a Steamship of this line, sailing from Savannah and Nassau

EVERY TEN DAYS,

and close connection also being made at Savannah with Railroads for all parts of the Country, thus giving the option of a short sea voyage from Savannah, or an additional voyage from New York, and also affording Tourists and Invalids sojourning in Florida a special opportunity to visit this unrivalled Sanitarium.

ONLY 48 HOURS FROM SAVANNAH.

For the convenience of those desiring information, the line will have an Agent in Jacksonville, and other points in Florida, from whom Through Tickets can be procured and State Rooms secured for Nassau.

A Schedule giving dates of departure from New York, Savannah and Nassau is issued monthly, and will be furnished on application to any of the advertised Passenger Agents, or to

MURRAY, FERRIS & CO., Owners and Ag'ts,
No. 62 South Street, New York.
HUNTER & GAMMELL, Ag'ts, Savannah. T. DARLING & CO., Ag'ts, Nassau.
For particular information, Staterooms and Through Tickets from Cities in New England, Northern New York, the North West and Canada, apply to

GUSTAVE LEVE, Gen'l Passenger Ag't.
Head Office, No. 202 St. James Street, Montreal, Canada,
or to
Agent at

Figure 2. Front page of a 1875 brochure advertising the Bahamas as the 'Great Sanitarium of the Western Hemisphere.'

Nassau dominated the Bahamas as the most important island, and its society mirrored that of the colony. Just as the Out Islands depended on the capital, Nassau's black working classes, who lived in a residential area called Over-the-Hill,⁶⁰ depended on the white merchants. But, despite the relative affluence and cosmopolitanism of Nassau, the Bahamas was itself isolated and impoverished in comparison to the West Indies proper, which was, in turn, an isolated, impoverished and 'forgotten' corner of the world.⁶¹ Thus, on the whole, the Bahamas was little more than "the least important of an insignificant group of colonies."⁶²

Tourism at the dawn of the twentieth century was similarly insignificant and visitors to the Bahamas "were still counted in the tens and hundreds."⁶³ Despite Flagler's ownership of two large Nassau hotels, the Royal Victoria and the Hotel Colonial, and his regular "winter passenger service between Nassau and Miami," Bahamian tourism was flagging instead of flourishing. The legislature decided that more needed to be done to stimulate the economy and in 1913 it passed the Manufactories and Hotels Encouragement Act which gave exemptions from import duties on materials for the "building, erection, alteration and repair of hotels."⁶⁴

This legislation was followed in 1914 with the establishment of The Development Board, whose goals were "to promote tourism, negotiate with carriers, and coordinate

⁶⁰ The area received its name because it was literally situated 'over the hill' separating downtown Nassau from the rest of the island, existing in a valley immediately south of Bay Street and Government House,

⁶¹ "By the end of the nineteenth century the Caribbean had become ... a forgotten derelict corner of the world." Gordon K. Lewis, *The Growth of the Modern West Indies* (London: MacGibbon & Kee, 1968), 63.

⁶² Saunders, *Bahamian Society*, 57, 78.

⁶³ Craton and Saunders, *Islanders Vol. Two*, 74, 82., Saunders, *Bahamian Society*, 119.

⁶⁴ Quoted in Cleare, *History of Tourism*, 61.

matters related to tourism.”⁶⁵ The Board had an annual budget of £3,000 and secured the services of the Atlas Advertising Company of New York to coordinate US and Canadian advertising. Its ambitions were relatively modest and it restricted its overseas physical presence to an annual booth at the Canadian National Exhibition in Toronto. Its advertising had some effect as the number of visitors increased to over twenty-six hundred for the 1915 season and was trending upwards until German submarines began to stalk Bahamian waters in 1917 forcing the US to impose strict war time shipping restrictions. This devastated the infant tourist trade, forcing the suspension of the Development Board and its advertising campaigns and compelling the closure of both major hotels as the total number of visitors during the 1917-18 season dropped to a paltry 125.⁶⁶ Needless to say, the Bahamas’ other modest export industries were likewise throttled by the war.

The Volstead Gift

The end of the First World War found the islands again in the throes of poverty. Gail Saunders describes 1919 as a year of “virtual depression, especially for the Out Islands.”⁶⁷ Bleak conditions were, however, mitigated by an unexpected gift from the United States. The gift was called the Volstead Act, which came into effect in 1920, and prohibited the sale or manufacture of any intoxicating liquor. The immediate side-effect of the law was that it created a thriving off-shore black market to satisfy US demand for spirits. Nassau easily resumed its role as trans-shipment port, this time for “English and Scottish liquor manufacturers” smuggling their now illegal produce into the United States. Thus, US Prohibition brought economic bonanza back to Nassau and the island transformed

⁶⁵ Ibid., 68.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 68, 9.

⁶⁷ Saunders, *Bahamian Society*, 102.

seemingly overnight, from a somnolent town to a bustling port "swarming with ships unloading thousands of barrels of liquor."⁶⁸

Few Bahamians actually got involved in the actual smuggling of liquor, although Roland Symonette, born a poor near-white on Eleuthera and later to become the first Bahamian Premier, was a notable exception who actually ran the liquor himself and became a millionaire in the process.⁶⁹ The smuggling was dominated by Americans, and their collaborators in Nassau were the white mercantile elites, and both took the lion's share of the profits. The Nassau merchants, in turn, used the money to consolidate their position in Bahamian society and establish wealthy private empires.⁷⁰ Before rum-running, the local elite had "little real capital" and color more than anything else defined the difference between the classes. By reinvesting their ill-gotten gains through legitimate enterprise, Bay Street was able to intensify the gap between the classes.⁷¹ In effect, raw capitalism had come to the Bahamas and had accentuated existing lines of privilege.

It was not that local blacks were left out of the opportunities for easy money, for there was a distinct trickle-down effect from the liquor trade. Many blacks and coloreds were involved as liquor merchants as well, but did so on a smaller scale than the white elite. Black women were also employed in the trade, rolling barrels of liquor around the docks from one ship to the next, and sewing special six-pack burlap sacks to hold the bottles.⁷²

⁶⁸ Ibid., 103.

⁶⁹ Craton, "Bay Street, Black Power and the Conchy Joes," 78.

⁷⁰ Saunders, "Impact of Tourism." Lewis, *The Growth of the Modern West Indies*, 320.

⁷¹ Saunders, *Bahamian Society*, 113.

⁷² Ibid., 106.

The government treasury benefitted from the boot-legging profits, in part through relatively heavy customs duties on alcohol, fortuitously instituted in 1919.⁷³ One result of the increased revenue was the resuscitation of the Development Board, and it ensured that government surpluses were spent on "large public works projects in Nassau" designed to make the city more "attractive to tourists and well-heeled immigrants and investors."⁷⁴ Communications between Nassau and the outside world, especially the United States, were improved. Passenger and freight service with England and Canada was initiated, and even more frequent service with Miami was secured. In 1923, the government began dredging the Nassau harbor to better accommodate deep-draft passenger liners and daily air service was launched by Pan American (Pan Am) Airways between Nassau and Miami in 1929.⁷⁵

Again, broader global trends influenced the Bahamian tourist market, modest as it then was. Historian Duncan McDowall points out that in the period between the world wars, "tourism became an 'industry,'"

There was the immense psychological release from the carnage of the Great War, a desire to escape its memory and to capitalise on the freedom and affluence that the war had supposedly won. The means of travel improved; it became easier to move across the face of the globe. ... And by the 1930s, some of the more affluent democracies began legislating holidays with pay for their citizens. For the first time, broad reaches of society had paid leisure time at their disposal. The word 'holiday' acquired a powerful social and economic meaning.⁷⁶

The 'climatotherapy' of the eighteenth century had been expanded and the healthful nature of the climate and breezes of the Caribbean had extended to embrace the sun, the very

⁷³ Michael Craton, *A History of the Bahamas* (London: Collins, 1962), 265.

⁷⁴ Saunders, *Bahamian Society*, 106. Craton and Saunders, *Islanders Vol. Two*, 242.

⁷⁵ Cleare, *History of Tourism*, 74. Craton and Saunders, *Islanders Vol. Two*, 242.

⁷⁶ McDowall, *Another World*, 105.

element that "had once been seen as a coarsening threat to white skins," and the tan became the new icon.⁷⁷

This expansion of tourism was, however, still limited to the rich and wealthy leisured class. The Bahamian Development Board thus spent "thousands of pounds on advertising to attract wealthy Americans and Canadians as visitors or settlers" highlighting the "incomparable climate" and the beautiful beaches, but also stressed the presence of elite sports, like "yachting, duck and pigeon shooting, grass court tennis, and golf."⁷⁸ In a marketing twist reflecting the image that the Bahamas promoted abroad, the beach on Hog Island, which was a small islet that both created and protected Nassau's harbor, was rechristened 'Paradise Beach.'⁷⁹ Amenities for the well-heeled visitor and settler were created in the form of exclusive racially-segregated clubs, like the ironically titled Bahamian Club, opened in 1920, which featured the first gambling facility in the colony, and the Porcupine Club on Hog Island.⁸⁰

Even the destruction of Flagler's Hotel Colonial by fire in 1922 did little to dampen the good times. The Development Board provided enough money and incentives to its owners that the hotel was completely rebuilt in only six months. Eager to duplicate the success, and the incentives, that the Hotel Colonial was enjoying, a group of Bay Street merchants got into the hotel business and built a similarly styled, yet slightly smaller, resort on the east of the island named the Hotel Montague.⁸¹ The influx of wealthy American investors with elaborate development schemes led to a simultaneous real estate

⁷⁷ Polly Pattullo, *Last Resorts: The Cost of Tourism in the Caribbean* (London: Cassell, 1996), 9.

⁷⁸ Craton and Saunders, *Islanders Vol. Two*, 243.

⁷⁹ This trend continued and the island itself become 'Paradise Island' in the 1960s.

⁸⁰ Craton and Saunders, *Islanders Vol. Two*, 245. Block, *Masters of Paradise*, 31.

boom in Nassau as land changed hands at “an unprecedented rate.” The Colonial Governor, while permitting the practice, was nonetheless amazed at its extent. In 1925, he remarked that “Americans are buying every inch of private land in New Providence and paying enormous prices for it — and there will soon be nothing British left except the flag!”⁸²

Newfound wealth was quickly put on display, and the automobile became the status symbol of choice for the white elite and ‘well-off’ coloreds. The effect of prohibition and tourist money on the society was seen in a dramatic increase in car ownership in the period. Historian Gail Saunders reports that “whereas six cars had been imported in 1918, 297 were brought to Nassau in 1922.”⁸³ By the end of the 1920s, almost a thousand cars were registered in the Bahamas.⁸⁴ The 1920s thus served to connect the Bahamas umbilically to the US and its growing affluence and consumerism.

Dark Side of the Boom

It was not all good news and the social costs of the 1920s were great. The influx of Americans with ideas of status born of Jim Crow segregation deepened the existing Bahamian racial divide. To keep the visitors happy, Nassau’s hotels implemented more rigorous racial segregation than ever before.⁸⁵ Although large sums of money were going into creating and maintaining tourist amenities, few dollars went towards improving the lot of the black majority. For example, while a modern water system serviced downtown Nassau by 1929, the black Over-the-Hill areas received only public standpipes.

⁸¹ Craton and Saunders, *Islanders Vol. Two*, 244.

⁸² Saunders, *Bahamian Society*, 108, 9.

⁸³ Ibid., 107.

⁸⁴ Craton and Saunders, *Islanders Vol. Two*, 242.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 244.

The Out Islands were even more neglected than Over-the-Hill, for as Nassau was contemplating solutions to its growing automobile traffic problem, Eleuthera was the only other island in the archipelago that had anything that even resembled a road.⁸⁶ The mercantile-run House of Assembly had little interest in extending development to the Out Islands and the resultant poverty on those islands created a large internal migration, as many impoverished Out Islanders came to Nassau looking for work. Before the 1920s 'bonanza,' a quarter of all Bahamians lived in Nassau; by 1931 this ratio had risen to a third.⁸⁷ The large influx of Out Islanders, many of whom were ill-equipped for the transition to a life of wage-labor, contributed to a dramatic increase in social ills such as vagrancy, juvenile delinquency and homelessness, previously unknown in the colony. Joblessness was compounded by the reluctance of hotels to hire black and colored Bahamians. The Colonial, for example, did not even employ Bahamians as bellboys until 1925.⁸⁸ The material benefits of rum-running and the increase in tourists were thus concentrated near the top of the social pyramid and the poor had few reasons to cheer.

End of Prohibition

The Great Depression that began in late 1929, probably hit Nassau just as hard as the two hurricanes that had plowed into the island that summer. When the new governor, Sir Bede Clifford (1932-37), arrived in Nassau, rum-running was essentially the colony's main industry. Nassau's big hotels were "practically empty" and liquor was the colony's last remaining financial pillar.⁸⁹ The governor joked that a new statue should be erected to

⁸⁶ Saunders, *Bahamian Society*, 107.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 111.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 110, 3.

⁸⁹ Clifford, *Proconsul*, 190.

Senator Volstead, the legislator most responsible for the creation of Prohibition, if only to recognize rum-running's importance to the Bahamian economy.⁹⁰

When Franklin Roosevelt was elected President of the United States in 1933, partly on the promise to end Prohibition, the writing was on the wall. Governor Clifford predicted that there would be a "temporary boom in smuggling before it ceased" and thought that the Bahamas "must use this brief interval of prosperity to revive the tourist industry."⁹¹ In Clifford's memoir he described the situation as 'a choice between the tourist industry and bankruptcy.' It was a straightforward decision since the agricultural industries were already withering from neglect, and any attempt to restart them would get little support from the largely mercantile House of Assembly. He expressed his epiphany to his Executive Council saying, "Well, gentlemen, it amounts to this — if we can't take the liquor to the Americans we must bring the Americans to the liquor."⁹²

Promotion

Governor Clifford in close association with the Development Board then initiated the 'Advertise Bahamas Campaign.' Besides the usual medium of print ads in magazines, they also utilized the novel medium of radio broadcasting. The crowning achievement of the campaign was a remote broadcast over the CBS network in February 1933 from the Hotel Colonial that was heard throughout the US and Canada. The program featured music by prominent Bahamian entertainers and speeches from the likes of the governor and hotel operators extolling the virtues of a Bahamian vacation.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 191.

⁹¹ Ibid., 194.

⁹² Ibid; Saunders, *Bahamian Society*, 121.

The CBS broadcast was followed by similar fare broadcast live over Nassau's own experimental radio station VPN. These broadcasts received almost sixty letters from as far away as Nova Scotia, Canada, where the program "was distinctly heard." Each letter got a personal response from the Development Board chairman along with a Nassau promotional brochure.⁹³ The advertising campaign was deployed in tandem with improvements to Nassau's hotels and the creation of polo and cricket grounds that Clifford, also a surveyor, laid out himself. The frequency of passenger ships to and from the US was also increased and a direct telephone link was laid between Nassau, New York and Canada.⁹⁴

The campaign was a success and the number of tourist arrivals in the Bahamas increased from just over 10,000 for the 1932 - 33 winter season to 25,000 by the 1934 - 5 season, almost ten times what it had been in 1915. The quality of the visitors was also cause for celebration as the Advertise Bahamas campaign attracted "a heady mix of celebrities of stage, politics and literature, American money, and British titles." Some of these well-heeled visitors were so enamored with the colony that they built themselves large winter homes in exclusive areas of Nassau, and those who felt that these posh developments were not chic enough, went and bought their own Out Island cays.⁹⁵

In his memoirs, Clifford also takes credit for the Bahamian policy, now enshrined, to eschew any form of income tax. Under some pressure from London to introduce income taxes to the colony, at least as a gesture of goodwill to the poor, the Governor replied that

⁹³ Storr, "Development of Broadcasting in the Bahamas", 157.

⁹⁴ Craton and Saunders, *Islanders Vol. Two*, 264.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

the tax "may be good democracy but it was bad business."⁹⁶ He reasoned that the absence of income tax would be a powerful magnet to attract wealthy foreign residents who might then invest some of their wealth in the local economy. This plan succeeded as well, and the Bahamas gained an international reputation as a tax haven, attracting the desired foreign investment. For its part, the decision to restrict government revenue almost solely to import duties made it, in the words of West Indian historian Gordon K. Lewis, "a poor government in a rich economy."⁹⁷

The most famous of the taxation refugees is without doubt Sir Harry Oakes, an American with Canadian citizenship who had become a multi-millionaire mining gold in northern Ontario. Oakes estimated that he was losing over 85 percent personal income in taxes to the Canadian Government and so he left Canada and took up residence in Palm Beach. Hearing that Oakes was in Florida, the first chair of the Development Board, real estate czar and MHA, H. G. Christie realized that there was an opportunity to lure Oakes a little further south to the Bahamas. After meeting Oakes, the two became fast friends and upon seeing the Bahamas for himself and hearing the Development Board vision for the island, he was persuaded to bring his sizable personal fortune to the Bahamas. The absence of income tax was icing on the cake.⁹⁸

Oakes was essentially an economy unto himself and came as a godsend for the economically depressed Bahamas. He purchased land equal to nearly a fifth of the island of New Providence along with the Hotel Colonial. He launched numerous ambitious projects, building several large mansions for himself, initiating an immense farming project, building

⁹⁶ Clifford, *Proconsul*, 195. See Cleare, *History of Tourism*, 84.

⁹⁷ Lewis, *The Growth of the Modern West Indies*, 337.

the island's first golf course and constructing Nassau's first airstrip that was appropriately dubbed Oakes Field.⁹⁹ He employed as many as fifteen hundred men at once, paying them a shilling more than the established wage and providing free meals and transportation, much to the chagrin of other island employers and the simultaneous delight of the fortunate few in his workforce.¹⁰⁰ When Oakes decided to run for political office and join the Nassau House of Assembly he did it in his usual fashion; he bought it. He did not campaign himself but instead had his campaign manager effectively bribe the local population while cutting off the credit of his political competitor, Milo Butler, at the downtown bank. The locals reciprocated with their votes and he was ushered into the House of Assembly with an overwhelming majority, despite the fact that he was not even on the island for the election.¹⁰¹ Despite his largesse, he was often cruel and thus his vicious, and still unsolved, murder on the night of July 7, 1943 was "an occasion for wonder and speculation, not universal grief."¹⁰²

The War and the Burma Road Riot

As if to underline the Bahamas' growing dependence on elite residential tourism and the injection of foreign capital it brought, disaster struck what was essentially the Bahamas last remaining traditional economic activity in 1938. The harvesting of the naturally occurring sponge from Bahamian waters for export on the world market was described by Michael Craton as the "backbone of the Bahamian economy for three-quarters of a century"

⁹⁸ Craton, *A History*, 270, 1. Cleare, *History of Tourism*.

⁹⁹ Craton, *A History*, 271, 2.

¹⁰⁰ Craton and Saunders, *Islanders Vol. Two*, 268.

¹⁰¹ Michael Craton, *Pindling: The Life and Times of Lynden Oscar Pindling First Prime Minister of the Bahamas, 1930-2000* (Oxford: Macmillan Caribbean, 2002), 13.

¹⁰² Craton and Saunders, *Islanders Vol. Two*, 298, 300.

and it was still one of the top industries of the colony in the late 1930s.¹⁰³ The trade was destroyed almost overnight in 1938 when an invasive fungoid wiped out 99 percent of all Bahamian sponge. At the same time, tougher immigration policies restricted the flow of labor to the United States while the stiff import duties Washington imposed helped kill off whatever hope was left for Bahamian agriculture.¹⁰⁴

The sudden death of the sponge industry was a harbinger of more bad news. The world went to war in 1939 and the Americans joined in 1941, bringing about yet another "collapse of the tourist industry and building construction which exacerbated the already serious unemployment problem."¹⁰⁵ However, Uncle Sam both gave and took away, and once again the US came to the rescue. Owing to the islands' strategic position in the Atlantic, the US began constructing training facilities and military bases in the islands. With plans to make New Providence a major air base, the US began refurbishing the Oakes Field airstrip and building a much larger modern air field some twelve miles outside of central Nassau.¹⁰⁶ The British Colonial administration was cooperative with its ally and construction began on what came to be collectively known as the 'Project' which provided the colony with a much-needed cash infusion and use for its labor.

In order to avoid creating a disruptive two-tier local labor market, Britain and the US agreed to keep wages for black Bahamian workers at the regular local rate which was much less than imported Americans were paid for the same work. This led to a large,

¹⁰³ Craton, *A History*, 253.

¹⁰⁴ Craton and Saunders, *Islanders Vol. Two*, 263.

¹⁰⁵ Saunders, *Bahamian Society*, 151.

¹⁰⁶ Michael Craton and Gail Saunders, *Islanders in the Stream: A History of the Bahamian People*, vol. 1 (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1992), 286.

unorganized demonstration of discontent that escalated into a riot in 1942.¹⁰⁷ This revolt became known as the "Burma Road" riot and can perhaps be seen as the tail end of a series of labor disputes and conflagrations that had already passed through the British West Indies in the late 1930s. The Bahamas, though, had not yet developed a strong national consciousness and had neither political parties nor a functioning labor movement. The so-called labor leaders were from the colored middle-class and were conservative to a fault and had little stomach for actual agitation. Thus little seems to have been accomplished by the riots although, in the short term, the workers did get their requested raise in wages. The riots demonstrated that there were issues that could arouse the anger of the black majority, and, as such, they foreshadowed more substantial changes to come.¹⁰⁸

Post-World War II Tourism

When the American military departed after the Second World War had ended, the Bahamian economy again searched for a foothold, but there was really only one rung left on the ladder. Stafford Sands, Bahamian corporate lawyer, businessman and emerging political force, led the House of Assembly and the Development Board to devote its attention to resurrecting the tourist industry. As *The Wall Street Journal* would later observe of Sands, "all descriptions of him, sooner or later, converge on the words 'brilliant' and 'genius.'"¹⁰⁹ Sands had become the *de facto* commandant of the Bay Street clique and was appointed Chairman of the Bahamas Development Board in 1949 and, as such, began funneling ever larger sums of money into the tourism apparatus.

¹⁰⁷ Hughes, *Race and Politics*, 16, 7.

¹⁰⁸ Saunders, *Bahamian Society*, 151, 2, 165.

¹⁰⁹ Stanley Penn Monroe W. Karmin, "Las Vegas East: U.S. Gamblers Prosper in Bahamas with Help from Island Officials Top Local Political Leaders Grant Casino License, Also Receive Consultants' Fees Is There Link to U.S. Crime?," *Wall Street Journal*, Wednesday, October 5, 1966.

In his memoirs Bede Clifford said he believed that “there was no reason why the Bahamas should not have a summer [tourist] season and a much longer winter season.” Sands agreed with Clifford’s assessment and immediately implemented it as policy, announcing 1950 as the first year-round season.¹¹⁰ Technological advances of the time were making what was once considered a pipe-dream fantasy into a concrete reality. For example, the air conditioner made it possible to finally colonize the hot and humid tropical summer heat that had long been hostile to tourist sensibilities. By 1954, the Bahamas featured its first fully air-conditioned hotel.¹¹¹

World conditions also favored the Development Board’s decision to extend the Bahamian tourist season. In the twenty-five years following the Second World War the increased wealth and prosperity generated in developed countries like the United States created a population with an “increasing capacity to consume” and a “widespread desire to travel.” Describing the extent of this desire, historian Arthur Burkart tells us that

mass travel was seen as merely one facet of the good life, to which anyone might aspire, in the same sense that a refrigerator, a car, or other durable consumer goods are seen as desirable concomitants of affluence.¹¹²

This trend merely accelerated in the 1960s with the introduction of the non-stop international jet service that truly opened the floodgates of the mass market.¹¹³ And while still heavily invested in continuing the long tradition of elite tourism, Sands was also dedicated to pursuing the mass market. Hotels began offering reduced ‘economy’ rates during the summer months and by 1959 the colony was receiving almost as many tourists during the previously moribund month of July as it did during the peak months of the

¹¹⁰ Cleare, *History of Tourism*, 162. Craton and Saunders, *Islanders Vol. Two*, 303.

¹¹¹ Cleare, *History of Tourism*, 112, 3.

¹¹² Burkart and Medlik, *Tourism*, 24, 25.

former 'season.'¹¹⁴ Blessed with a revitalized Oakes Field airstrip and the brand-new airport at Windsor Field courtesy of the Americans, Nassau was well equipped to capitalize on the post-war surge in air-travel.

A large part of Sands' strategy was effective advertising. He channeled large sums of money, more in fact than was used by "the entire educational system," to the Development Board for the promotion of the Bahamas in the primary markets of the US and Canada.¹¹⁵ The advertising stressed the islands' proximity to the United States — "only 50 miles from the U.S." and its "English-speaking," "smart British atmosphere." Summing up the trend, one 1959 ad had the tagline "so different... so near..." The advertisements focused on white Northerners frolicking in the sun, either on the beach or walking down deserted Nassau streets with not a black person to be seen. One interesting feature of the advertising is its gradual shift from the 1950s focus on NASSAU in bold letters to the sultry sounding "Resort Islands of the Bahamas" by the early 1960s. (See figures 2 – 6) This adjustment in focus is reflected in the arrival figures, for in 1960 only one-seventh of all visitors went to the Out Islands, but this percentage had risen to a third in 1965.

¹¹³ Pattullo, *Last Resorts*, 9.

¹¹⁴ Craton and Saunders, *Islanders Vol. Two*, 303. Saunders, "Impact of Tourism," 76.

¹¹⁵ Craton and Saunders, *Islanders Vol. Two*, 302.

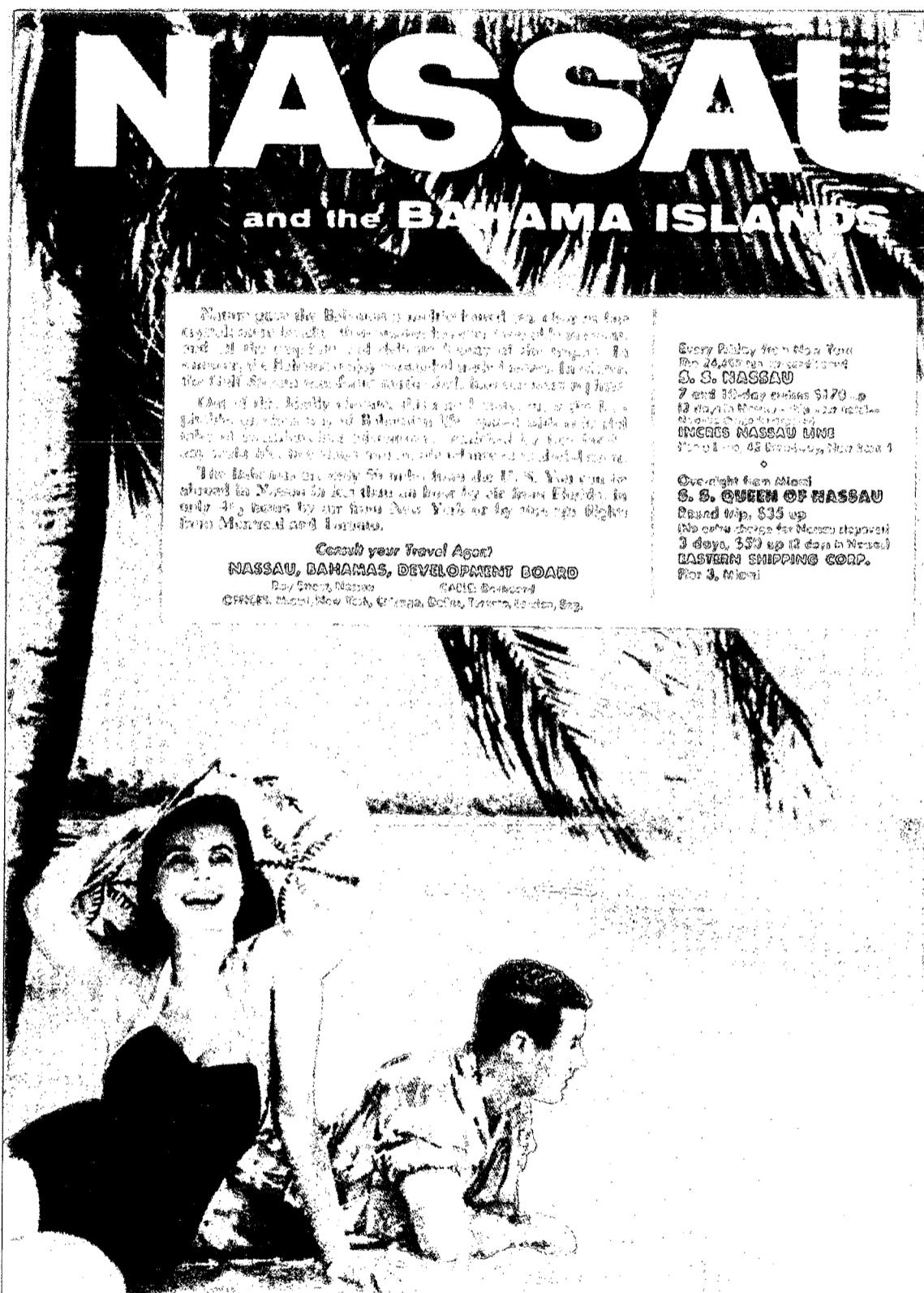


Figure 3. Ad appearing in November 5, 1956, *Time* (Canadian Edition) page 44



So different . . . so near . . .

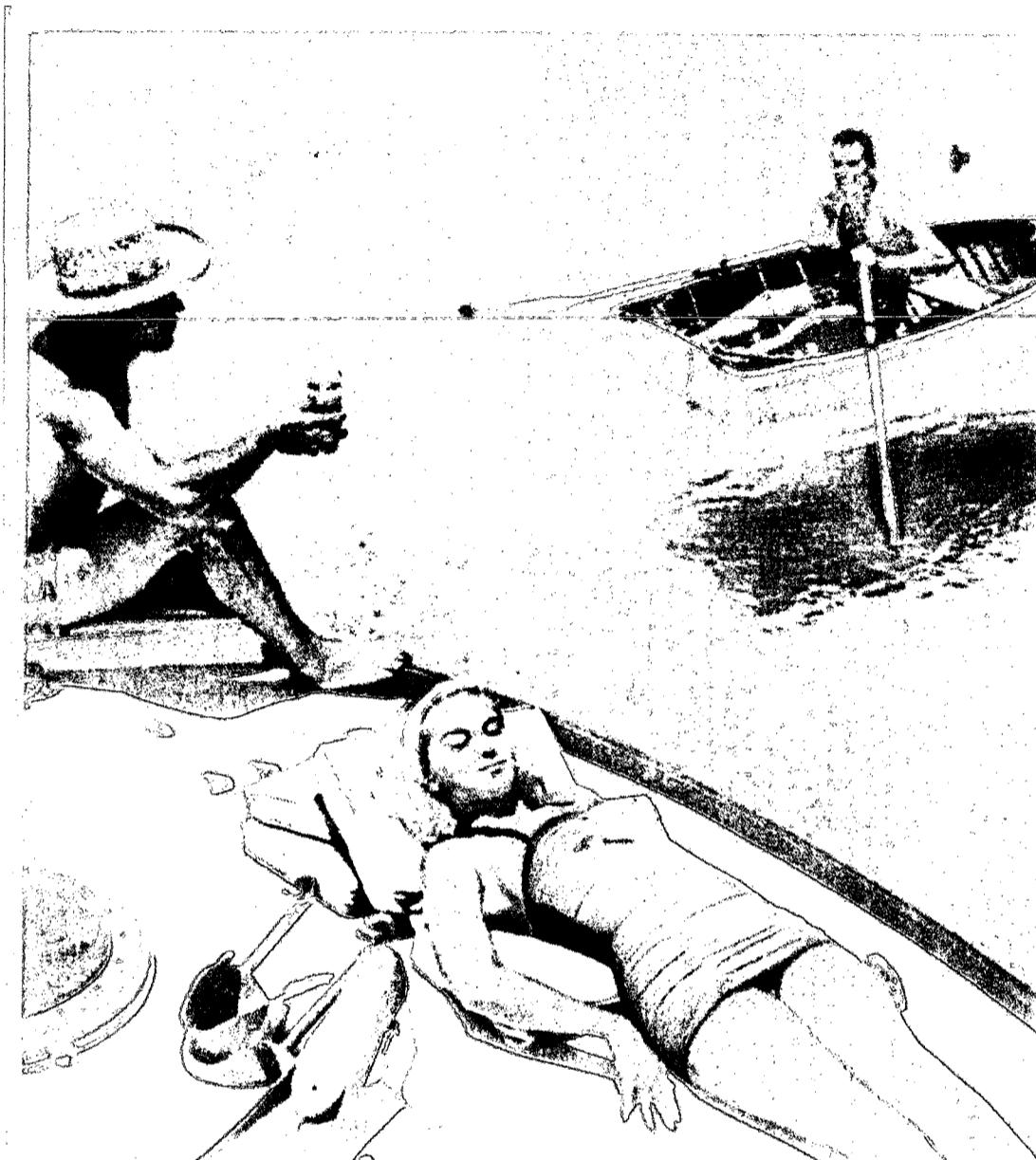
NASSAU

and the Bahamas Islands

This is a remarkable place. Nowhere else in the world can you find such a blending of the old and the new . . . of today's creature comforts and yesterday's traditions . . . of sophisticated luxury and tranquil beauty . . . of year-round sport and long entertainment. It's all here—the year 'round—in Nassau and Nassau Islands of the Bahamas.

Why not whisk yourself away to the Bahamas soon? Please see your travel agent or plan your holiday trip. Or, for further information, write to Dept. P, Nassau, Bahamas. Development Board, 707 Victory Rd., 80 Richmond St., Toronto, Ontario. The telephone number is EMpire 4-9857.

Figure 4. "So Different ... So Near." Little white children cavort down deserted streets. Ad appears in October 12, 1959, *Time* (Canadian Edition) inside cover.



"Cheers" atop sapphire waters in the sun!

Cocktail hour, Bahamas style -- surrounded by jewel-clear tropic waters! These tranquil seas invite you BAHAMA-style for sun-bathing, skin-diving, world's finest fishing. And, where...ample modern accommodations plus unique British atmosphere.

Direct air service from Toronto, Mon-

treal, New York, and Florida. No passports are required for Canadian citizens. See any travel agent now! Bahamas Development Board, 89 Richmond Street, West, Toronto, Ont. • Other offices: Miami • New York • Chicago • Los Angeles • Dallas • London, England Bay Street, Niagara. Cable: Devboard.

BY SEA: From Miami, Mondays and Fridays, S.S. BAHAMA STAR, Eastern Shipping Corp., Miami 1 • From New York, every Saturday, 7-day cruise, U.S. FLAG, Trans-Liners, 42 Broadway, New York 4

The Resort Islands of the **BAHAMAS**

just 55 minutes east of the Florida mainland

Figure 5. Ad appearing in January 6, 1961, *Time* (Canadian Edition) page 57



Figure 6. Truly "different" Atmosphere. Blacks are conspicuously absent in the photography but their presence is suggested in the copy. Ad appeared in February 8, 1963, *Time* (Canadian Edition) page 62

The increase in Out-Island traffic was due to a number of factors, first was the Hotels Encouragement Act passed in 1949, that gave even more incentives than the similarly titled 1913 legislation. It gave investors a ten-year tax-free period while allowing "them to bring in materials and food duty-free and [hire] foreign staff without the normal immigration restrictions."¹¹⁶ The requirements to receive the act's concessions were far lower on the Out Islands than in Nassau. The second factor was the development of Freeport-Lucaya in one of the largest islands in the archipelago, Grand Bahama.

In the 1950s, the Wall Street financier and convicted fraudster and embezzler Wallace Groves, had a vision to build a "free port and an industrial complex" on Grand Bahama. With Stafford Sands as his close friend and lawyer, the resultant Hawksbill Creek agreement granted Grove's Grand Bahama Port Authority "fifty thousand acres (eighty square miles) of land and tax and other concession of breathtaking generosity."¹¹⁷ The concessions essentially entailed the surrender of government sovereignty over the island, and allowed Groves to do as he pleased. When work on the industrial park stalled, plans were drawn up for a first-class hotel to provide the development with a boost. The hotel's trump card was its full casino, courtesy of Sands' ability to provide a certificate that exempted the casino from Bahamian laws that prohibited gambling. When the Monte Carlo Casino opened early in 1964, the island's fortunes dramatically improved, and 'Freeport,' formerly a sleepy Out Island, became a destination almost as popular as Nassau.¹¹⁸

Sands' strategy was immensely successful overall and the numbers of annual tourist arrivals shot up more than two thousand percent over his tenure as chief of Bahamian

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 303.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 324.

tourism, from 45,371 in 1950 to 915,273 in 1967. The majority of tourists, nearly ninety percent in 1961, came from North America, mainly the United States. Arrivals from Britain never rose above nine percent of the total. Even better for the economy was the fact that two-thirds of visitors arrived by air and stayed more than two days, far better than the more transient cruise ship passengers who made up the remainder of tourist traffic.

The Bahamas' open-door posture towards foreign investment, articulated by Clifford with his 'no income tax' mantra, was both maintained and enhanced by Sands. As there was no local income, or capital gains tax, and with the introduction of banking laws that adhered to absolute bank secrecy like that found in Switzerland, large sums of capital flowed into Nassau through so-called "suitcase" companies. These entities were little more than "legal fictions designed solely for the purpose of evading United States or British taxation." While the benefits to the country were not as obvious as that of a hotel, they were just as important to the economic life of the Bahamas and the money they generated could be roughly gauged by the proliferation of Nassau's banks and trust companies, the number of which had grown from one in 1946, to twelve by 1962.¹¹⁹

Black Agitation

Since the Burma Road riots in 1942, little progress had been made to advance the cause of the Bahamian black majority. In the early 1950s, hotels were still segregated and the concessions given to foreign investors allowed them to bring in large amounts of expatriate labor. The creation of the Progressive Liberal Party (PLP) by white and light-skinned idealists in 1953, while ushering the Bahamas into the era of the political party,

¹¹⁸ Block, *Masters of Paradise*, 30, 43.

¹¹⁹ Craton, *A History*, 283.

also became a watershed moment in the evolving consciousness of the black population. It was also a clear reaction to the economic obstructionism practiced by the white Bay Street oligarchy.¹²⁰

The PLP party platform released on October 21, 1953 focused the majority of its agenda on the gross inequality of wealth distribution in the country. Echoing the language of the tourist brochure, it declared that "The Progressive Liberal Party is a party for every man with a stake in these beautiful isles of June." The document stated that the PLP adopts this platform in the conviction that the destiny of the Bahamian people is to build a country in which every citizen can obtain a higher standard of living with the promise of greater social and political freedom.¹²¹

With segregation still a bone of contention in the Bahamas and in the US, and the lack of a proper franchise for poor black men and none for women, it is interesting that the question of prosperity should come before the matter of 'greater social and political freedom.' The manifesto also expressed concern for the profound neglect of the Out Islands and their metropolitan dependence on Nassau. Despite the noted desire of its leaders to downplay the issue of race, the party quickly became labeled as 'the black man's party' and it was not long before its light-skinned founders were marginalized and ignored in the very organization that they created.¹²²

The formation of the PLP was followed shortly thereafter by the formation of a political party more mindful of middle-class interests, led by the editor of the local *Nassau Tribune* daily newspaper and MHA, Etienne Dupuch. The party, called the Bahamas Democratic League (BDL), was mainly concerned with the "overwhelming dominance of

¹²⁰ Doris L. Johnson, *The Quiet Revolution in the Bahamas* (Nassau: Family Islands Press, 1972), 31. Craton and Saunders, *Islanders Vol. Two*, 175.

¹²¹ Quoted in Craton and Saunders, *Islanders Vol. Two*.

Bay Street" and partly with the potential of the PLP to polarize the colony's racial situation. Despite the clear antagonisms between the BDL and the PLP, the groups managed to rid the country of discrimination in public places like hotels in early 1956. This was a major breakthrough in race relations and marked the high point in the life of the BDL and, after the encouraging success of the PLP in the elections held later that year, it was clear that the PLP star was rising.

Facing a legitimate threat to its hegemony for the first time, Bay Street responded by combining its interests to form the United Bahamian Party (UBP) two years after the 1956 general election.¹²³ For its part, the PLP under the leadership of the charismatic young lawyer turned politician, Lynden Pindling, who had joined the party almost at its inception, and the energetic but 'erratic' labor leader Randol Fawkes, intensified its opposition to the exclusionary and increasingly corrupt practices of the UBP.¹²⁴ The PLP, in association with Fawkes' labor movement, pushed for more fundamental social change and a greater share of the economic bonanza.

In a major dispute in 1958, the UBP attempted to bar black taxi cab drivers from the Windsor field airport taxi trade in tourists. Ironically, the airport had been the epicenter of the 1942 riot, and the UBP had wanted to give the monopoly to a white owned tour bus company.¹²⁵ The dispute led to a general strike, organized by the PLP and the labor movement, which paralyzed the tourist industry, giving black workers a taste of the collective power they possessed. The governor and the power brokers of Bay Street feared

¹²² Ibid., 309.

¹²³ Johnson, *Quiet Revolution*, 34.

¹²⁴ Craton, *Pindling*, 51, 72.

¹²⁵ Hughes, *Race and Politics*, 62.

a repeat of Burma Road and the British military was called in to stand guard over Bay Street.¹²⁶ Politics in the Bahamas now reflected a struggle to control the strategy, execution and profits of tourism.

Using all levers at their disposal, the UBP began using the national radio station, Zephyr Nassau Sunshine (ZNS), which had begun operations in 1937, as more of a political propaganda tool than ever before.¹²⁷ ZNS coverage of the general strike was roundly criticized by letters to the editor in the local press. The station regularly downplayed or did not report major incidents or developments, leaving the population frustrated.¹²⁸ The UBP did not control Nassau's newspapers, which were essentially free to print what they liked, however, they often walked in ideological lockstep with the UBP of their own accord, and were often supportive of the governing party.¹²⁹ Bay Street's lack of total control in news print, however

was more than made up by the way its dominance in the legislature allowed for the underdevelopment of education — thus guaranteeing ... a lack of political sophistication¹³⁰

Radio was their most effective means of controlling the Out Islands which were too isolated and ill-informed to follow the events in the capital via the printed page as they would get Nassau newspapers days late, if at all. Thus, the people of the Out Islands had come to rely on ZNS as their main source of information. The Out Islands were important to the UBP as their stranglehold of the legislature was largely determined by the over-representation of Out Island constituencies in the House of Assembly.

¹²⁶ Randol Francis Fawkes, *The Faith That Moved the Mountain: A Memoir of a Life and the Times*, 3rd ed. (Nassau: Nassau Guardian, 1997), 121.

¹²⁷ Stuart, "From Monopoly to Duopoly", 162.

¹²⁸ Storr, "Development of Broadcasting in the Bahamas", 303.

¹²⁹ Hughes, *Race and Politics*, 86.

If they were able, the UBP would likely have tried to extend the control they exercised over ZNS to the international press. The strike, and the governor's reaction, was reported widely in the "British, Canadian and American press." The colony did not fare well under the international scrutiny it received. The Bay Street powers received harsh criticism for their systematic repression of the population. Throughout the Carolinas, Georgia and Florida, the Bay Street boys were, according to the *New York Times*, regarded as the "biggest gang of pirates yet unhung."¹³¹ The British Embassy in Washington was understandably embarrassed by the press reaction and feared that if it showed public support for Bay Street, it too would receive international scorn.¹³²

The embarrassment extended all the way to London, prompting Secretary of State for the Colonies, Lennox Boyd, to visit the Bahamas in April 1958, "to investigate the underlying causes of the strike and to make recommendations for change."¹³³ This was the first ever visit to the Bahamas by "such a high [ranking] imperial official."¹³⁴ Boyd's visit lasted only a week and, after touring the islands and talking with the government and the opposition, determined that changes needed to be made. He recommended changes to the constitution, universal adult male suffrage, (he did not see enough demand for women to get the vote despite the women's suffrage movement being almost ten years old) and restricting the plural vote, which gave land owners, usually white, the right to vote wherever they held property.¹³⁵ He threatened that if Bay Street would not implement the

¹³⁰ Craton and Saunders, *Islanders Vol. Two*, 301, 2.

¹³¹ *New York Times*, Jan 14, 1958, quoted in Saunders, *Bahamian Society*, 202.

¹³² Ibid.

¹³³ Ibid., 203.

¹³⁴ Craton, *Pindling*, 85.

¹³⁵ Ibid., 91, 2.

changes themselves they would find change imposed from above; "No one should be in doubt as to the ultimate authority of the Imperial Parliament," he said.¹³⁶

Predictably then, most of the suggested electoral reform was soon made law. Through the efforts of Bahamian women and the support of Labor, sufficient demand was found to get women the vote in 1961, and they consequently exercised their new power in the 1962 general elections.¹³⁷ To the dismay of the PLP, this reform did not lead to immediate victory. Judging from public response at the time, Saunders suggests that fear of black government was not limited to whites but also extended to colored and other blacks who felt that the PLP was not able to run the colony as well as whites.¹³⁸

The UBP took advantage of its new lease on life and the colony swiftly moved through its most rapid rise in prosperity. They moved to further adjust the constitution and brought internal self-government to the colony in 1964, which according to historian Gordon Lewis was merely a "formal ratification of a *de facto* situation."¹³⁹ With the changeover Roland Symonette became the first premier of the Bahamas; the Development Board became the Ministry of Tourism, and Stafford Sands the new Minister of Tourism, a post he held in addition to his appointment as Minister of Finance.¹⁴⁰ Additionally the governor's powers were "greatly diminished" and Britain retained control of only "foreign affairs, defense, internal security, and further changes in the constitution."¹⁴¹

¹³⁶ Hughes, *Race and Politics*, 66.

¹³⁷ Ibid., 313. Craton, *Pindling*, 92, 3.

¹³⁸ Craton and Saunders, *Islanders Vol. Two*, 314.

¹³⁹ Lewis, *The Growth of the Modern West Indies*, 321.

¹⁴⁰ Craton and Saunders, *Islanders Vol. Two*, 303.

¹⁴¹ Ibid., 337, 8.

The PLP saw its setback in the 1962 election as a 'wake-up call' and pressed harder.¹⁴² It had gained enough seats in parliament to form a viable official opposition, and with their small but vocal bloc in the House of Assembly, they made life increasingly difficult for the UBP. In a dramatic episode that was immediately mythologized, Pindling grabbed the mace while the House was engaged in a heated debate over UBP gerrymandering, and said, this "is the symbol of authority, and in this island, authority belongs to the people." He then threw it out of the window towards a large crowd of black supporters who were chanting "PLP, PLP," in the square outside.¹⁴³ While the episode increased the level of racial polarization, it served to convince many undecided black voters that the PLP had the will power necessary to bring about real change.¹⁴⁴

That the UBP was corrupt was a revelation to no one; its conflicts-of-interest were paraded publicly for all to see. Sands, in one blatant example, combined his posts as Minister of Tourism and Finance with a seat on the board of the local subsidiary of the Royal Bank of Canada.¹⁴⁵ What was new was the alleged scale of their private corruption. On October 5, 1966, *The Wall Street Journal* ran a story that was later to win a Pulitzer prize for its authors, claiming that the leaders of the UBP, including Stafford Sands, had received large bribes from shady casino operators and Mafia figures to establish the gambling casinos in Freeport and an impending complex on Paradise Island.¹⁴⁶ The PLP seized on the scandal and got as much political mileage out of it as they possibly could. They made

¹⁴² Craton, *Pindling*, 96.

¹⁴³ Craton and Saunders, *Islanders Vol. Two*, 340.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., 341.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 342.

¹⁴⁶ Monroe W. Karmin, "Las Vegas East." Block, *Masters of Paradise*, 45.

appeals to the Governor to have a full investigation into the matter, and when he delayed, they demanded his resignation and sent a delegation to London.¹⁴⁷

The Tenth Day of the First Month

As the UBP tried to hold onto its power, the tides of popular opinion were turning against it. On December 1, 1966, Roland Symonette, the colony's premier, announced that the election, which was constitutionally due in 1967, would be held on January 10th. He announced that the UBP would be happy to investigate the swirling charges of corruption, but *after* the campaign.¹⁴⁸ The hope of the UBP was that an expedited campaign with a date so close to the Christmas season would find the PLP unprepared and the populace distracted. It miscalculated. After initially resisting the date, the PLP changed gears and turned the date into one of religious significance; it reminded voters that the ancient Israelites in the Biblical story of Exodus were released from bondage in Egypt on the "tenth day of the first month" and they prophesied that the colony's oppressed blacks would be freed on the same day.¹⁴⁹ This appealed to the religious zeal of black Bahamians, who were nothing if not fluent in the Biblical story. Collin Hughes writes that

The use of biblical imagery had long been a feature of Bahamian political debate. The Bible was the book, the one book with which all were familiar, closely familiar.

Along these lines, the campaign song was an obvious choice — the oscar-winning theme from the 1960 film "Exodus." Anticipation of the election became feverish and in the fervor Lynden Pindling was recast as the black Bahamian Moses.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁷ Hughes, *Race and Politics*, 116.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., 119.

¹⁴⁹ Craton, *Pindling*, 131, 2. That the Israelites operated on a lunar calendar, making their first month equivalent to March-April on our Gregorian calendar, was a minor technicality.

¹⁵⁰ Strachan, *Paradise and Plantation*, 121, 2.

The election resulted in a dead heat between the two major parties and it was only the decisions of two independent MHA's to side with Pindling that enabled the PLP win the election. Labor leader Randol Fawkes joined ranks with the PLP under the condition that he be appointed Minister of Labor in the new government and Alvin Breyنان, unwilling to join the UBP, agreed to become the neutral Speaker of the House.¹⁵¹ Lynden Pindling, at thirty-six years of age, became the colony's first black premier. There was understandable euphoria among the black eighty percent of the population over the victory, although the leaders of the PLP were well aware that the fight to shift the balance of power in the Bahamas was not over.¹⁵²

The UBP and its supporters believed that its defeat was only an aberration and its return to power was imminent. An editorial in *The Nassau Guardian* for January 11, 1967, tried its hand at scare mongering:

Ahead we foresee a period of inactivity, a virtual standstill. The prosperity the UBP has created over the years will continue for a while, driven on by its own impetus. But the future assurance of prosperity depends upon the injection of a constant flow of development capital, and we do not believe that conditions here will attract new investments...

From these ashes we must hope and pray that the UBP will rise, phoenix-like, again to guide the destiny of the Bahamas.¹⁵³

The editorial merely repeated the UBP election claims that the black leaders of the PLP were naturally incompetent and only the white business class was capable of managing tourism and the economy. Black government was called a "nightmare" as it was felt that

¹⁵¹ Robert Bernard Spadoni, "National Identity Formation and Diffusion in the Commonwealth of the Bahamas: A Politico-Geographic Appraisal" (PhD diss., University of Northern Colorado, 1977), 59. Craton and Saunders, *Islanders Vol. Two*, 346.

¹⁵² Spadoni, "National Identity Formation", 59. Hughes, *Race and Politics*, 124.

¹⁵³ Editor, "Comment: The Stalemate," *The Nassau Guardian and Bahamas Observer*, Thursday, January 12, 1967.

there were not enough black people of sufficient competence to fill government posts.¹⁵⁴

The reference to ‘conditions’ that would fail to attract new investments reflected global ambivalence in an era of fractious colonial emancipation around the world.

Reassurances to the *Status Quo*

When Pindling announced his cabinet on January 16, 1967, the “major surprise” was that he himself took over half of Stafford Sands portfolio, taking the title of minister of tourism and development, while spinning the ministry of finance off to his former school teacher Carleton Francis.¹⁵⁵ Pindling’s self-appointment and the addition of the vaguely defined portfolio of ‘development’ harkened back to the ministry’s origin as the Bahamas Development Board. The move also backed up his claims that tourism would be a major priority under his administration.

The new 10-man PLP administration was young and inexperienced save for two stalwarts, Clarence Bain and Milo Butler, who were in their 60s. Without them, the average age of the cabinet would have been thirty-eight.¹⁵⁶ However, it did not take experience for the PLP to realize that any faltering of the economy would be blamed on it, or to realize that Bay Street was waiting to capitalize on any misstep. Thus began a process of convergence, as Colin Hughes writes, whereby “the UBP [became] more liberal in pursuit of votes [and] the PLP [became] more conservative in pursuit of business support.”¹⁵⁷ Pindling succinctly

¹⁵⁴ Craton and Saunders, *Islanders Vol. Two*, 302.

¹⁵⁵ Anonymous, “Pindling Takes over the Pulse,” *The Nassau Guardian and Bahamas Observer*, Tuesday, January 17, 1967, 8. Craton, *Pindling*, 142.

¹⁵⁶ Craton, *Pindling*, 143.

¹⁵⁷ Hughes, *Race and Politics*.

phrased the political environment in an interview with the *Guardian* newspaper on the 11th of January: "I can't see us doing anything to cut our own throats."¹⁵⁸

In a press conference in the Cabinet Chamber on January 16th, Pindling gave a brief sketch of his governmental policy to local and foreign journalists, reemphasizing the PLP campaign slogan of "A square deal," but gave little real detail. Pindling said that his government was committed to maintain its part in "the defense pattern of the western world and these islands will no longer be a haven for gangsters."¹⁵⁹ This was in part a reference to the gambling-related accusations that had been circling over the UBP like vultures over a carcass. Pindling was also hinting that his administration had no intention of becoming socialist, or even worse, communist like neighboring Cuba.

Proving himself to be more pragmatist than revolutionary, Pindling continually reiterated his desire to leave the *status quo* undisturbed. He said:

Let me therefore reassure our friends abroad that my Government will foster the climate of free enterprise which they have come to expect in the Bahamas.

Our plans for the pleasure of tourists call for more, not less. Our plans for the confidence of investors call for immediate person-to-person conference with leaders both here and abroad.¹⁶⁰

The PLP economic plan called for diversification in "light industrial development" at some unspecified point in the future. This would be modeled on Puerto Rico's 1940 'Operation Bootstrap' experiment, which transformed that island from an agrarian-based economy into a more industrialized one. But the PLP knew that tourism was the only economic leg it could then stand on, and it was the only means it had of underwriting the cost of any

¹⁵⁸ Lynden Oscar Pindling, *The Vision of Sir Lynden Pindling in His Own Words : Letters and Speeches 1948-1997*, ed. Patricia Beardsley Roker (Nassau: The Estate of Sir Lynden Pindling, 2000).

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., 24.

experiments in diversification.¹⁶¹ It was the goose that laid the golden egg, and its continued health was imperative to the PLP's political survival.¹⁶²

The Slacking Electorate

Pindling, seen by the masses as a savior, also had to contend with Bahamians' sky-high expectations and directed some of his energies in the immediate post-election period to bringing these expectations down-to-earth. On January 17th, 1967, he gave his first radio address to the Bahamian people. He styled it as a "chat rather than a speech," echoing the 'fireside chats' that F. D. Roosevelt used to great effect in the depression era US, promising that this would be the first of many similar broadcasts. The radio address was preceded and concluded by the music of the recent campaign, the poignant theme to the movie Exodus, a not-so-subtle reminder of the election victory, the campaign rhetoric, and his own role as the Bahamian Moses, all in one.¹⁶³

Black Bahamians were understandably jubilant and they were chomping at the bit, anxious to receive what they felt was their due from a system that had denied their existence as equal human beings for so long. Many had hoped that the election of the PLP was akin to a collective pink slip being handed out to foreign workers. This was not to be.¹⁶⁴ In his fifteen minute address Pindling said:

I have also been disturbed about reports that some workers are slacking on their jobs thinking that they no longer have to work hard. Let me say that we need to work harder today than we have ever done before... I want our waiters

¹⁶⁰ Anonymous, "The P.L.P. Philosophy... A Square Deal: But Pindling Gives Little Away," *The Nassau Guardian and Bahamas Observer*, Tuesday, January 17, 1967, 1.

¹⁶¹ Ibid., 9.

¹⁶² Strachan, *Paradise and Plantation*, 140.

¹⁶³ Paul Grahame, "Stop Slacking: Premier Tells Workers," *The Nassau Guardian and Bahamas Observer*, Wednesday, January 18, 1967.

¹⁶⁴ Benson McDermott, "Hotel Workers Have Failed Mr. Pindling," *The Nassau Guardian and Bahamas Observer*, Friday, January 12, 1968.

and maids to smile and be courteous more than ever before because you have something to smile for now. If you fail and then I shall fail and I don't want to fail. So I ask you please not to fail.¹⁶⁵

If majority rule was conceived as a role reversal with black replacing white on the socioeconomic ladder, his words were unexpected. Talk of hard work after such a joyous victory over the enemy was probably not what the population wanted to hear. And then to say that they must work harder than they had ever done before? The subtle manoeuvre of broadening the responsibility for the fulfillment of campaign promises on the people was quite the political slight of hand, but the appeal to the pride of the "waiters and maids" of Bahamaland must have been a difficult pill for blacks to swallow when the managers of the hotels were still white and / or expatriate and the only employment they could get was as "waiters and maids."

Pindling faced a difficult balancing act. He had to maintain the tourist industry for the sake of the economy and at the same time keep the people in line without letting them feel that he was selling them out. Little wonder that, in keeping with his quasi-religious role, Pindling concluded his chat by quoting from the Bible verse of Second Samuel 23:3 and then said "Pray God your Progressive Liberal Party and your new government will rule justly and fairly for all mankind."¹⁶⁶ He could use all of the help he could get.

Conclusion

The economic history of the Bahamas has been one of deepening dependence on an industry that exists, for the most part, outside of local control. With the coming of majority

¹⁶⁵ Grahame, "Stop Slacking." Cleare, *History of Tourism*, 165., Strachan, *Paradise and Plantation*, 123.

¹⁶⁶ The verse according to the King James Version reads "The God of Israel said, the Rock of Israel spake to me, He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God." Pindling slightly misquoted it in his radio address, perhaps blending two translations. Grahame, "Stop Slacking."

rule in January 1967, black Bahamians, who constituted eighty percent of the population, felt that for the first time they could take control of their destiny. When the new PLP led legislature met for the first time on February 9th, 1967, there was a crowd of twenty-five thousand on hand to witness proceedings and the spectacle was even broadcast live on Miami's channel 4 TV.¹⁶⁷ That evening the new administration was treated to a gala performance at Government House by black American entertainment "royalty" like Bill Cosby, Miriam Makeba and Harry Belafonte, a festivity that was led by Bahamian movie star Sidney Poitier, who was also a vocal supporter of the PLP.¹⁶⁸

The mood for most blacks was filled with expectations and hope. But as young Premier Pindling already knew, and the people would also discover, the real master of the colony was not the UBP, or even Britain; plantation economics had finally come to the Bahamas in the form of tourism and the metropole that was firmly in charge of that dynamic was the United States. Tourism accounted for the overwhelming majority of the country's gross national product (GNP) and could not be ignored.¹⁶⁹ Pindling may have been Moses to his people, but the tablets that he brought down from the mountain were made in the U.S.A. and contained only one commandment: "Thou must smile."

¹⁶⁷ Anonymous, "House Opens Today — and You Can See It on T.V.," *The Nassau Guardian*, Thursday, February 9, 1967. Hughes, *Race and Politics*, 126. Although Bahamians did not have their own television station, they were close enough to Florida to receive spillover American television signals, such that the schedule of Miami's TV station was a regular feature in the local newspapers at least from the late 60s. Local television was a perennial political promise in the colony since 1958 that was not realized until 1977. Storr, "Development of Broadcasting in the Bahamas", 284, 290.

¹⁶⁸ Craton, *Pindling*, 131, 144.

¹⁶⁹ Bahamas Ministry of Tourism, *Tourism in the Bahama Islands 1967*, 1967. (Nassau) Foreword.

Chapter 3

The Economics of Smiling: A History of the Bahamian Courtesy Campaign 1955 — 1970

The selling of the paradise myth is a fickle business and friendliness is an intrinsic part of the Bahamian product. The tourist arrives in the islands with expectations of smiling service because friendliness is a central facet of the craving for a mythic paradise, a place free of the impersonality of modern urban life.¹ If, however, paradise turns out to be unfriendly, the guest leaves unsatisfied. Mythic expectations are encouraged and promoted in tourist advertising — in print, on radio and television — luring the foreigner, typically a white American, to vacation in the Bahamas. At the same time, other media are used by the local government to manage the responses of the population once the tourist arrives. The tourist returns home, hopefully satisfied, and the cycle begins again.

Given the primary place of tourism in the Bahamian economy it is understandable why successive governments have guarded the industry fiercely and have employed varying strategies to secure its clientele. These strategies have, over time, translated slow and inefficient service into the rustic charm of ‘island time.’ But when the slow and inefficient degenerates into the mean and belligerent, simple rebranding is not enough. It is then that the government turns to the courtesy campaign. These programs, conducted at regular intervals, are designed to remind the population that tourists *are* the economy and should be treated accordingly. In the process, the campaigns gloss over significant social problems and inequalities implicit in, or brought about by, tourism, with heavy doses of conditioning that can essentially be boiled down to the maxim: “the customer is always

right." Over the years the Bahamian has learned that smiling service is essential to their economic wellbeing and that courtesy is the equivalent of treason.

Historiography

Since *The Fergusons of Farm Road* radio show, the object of this study, is a product of the ongoing Bahamian courtesy campaign, it is appropriate that we first attempt to understand the originating phenomenon. In the small pool of literature that is the field of Bahamian history, the courtesy campaign has been largely ignored. This neglect is surprising given its importance to the maintenance of the modern Bahamian tourism apparatus.

These campaigns earn only brief mentions in even the best histories of the islands, that is, if they receive any mention at all. For example, the second part of Michael Craton and Gail Saunders *Islanders in the Stream*, the first attempt to write a comprehensive national history of the modern Bahamas to date, devotes one half of one sentence to the phenomenon in almost five hundred pages of text.² Craton gives a fuller three sentence coverage of the campaigns in his 2002 biography of Pindling, but in that brief space he manages to not only conflate two distinct campaigns but also gives the erroneous impression that Pindling was still minister of tourism in 1970, when in actuality he had already passed the tourism baton twice.³ Courtesy campaigns in the Caribbean have received similar scant attention. Polly Pattullo provides only a snapshot of these

¹ Strachan, *Paradise and Plantation*, 116.

² Craton and Saunders, *Islanders Vol. Two*, 357, 8.

³ Craton, *Pindling*, 162.

campaigns, or ‘tourism awareness programs’ as she calls them, in the form of a three-page subheading in *Last Resorts*, her classic study of Caribbean tourism.⁴

The only substantive treatment of courtesy campaigns in general, and the Bahamian version in particular comes courtesy of Ian Strachan in his 2002 book, *Plantation and Paradise: Tourism and Culture in the Anglophone Caribbean*, in which he analyzes aspects of the Bahamian ‘Pride and Joy’ courtesy campaign of 1984 and the memorable enactment of courtesy in 1990 by Sir Lynden Pindling who ‘worked’ various tourist-related jobs, for example becoming a bell boy for a few hours, to show Bahamians how things were supposed to be done.⁵ While he is both informative and analytical, and correctly situates the campaigns as a part of “the long tradition of [paradisiac] mystification,” Strachan does not attempt to trace the origins of the Bahamian courtesy campaign nor does he fully explicate its place as a significant and recurring method of social control of the modern Bahamian state.⁶

The smattering of coverage in the literature has also perpetuated a persistent myth about Bahamian bad service and thus the need for corrective courtesy campaigns: namely that they are the direct outcome of majority rule and were thus ushered in by the Progressive Liberal Party (PLP) with its electoral victory of 1967. While this argument seems reasonable enough on the surface, it becomes ludicrous and demeaning to black Bahamians under closer scrutiny. This chapter then, represents the first comprehensive discussion of the Bahamian courtesy campaign that this author is aware of. It defines the phenomenon as a significant form of social control that has been a recurring feature of the

⁴ Pattullo, *Last Resorts*, 70-3.

⁵ Strachan, *Paradise and Plantation*, 116 - 124.

local landscape since at least the dawn of mass tourism in the 1950s. Gordon K. Lewis memorably described the Bahamian ruling classes in 1968, as 'paranoid tourist-worshippers' — the courtesy campaign is testament to the continuing perfection of that faith.

Taking the Reins

It should not come as a surprise to us that upon taking office in 1967, the Progressive Liberal Party (PLP) took tourism more seriously than did the United Bahamian Party (UBP) that it replaced. Certainly it had more to lose if the industry failed under its stewardship. In *the Wall Street Journal's* report of 1966, alleging UBP connections between United States (US) mobsters and Bahamian gambling, Pindling is quoted as expressing hope that he could retain the services of his erstwhile political foe Sir Stafford Sands as minister of tourism and finance if the PLP won the next election.⁷ The offer was probably not extended but it would not have mattered. Putting "an end to the end of an era" Sands sold his businesses, closed his law practice, resigned his seat in the House of Assembly and lived his last remaining days under imminent death sentence from cancer in self-imposed exile in Spain.⁸ Bahamian tourism was, therefore, 'under new management.'

After taking the post of minister of tourism and development upon himself, Pindling discovered that the autocratic Sands essentially *was* the ministry of tourism. In May of 1968, when defending his budget request — mainly for administrative purposes — for a sizable increase of \$660,825 to the already gargantuan tourism allotment, Pindling

⁶ Ibid., 116.

⁷ Monroe W. Karmin, "Las Vegas East."

⁸ Craton and Saunders, *Islanders Vol. Two*, 347. Hughes, *Race and Politics*, 130, 1.

described the organization he inherited as "a fiction existing on paper."⁹ The command structure of the ministry had consisted of Sands at the top and little more than a news bureau with local and overseas sales offices below. Planning and promotion were not conducted in any systemized way and were not based on accurate data, or much data at all. Pindling complained in the budget debates that "nothing, nothing at all, was done by my predecessor... to study even the basic facts about [the] markets."¹⁰ It was decided that the business of tourism in the Bahamas would henceforth require an "advanced level of professionalism."¹¹

Calling the Shots

The emphasis on 'professionalism,' of course, begs the question of Pindling's own qualifications for his self-appointed job of tourism chief. It could be argued that Sands at least had the benefit of mentorship by previous heads of the Development Board, like H. G. Christie — Pindling had no such tutelage but was a well educated "University of London-trained barrister [from] a working-class background."¹² He was, of course, also a capable and skilled political leader, but he was not the omnipotent and omniscient figure that seems to arise from Bahamian history texts. Take, for example, Angela Cleare's *History of Tourism in the Bahamas*, where speaking of Pindling's actions in the ministry of tourism she says: "Premier Pindling initiated the process of long-term planning, and building a professional organization."¹³ Michael Craton's biography of Pindling follows suit, saying that, "in March, 1970, [Pindling] initiated and starred in a well publicized 'Friendliness'

⁹ Anonymous, "Premier Labels Past Tourism Ministry as Only a 'Fiction Existing on Paper'," *The Nassau Guardian and Bahamas Observer*, Wednesday, May 22, 1968.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Tourism, *Annual Report 1967*. 7.

¹² Strachan, *Paradise and Plantation*, 121.

Campaign.”¹⁴ So common is this type of sentiment that it goes unnoticed and the ‘cult of the leader’ gains members through sheer momentum. We need to look closer at what Pindling’s ‘initiating’ entailed.

The unvarnished words of Clement Maynard in his 2007 memoir, *Put on More Speed*, provide us with a more realistic perspective on what it might have been like to take over the reins of a ministry with no prior experience:

apart from my personal experiences [as a tourist], I had no formal knowledge of the requirements and techniques for promoting tourism, when I was appointed Minister of Tourism in 1969. In fact, very few Bahamians did, but I was adamant about learning the intricacies related to the profession of tourism.¹⁵

It is likely that Pindling began his tenure as minister of tourism in a similar predicament. It should be remembered, though, that Maynard was moving from one ministry to another, and was at least familiar with the machinery of state — Pindling did not even have this advantage in 1967. Craton’s biography of Pindling touches briefly on this transition period:

What [the new PLP government] lacked [in 1967], as Pindling himself was privately to admit, was any experience of the workings of the executive under the system of responsible government. Here, like the UBP ministers before them, they benefitted hugely from the friendly help of the Colonial Office and from the British traditions that the actual machinery of Cabinet and ministries was run by expert civil servants permanently employed and politically neutral.¹⁶

While we can take Craton’s suggestion of ‘friendly help’ and ‘political neutrality’ with the pre-requisite grain of salt, he does shed valuable light on the role of advisors to the process and functioning of the new PLP government which was clearly dependent, at least initially, on the expertise of those who had come before.

¹³ Cleare, *History of Tourism*, 166.

¹⁴ This sentence by Craton is incorrect on several levels, as we shall see later. Craton, *Pindling*, 162.

¹⁵ Sir Clement T. Maynard, *Put on More Speed: A Bahamian Journey to Majority Rule & Sovereignty*, vol. Memoirs Volume 1 (Nassau: I-Ease Publishack, 2007), 277.

¹⁶ Craton, *Pindling*, 143.

With Sands having vacated the premises and soon to abandon the country, it is little wonder that one of the first items on Pindling's to-do list was the recruitment of an internationally respected tourism expert to 'assist' him. By mid-July 1967 he had found Som Nath Chib, and he became the first person to serve in the newly created position of director of tourism in September. Chib had served as the Director General of Tourism in India for ten years and had been President of the International Union of Official Travel Organizations in 1958, he had also headed the Pacific Area Travel Association in 1965, and had been co-chairman of the United Nations Conference on International Travel and Tourism in 1963.¹⁷ Chib was clearly qualified to both guide Pindling and re-create Bahamian tourism from the ground up.

It was also in July 1967 that Pindling installed another crucial component of the ministry of tourism. He did this by consolidating its advertising from a mishmash of contracts with separate firms, many of whom had already resigned of their own accord, to the Delaware-based Interpublic Group of Companies (IPG).¹⁸ IPG describes itself as a 'holding company' that manages and directs many smaller public relations entities like that of McCann-Erickson. The company presently describes itself as the "grandfather of the global marketing communications" as some of their corporate components date back to 1902. Handling brands as diverse as the Encyclopedia Britannica and Vaseline in the 1960s, the associated companies began operating under the Interpublic name in 1961 and when Pindling hired them, they were one of the largest advertising agencies in the world.¹⁹

¹⁷ Tourism, *Annual Report* 1967. 7.

¹⁸ Anonymous, "Another P.R. Firm Cancels Contract with Ministry," *The Nassau Guardian and Bahamas Observer*, Friday, May 12, 1967. Cleare, *History of Tourism*, 167.

¹⁹ Interpublic Group, *Interpublic Group 2008 Annual Report* (Pittsburgh, 2008), 2.

Pindling thus began his role as premier and minister of tourism and development under the influence of a large brain-trust. There were the British civil servants on one side, Chib as chief tourism guru and the marketing experts at Interpublic on the other. Interpublic did more than advise however, as they performed many of the ministry's actual functions. The Bahamas News Bureau, a crucial component of the ministry, not only had numerous employees on the Interpublic payroll, it also reported directly to an Interpublic subsidiary in New York. Interpublic also maintained an office within the ministry of tourism well into the 1970s.²⁰

Maynard described Chib as "my right hand" and that he "regarded him as [his] adviser on matters of policy and [his] early instructor on the business of tourism management" and it is likely that he filled a similar role for Pindling.²¹ Angela Cleare, the author of the *History of Tourism in the Bahamas*, was among the first Bahamians employed in the ministry of tourism during the Pindling era. As a personal recruit of the premier himself, she began working at the ministry in 1968. In an interview, she described the decision-making process as follows:

Som Chib ... came up with the ideas and the advertising agency came up with the ideas. They were all submitted to Pindling as the minister who said 'yea' or 'ne'. And because he had so many other things to do, more often than not, he said 'yes'.²²

Pindling, according to Cleare, was much more concerned with the Bahamianization of the ministry than its marketing. Bahamianization, in this case, basically refers to how quickly natives were being trained to replace foreigners and expatriates. This was an

²⁰ Angela B. Cleare, telephone interview by author, Nassau, July 29, 2009. Sonia Mills, telephone interview by author, Kingston, Jamaica, July 9, 2009.

²¹ Maynard, *Put on More Speed*, 277, 8.

²² Cleare, interview

understandable concern, since many of the ministry's functions were essentially outsourced and the number of Bahamians employed was a figure that would get Pindling the greatest political mileage.

Cleare later took pains to stress that the "minister, whoever he was, sat in all the meetings, listened to all the measurements and asked very deliberate questions."²³ Regardless of the questions asked, Chib and Interpublic were the experts and Pindling was the tourism neophyte. It seems likely then that the actual directing and design of tourism in the Bahamas, at least in the PLP's initial years in power, did not come from the top. Pindling thus 'initiated' policy in the sense that he ultimately approved what was done, but his role was clearly more rubber-stamp than creative spark.

Under New Management

The management of tourism in the Chib / Interpublic era was focused on the science and methodologies of modern marketing and advertising which had come into its heyday in the 1950s. Tools such as market segmentation, socio-economic profiling and product differentiation were now as easily applied to auto sales as they were to tourism. While Sands had been content to rely on raw arrival numbers and his instincts, the new administration wanted more and bitterly complained about Sands' statistical slackness:

Immigration cards have been an important source for visitor statistics. However, they have yielded no information on the characteristics of these visitors. Such data were considered essential for framing future policies. In fact, considering the importance of tourism to the economy of the Bahamas it was surprising how little was known about visitors.²⁴

²³ Ibid.,

²⁴ Tourism, *Annual Report 1967*. 17.

Tourist promotion was to be targeted more precisely, and the main market of the United States, which represented over ninety percent of arrivals, was broken into more distinct regions, with special emphasis on the Eastern US as the Bahamas' core client base.²⁵ This was not simply an academic exercise in map drawing as several US Regional Sales offices were closed and others were formed. For example, while Stafford Sands had four offices promoting the Bahamas in the Eastern US, the area was re-divided between seven, with one office dealing only with the New York City area.²⁶ Advertising was divided along similar lines with a "thin blanket" of coverage in nationally circulated magazines and a thicker blanket of ads in important regional magazines coinciding with the ministry's first use of television advertisements.²⁷

The Bahamas itself was subdivided into three separate products to promote. The two main cities of Nassau and Freeport became separate attractions used for advertising; Nassau offered a cosmopolitan and exciting 'foreign' flavor, while Freeport provided exciting gambling and nightlife. They continued a trend from the Sands' era that promoted the undeveloped and neglected out islands as 'unspoiled' product differentiators and claimed it as a new innovation.²⁸ The ministry also began producing slick annual reports, giving an overview of the business to travel agents as if they were shareholders in a publicly traded corporation. And in many ways they were. Travel agents are the gate keepers of any tourism industry, and in the pre-internet era, travel agents directed tourists to destinations — so this was an important demographic to convert.

²⁵ Cleare, *History of Tourism*, 560.

²⁶ Tourism, *Annual Report* 1967. 9-11.

²⁷ Ibid. 14. Chris Symmonett, "Interviewed on Mary's Notebook: Bahamas and Caribbean Will Benefit from L.B.J.'S Ban, Premier Says," *The Nassau Guardian and Bahamas Observer*, Tuesday, January 9 1968.

²⁸ Tourism, *Annual Report* 1967. 14.

Let's Assume I'm An Island

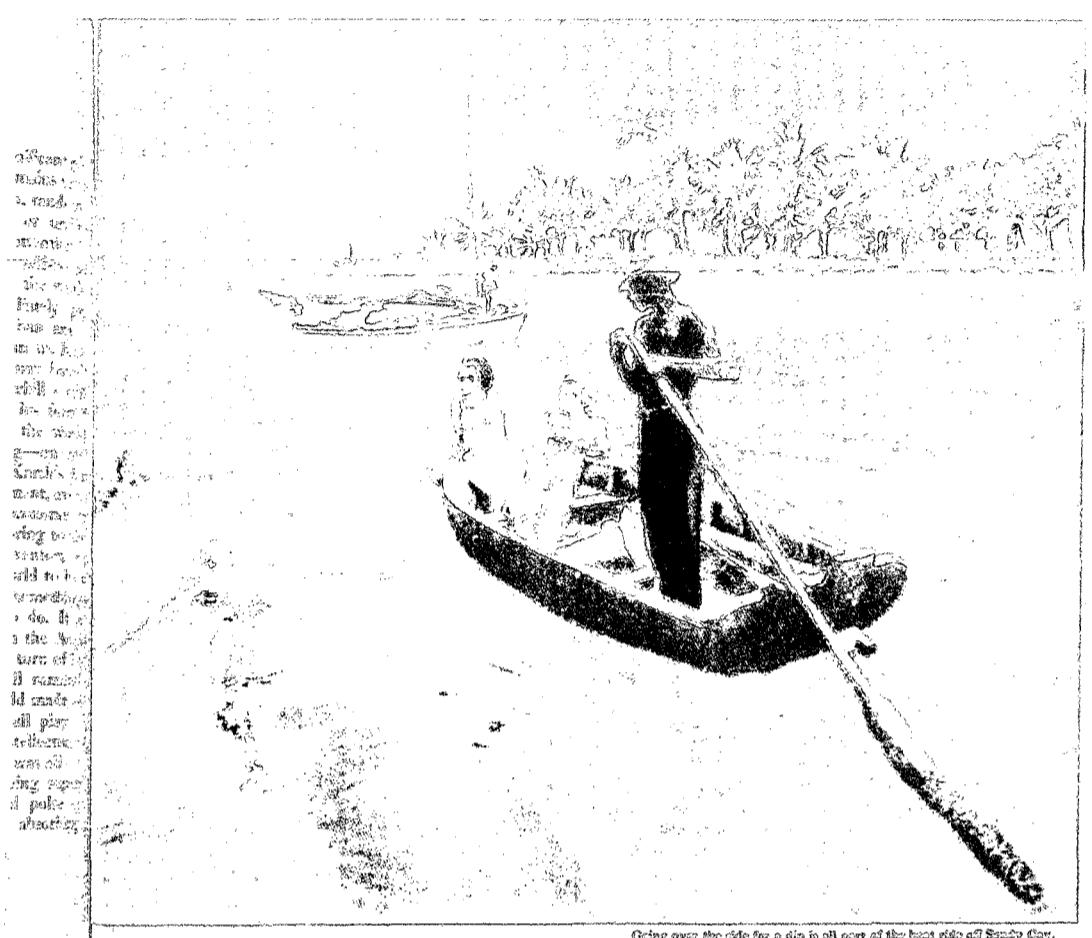
The advertisements Chib and Interpublic produced were a radical departure from anything that had come before. Ads for the Bahamas during the Sands era were always terse and featured large colorful and conservative photographs that emphasized the beautiful beaches or the rustic scenery of the islands. Black Bahamians only began appearing in ministry advertising as late as 1966, the last days of the UBP government, and then only appeared in either clear positions of subservience or were used to illustrate Bahamian exotica. (See figure 7) The new advertisements immediately abandoned the previous conservatism and went straight for the sexual jugular. With slogans like "Are You Big Enough For the Bahamas" and photographs with clear phallic imagery, black people again faded into the background, that is if they appeared at all. While the 'crystal-clear' Bahamian water had long gathered attention in promotional material the Interpublic ads transferred the water's storied transparency to the entire colony. The ad in figure 8 is an indicator of this odd shift. In previous advertisements the water *was* an attraction, but here it is merely the medium for cheap voyeurism. The copy of another ad reads "Find out, once and for all, how it feels to take off your clothes and swim in the raw. You can. Nobody's looking." It is as if the country is itself ethereal, no/body is there, and it exists only for the pleasure of the traveler.

Almost all of the ads display a disturbing fascination with the white, barely clad female body that reached its nadir in an entire series that used the bikinied body as a metaphor for the Bahamas. (See figure 9) The headline read "Let's Assume I'm an Island" and the image displayed a solitary white female, scantily clad, wading in shallow water. The copy of the ads was written as if it came from the woman herself, extolling the virtues of a

particular Bahama Island, always sure to emphasize its proximity to the US, ending with the phrase: "That's what I call conveniently located." In another similar ad, shown in figure 10, each major island in the archipelago became a voluptuous bathing beauty (there are a few black women in this image). This blatant feminization of the Bahamas encourages each visitor to re-enact the colonial conquest with a sexual twist. In the words of Ian Strachan who was analyzing a descendant of these very images, "the land, the woman, and the nation, then are all awaiting penetration and possession."²⁹

This style of advertisement not only diverged from what had come before, but was also far racier than any other Caribbean destination was attempting at the time. Perhaps Chib and the experts at Interpublic wished to exploit the sexual freedom that was beginning to permeate US society in the form of the hippie and other liberation movements to their advantage. One wonders what Pindling's reaction was to these ads as they were unveiled to him at ministry meetings and if he gave them much thought before he approved them. Regardless, it is troubling that these were the first images that the new Bahamian state chose (or passively signed-off on) to represent itself to the world.

²⁹ Strachan, *Paradise and Plantation*, 31.



Giving over the side for a dip in all ports of the best ride off Sandy Cay.

Does the Bahamian sea need retouching?

"We run pictures of the clear sea, we get mail from skeptical They find it hard to believe that be this transparent. And we don't m. We see it every day and we still ed to believe.

Thousands of scuba divers, glass-bottom boat explorers, sunba der skins and bikini watchers who edared that there is more to this sea meets the eye. It's just the one you like because of our year cast ins.

New York—S.S. Bahamas and Sons, at 6 P.M. today, under Capt. S. G. Moore, 42 Broadway, New York, or 600 Park Avenue, New York, telephone: GRANITE 4-4444; and Eastern Shipping Lines, Pier 45, 14th Street, New York, New Jersey and other principal cities of Canada and Mexico. No passenger or crew needed by U.S. citizens, same point of embarkation required.

Of course you can't see too much of it at night. But you'll be too busy anyway dancing the limbo, watching the fire swallowers, playing black jack in one of our casinos or listening in on one of our great native steel bands. But you'll know it's there, waiting for you to walk along its edge, or end your evening with a moonlight dip before turning in. Then it will pull you to sleep.

The clear Bahamian sea is only 2½ air hours from New York, 30 minutes from Miami. Mail the coupon. Visit your Travel Agent and then see it with your own eyes.

Bahamas Ministry of Tourism
P.O. Box 500, Elbow Cay Annex
Milano, Florida 33162

Please send free vacation literature to:

Name _____

Street _____

City _____

State _____ Zip Code _____ NV _____

Bahama Islands

Figure 7. In the last years of the UBP regime, black people finally appear in a ministry of tourism ad. They are still, however, clearly placed in positions of subservience. From the November 11, 1966, *New Yorker* page 239.



**If these were not Bahama waters,
look what you would have missed.**

It's an oceanographic fact: Bahama waters are the clearest in the world.
Observe her sunkissed hair. The little brown mole on her left knee.
And see the pretty daisies on her bathing suit?
There's so much to see in the Bahamas.



Figure 8. Ad from the second year of the PLP / Interpublic / Chib era. From the December 7, 1968, *New Yorker* page 254.



Let's assume I'm an Island.

I've got the bluest waters in the world.
Beaches like cream colored silk.
Great big romantic hotels.
And all around me, I've got sleek white yachts with rich men inside.
I'm New Providence Island, Nassau.
Just 2½ hours from Times Square
and that's what I call conveniently located.

700 Bahama Island

© 1968, The Bahamas Government, Ministry of Tourism, Nassau, Bahamas

Figure 9. Bikinied female body as metonym for New Providence in a 'come hither' pose. From the November 30, 1968, *New Yorker* page 143.

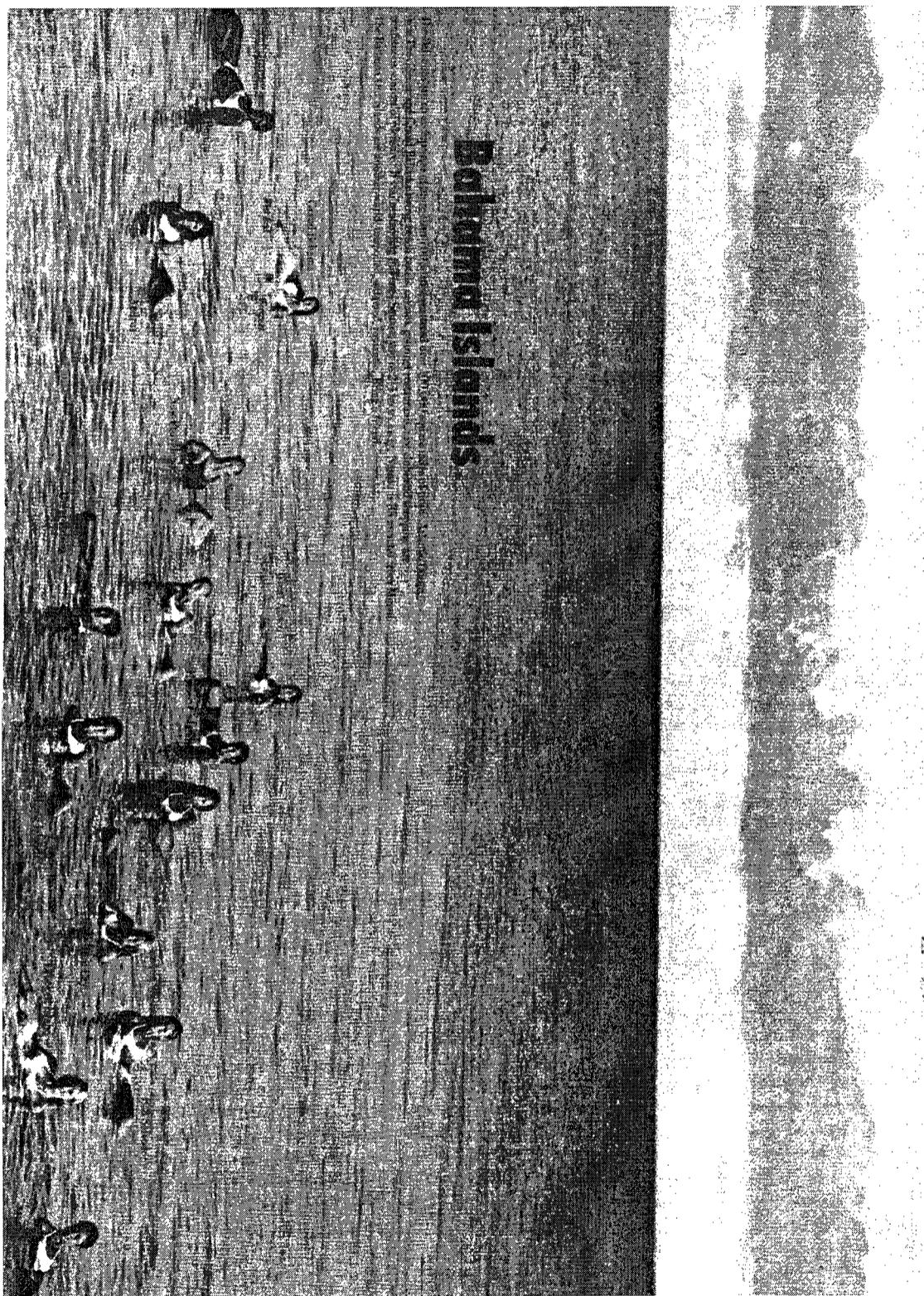


Figure 10. The Bahamas as a collection of bathing beauties. Compare with the map of the Bahamas in figure 1.
From the Bahamas Ministry of Tourism Annual Report, *Tourism in the Commonwealth of the Bahamas* 1968.

Organizational Structure

While he and Interpublic were retooling the Bahamas' image through advertising, Chib also set to work expanding and fleshing out the organizational structure of the ministry of tourism to be "an actual ministry" rather than the hollow structure that had existed before.³⁰ Although, as we have discussed, it took some time before this org-chart reflected reality and was filled with qualified Bahamians and not merely out-sourced Interpublic components. Since the Promotion of Tourism Act was passed by the UBP in 1964, the ministry of tourism existed outside of the jurisdiction of government bureaucracy and 'red tape,' giving it *carte blanche* authority to do whatever it felt was necessary to promote its mandate. It essentially operated more like a private company than a branch of government. While this legislation was perhaps merely a legitimization of the *de facto* freedom that Sands already enjoyed, the PLP did not seriously seek to change this provision as it provided Bahamian tourism authorities with an extra-bureaucratic edge that allowed it to be entrepreneurial in its actions.³¹

In the 1967 annual report, Chib took pride in his scientific and professional re-invention of Bahamian tourism. He went as far as to suggest that the Sands' era had little to do with the unprecedented growth of the trade, saying that it is "questionable whether it was the old methods of promotion which yielded such good results" or just a mixture of good luck and easy opportunism. Chib seemed to be saying that if so much had been done with so little before, now under proper management, the sky was indeed the limit. There was reason for confidence as the ministry had all of the new tools of the trade in place. It had created a mathematical formulae to calculate the amount of money that each tourist

was spending. They had invested in more detailed exit cards, exit surveys and launched several research studies to qualify and quantify the tourist business. They had even introduced an IBM computer system to process both the new information and to analyze the sparse data that Sands had left.³² With the number of visitors at the record level of over 900,000 in 1967 and forecast to reach over a million in 1968, there was no room to leave anything to chance.

Black and in Power

The systematic management being applied to tourism even seemed to extend into the political arena. When the initial PLP budget was presented to parliament in March 1967 by Carleton Francis, the UBP created an uproar over the proposed parliamentary and ministerial salaries slated for the new administration. Due to their private wealth, there was little need for Bay Street politicians in the pre-PLP years of Bahamian politics to receive salaries as House members, or even after the adoption of a ministerial system in 1964, as ministers of government departments. This paid dividends both politically and fiscally because UBP politicians could piously claim that they were not receiving public funds for serving the country, and at the same time it gave them an excuse to mix their private affairs with the people's business. The stance thus gave them a lucrative grip on both the politics and the profits of Bahamian life.³³

PLP politicians tended to come from working and middle-class backgrounds and could not afford such pseudo-altruistic gestures. If they were to manage the country

³⁰ Tourism, *Annual Report 1967*. 8. Symmonett, "Interviewed on Mary's Notebook."

³¹ Maynard, *Put on More Speed*, 275. Cleare, *History of Tourism*, 153, 568.

³² Anonymous, "Premier Labels Past Tourism Ministry as Only a 'Fiction Existing on Paper'."

³³ Craton, *Pindling*, 128.

effectively and thus get reelected, they realized that they would need to devote their full attention to the art of government. However, as Colin Hughes writes, the salaries they granted themselves were "generous by Bahamian public service standards."³⁴ Pindling for example, went from earning no more than \$5,000 per year in his legal practice to a salary equal to that of the Governor at \$27,142, in addition to an \$11,428 annual entertainment allowance. The PLP argued that the generous salaries for elected politicians would reduce the temptation of corruption, a novel idea. Several UBP members ostentatiously donated their new salaries to charity in protest.³⁵ The new budget also established new priorities for spending. Education and health became the largest items in the budget, relegating tourism to third place, at a still significant \$5.5 million.³⁶

The budget debate took place in parlous political circumstances — with an uncomfortably slim majority in the House, the PLP's grasp of power was tenuous. Thus, when an election court voided a no-contest result in an Out-Island constituency and the seat went to a by-election, the government "immediately adjourned the House for seven weeks to fight the campaign."³⁷ Despite this concentrated and expensive effort, the UBP still held onto the seat, albeit by a narrow margin. However, the charges of electoral misconduct that had traditionally been the hallmark of complaints against Bay Street, were now being justifiably leveled against the PLP.³⁸ The party again tried to gain an advantage in the House when Stafford Sands' vacant seat went up for by-election in August. Showing their adaptability, the UBP nominated a black electrician, Cleophas Adderley, as their candidate.

³⁴ Hughes, *Race and Politics*, 128, 9.

³⁵ Craton, *Pindling*, 144,5.

³⁶ Tourism, *Annual Report 1967*. 16. Hughes, *Race and Politics*, 128, 9.

³⁷ Hughes, *Race and Politics*, 129.

³⁸ Craton and Saunders, *Islanders Vol. Two*, 346.

Again, Bay Street managed to retain the seat, although there was noticeable erosion of support in what had been one of its traditional strongholds. The by-election ironically coincided with Sands' own brief return to the colony to testify before a commission of inquiry into the Freeport gambling scandal and its alleged ties to US mafia figures, an action that did much to tarnish his already stained legacy.³⁹

Although the next general election was not constitutionally due until 1974, the PLP was clearly angling for an earlier date. In late November 1967, it tabled recommendations from an electoral committee which adjusted constituency boundaries in a way that would tilt the balance of power more firmly to their side, whenever that next election came.⁴⁰ A contemporary commentator remarked that with the new electoral boundaries the UBP might only win ten or twelve of the proposed thirty-eight seats. At the time of the ratification of this redistribution, PLP backbencher Uriah McPhee was deathly ill from cancer and was unable to cast his vote, thus the boundaries only passed by the deciding vote of the supposedly neutral speaker.⁴¹

During this period the PLP became more adept at manipulating the levers of state to its advantage. It used its monopoly over publicly-funded ZNS radio in much the same way as its predecessors, and perhaps even exceeded their manipulation of the airwaves. During debates broadcast over ZNS in November on an amendment to the currency act for instance, comments from UBP members were essentially censored. The report in *The Guardian* newspaper said that "while UBP members gave their views of the national crisis,

³⁹ Hughes, *Race and Politics*, 131.

⁴⁰ Craton, *Pindling*, 148.

⁴¹ Hughes, *Race and Politics*, 134.

soft music was played."⁴² Contrary to the dire predictions of general collapse from inexperience and incompetence at the beginning of the year, 1967 ended with the PLP still in control and flexing their new muscles.

The World is Watching

Against this backdrop of political precariousness and manoeuvering, it is understandable that Pindling let a promise slide through the cracks. That unfulfilled promise related to the continuation of his radio 'chats.' In his inaugural broadcast, he had memorably told the people to "stop slacking" for fear that they might fail him, and thereby create a chain reaction that would result in doom for all.⁴³ According to *Nassau Guardian* reporter Benson McDermott writing almost a year later, "the January 17, 1967, broadcast proved to be the first and last in the promised series." The original chat was also largely unsuccessful in stimulating a friendlier tourism industry, for not only had Bahamian hotel workers failed, in McDermott's view, but they had "failed him dismally." Nassau had developed a "reputation for slow, unfriendly and generally inefficient service in hotels and restaurants."⁴⁴

To address the problem the Premier returned to the airwaves on January 4, 1968, to readdress the slackers and launch a pre-packaged "courtesy campaign." The campaign was entitled "Look up, Move up, The World is Watching."⁴⁵ It was a multi-faceted and wide-ranging campaign, apparently designed by Interpublic, that attempted to reach as many of the people as possible, especially those who came into contact with tourists. Pindling's

⁴² Anonymous, "Storm over Z.N.S. Broadcast," *The Nassau Guardian and Bahamas Observer*, Tuesday, November 21, 1967.

⁴³ Grahame, "Stop Slacking."

⁴⁴ McDermott, "Failed."

radio address, ironically cut short by power black-outs then plaguing Nassau, was followed later that week by similar radio speeches by other members of his cabinet, namely Randol Fawkes and Arthur Hanna, the respective ministers of labor and education.⁴⁶ A key theme that ran through the talks was the concept of the "new Bahamian." Pindling gave a circular definition to the term, even linking tourism with national purpose, by saying that

That's what we are. We are a new country with our own new government. We are NEW to the world. Every one of us is in an improved new position... both as a private individual and as a citizen of new, and very special country.⁴⁷

Randol Fawkes was slightly more focused in his speech when he said that "the new Bahamian [is one] who is willing to do a job well." Apparently, the "Old Bahamian" — self-absorbed, lethargic and unresponsive to visitor's needs — was responsible for the declining service in tourism and all Bahamians now needed to "resolve to bury the old Bahamian" and his nefarious ways.⁴⁸ An example of the damaging consequences of the 'old Bahamian' to tourism was given by Arthur Hanna who furnished the following anecdote:

The other day a visitor to one of our hotels checked out and refused to pay his bill because he was made to wait over an hour for breakfast while waiters stood about chatting among themselves and ignoring the guest.⁴⁹

Such attitudes of the old Bahamian would only serve to damage the tourist trade, they charged, and if that persisted everyone would suffer. While there was a similar program called "Operation Goodwill" running separately in Freeport, "Look Up" was a more

⁴⁵ P. Anthony White, "Premier Launches Courtesy Campaign with Talk over Z.N.S Today," *The Nassau Guardian and Bahamas Observer*, Thursday, January 4, 1968. Cleare, *History of Tourism*, 166.

⁴⁶ Anonymous, "What Went Wrong?," *The Nassau Guardian and Bahamas Observer*, Friday, January 5, 1968. Pindling's pre-recorded address was broadcast later that evening and again two days later. Anonymous, "Premier's Speech Rebroadcast," *The Nassau Guardian and Bahamas Observer*, Saturday, January 6, 1968.

⁴⁷ Anonymous, "Premier's Broadcast over Z.N.S. Launches Courtesy Campaign: 'Each One Must Do His Part Well ... With Class and Style!'," *The Nassau Guardian and Bahamas Observer*, Friday, January 5, 1968.

⁴⁸ Chris Symmonett, "Fawkes Raps Inattention, Indifference, Slack Work," *The Nassau Guardian and Bahamas Observer*, Monday, January 15, 1968.

"massive campaign" that extended from hotel workers all the way down to school children and aimed to train the nation how to better service the needs of tourism.

Contrary to the tone and tenor of his original address, Pindling tried to soften his message a few days later when asked in a radio interview with Mary Kelly what specific complaints he had heard that led him to launch the courtesy campaign. He said that "only one or two complaints had reached his ear." He quite lamely explained that there had been general complaints about immigration officers and telephone operators leaving people unconnected on the phone lines. These complaints had been investigated and although it was felt that the campaign was necessary to create an atmosphere of "total involvement," Pindling did not feel that "all of the complaints were really justified."⁵⁰

Regardless of the reasons behind the launch, the crown jewel of the "Look Up" campaign was undoubtedly the seven-minute film that starred Pindling himself making the case in living color for Bahamians to be made 'new.' The motion picture was given wide distribution in hotels, was also played in Nassau's six commercial movie houses before feature films and was available from the ministry of tourism to anyone willing to show it. The film tied the definition of the "New Bahamian" to the campaign slogan with another bit of inspirational rhetoric. In the film Pindling apparently described the 'new Bahamian' as "one who looks up, moves up and improves himself because he is aware that the world is watching."⁵¹

⁴⁹ Anonymous, "Let's Keep the Tourist Happy, Says Hanna in Z.N.S. Broadcast," *The Nassau Guardian and Bahamas Observer*, Saturday, January 6, 1968.

⁵⁰ Symmonett, "Interviewed on Mary's Notebook."

⁵¹ White, "Premier Launches Courtesy."

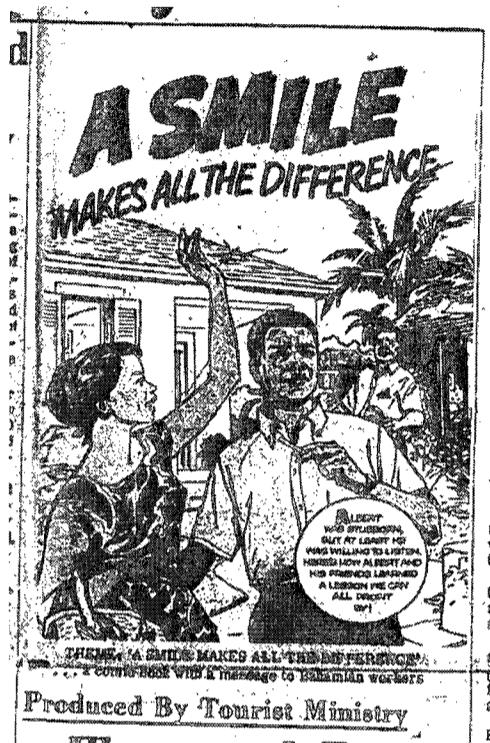


Figure 11. Interpublic produced comic book promoting courtesy

In late February, the campaign moved into its second phase with the mass distribution of special placards and bumper stickers containing the campaign slogan.⁵² The 'Look up' campaign even inspired Paradise Island hotels to institute their own distinct "long-range programme" in June to enhance their levels of courtesy. The most courteous employees of the month, as voted by guests, were rewarded with cash prizes of up to \$25.⁵³

Another phase of the program was launched in September with the release of a special comic book designed by Interpublic that vividly portrayed the transformation of an 'old' Bahamian. (See figure 11) It was entitled *A Smile Makes All the Difference* and was described in a press release as the "story of a Bahamian waiter who never took his job

⁵² P. Anthony White, "Courtesy Campaign Enters New Phase," *The Nassau Guardian and Bahamas Observer*, Friday, February 23, 1968.

seriously and, as a result was beginning to discourage tourists." Over the course of the story, a taxi driver friend proves to the indolent waiter that "courtesy and efficiency in his job could not only enhance customer relations, but lead to better gratuities as well." The booklet was inspired by the success in the US of similar comic books designed to prevent social problems like juvenile delinquency, sexually transmitted diseases and drug abuse. Hotels and stores throughout Nassau received enough copies of the booklet for all of their employees.⁵⁴

Crossing the Red Sea

On 16th February, 1968, the ailing PLP backbencher Uriah McPhee lost his battle with cancer and died in a Boston hospital. He is reported to have given a note to a colleague exhorting his family and friends not to mourn for him because his death was preordained and would serve a higher purpose. This purpose was soon made clear. Understanding the Bahamian love for lavish burials, the government conducted the first ever state funeral in grand style on February 23rd. Four days after having lionized McPhee in death, Premier Pindling announced that there would be no by-election for his vacant seat, but instead called a general election in six weeks' time for April 10th, 1968.⁵⁵

⁵³ Anonymous, "Paradise Island Launches Own Courtesy Campaign," *The Nassau Guardian and Bahamas Observer*, Wednesday, June 26, 1968.

⁵⁴ Anonymous, "Illustrated Book 'Sells' Courtesy," *The Nassau Guardian and Bahamas Observer*, Wednesday, September 4, 1968.

⁵⁵ Hughes, *Race and Politics*, 138. Evocations of the 'tenth day of the first month,' January 10th, are found in every election date that Pindling ever set. The numeral was either obviously present or apparent through simple addition. Besides playing with numerology, Pindling was also dabbling in the occult. The numeral ten is significant in the folk religious belief system of Obeah and thus had several levels of significance for the Bahamian people.

According to historians Michael Craton and Gail Saunders, this was a move that Pindling “hoped would bury the UBP.”⁵⁶ The election continued the metaphor from the previous campaign and was also cast in a Biblical light. If the January 10 victory was the flight from Egypt, April 10th would bring the crossing of the Red Sea along with the destruction of Pharaoh’s armies who were (metaphorically speaking) in hot pursuit. The allusions were ripe and it was not long before there was talk of moving into the “promised land.”⁵⁷ There was some grumbling from the populace that the election overlapped the Easter season, a complaint to which the minister of finance, Carlton Francis, responded: “We are fighting a holy war and we are in the midst of a holy season.”⁵⁸ Voter rolls that had started to be filled ever since McPhee’s death began to swell as anticipation for the election moved into high gear.⁵⁹

The UBP, convinced they could not get a fair shake from ZNS radio, determined that the best way of getting their campaign message across to the people was to rent time from Miami station WGBS and break the ZNS airwave monopoly via spillover signals from the US. They called their paid political messages “Radio Free Bahamas.” The government quickly complained to the US State Department and a Federal Communications Commission (FCC) investigation was launched. WGBS subsequently dropped the broadcasts, forcing the UBP to find another US station. When these broadcasts were also cancelled by US authorities, Roland Symonette, the leader of the UBP, complained that

⁵⁶ Craton and Saunders, *Islanders Vol. Two*, 348.

⁵⁷ Craton, *Pindling*, 150.

⁵⁸ Hughes, *Race and Politics*, 138.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

"they have silenced us here in the Bahamas, and now they have silenced us in America."⁶⁰

The episode clearly showed that radio was still a powerful opinion maker in the colony and that control of the airwaves meant control of the nation.

The Bad-Service Barometer

In the lead up to the general election, the UBP, amidst its campaign rhetoric, attacked the government for its "Look Up, Move Up, The World is Watching" courtesy campaign. They claimed that there had been "a breakdown in courtesy since the emergence of the New Bahamian under [Pindling's] Square Deal Administration" and that such campaigns were unnecessary when they had been in power. In their view, superficial tactics like courtesy campaigns only served to demonstrate the extent that the colony had fallen under the brief rule of the new regime.⁶¹ When "Look Up" was announced in January 1968, Norman Solomon, Member of Parliament for the UBP had said:

I think it is a regrettable truth ...[that] can be confirmed by the hoteliers of this country that the standards of courtesy in the hotels have fallen to such a disastrously low level that Government is, indeed, obliged to do what it is doing and what it should be doing to correct a situation which could only do economic damage to this country.⁶²

Solomon believed that the radio speeches made by the Premier and his cabinet members were not so much in service of a courtesy campaign, but were instead designed to "kill the tendency towards racial hatred." This "racial hatred" was being expressed as surly service

⁶⁰ Anonymous, "U.B.P. Switches Stations in Wake of Protests: 'Radio Free Bahamas' Is Back on the Air," *The Nassau Guardian and Bahamas Observer*, Thursday, April 4, 1968. Storr, "Development of Broadcasting in the Bahamas", 305, 6.

⁶¹ Anonymous, "Courtesy Drives an Old Story?", *The Nassau Guardian and Bahamas Observer*, Thursday, April 4 1968.

⁶² Anonymous, "Norman Solomon: 'Courtesy Campaign Because of Low Standards'," *The Nassau Guardian and Bahamas Observer*, Monday, January 15, 1968.

to white tourists to the possible detriment of the economy. In other words, black pride fostered by the PLP was the root cause of bad Bahamian service.⁶³

It is interesting to note that the UBP's view has been shared by many commentators of Bahamian social and political history over the years. Contemporary columnist Benson McDermott, writing in January 1968 noted that

Mr. Pindling is either deliberately obscuring, or he genuinely doesn't understand, a basic aspect of the problem. It is this: the attitude of a number of hotel service personnel towards tourists is the result of the racial self-consciousness that has for several years been deliberately encouraged by Mr. Pindling's own party.⁶⁴

Pindling himself seemed to agree. In his radio address announcing the campaign he attributed the need for the program to a change in national attitude that his party's election victory had fostered. He said

I know that the attitude of many of us has changed since we have our own Government. We are relaxed ... and freer. But a few of us also tend to be a little too cocky.⁶⁵

Similarly, researcher Angela Cleare in her *History of Tourism in the Bahamas: A Global Perspective*, published in 2007, wrote that

Despite the admonishments by [Pindling as] the Minister of Tourism, the excitement [of the 67 victory] turned to arrogance and poor attitudes in the workplace, in some cases directed against white employers.⁶⁶

Clement T. Maynard, a member of the original PLP cabinet, and the longest serving minister of tourism in the region, went a bit further, linking outright tourist abuse with the nationalist spirit in his 2007 memoir *Put On More Speed*.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ McDermott, "Failed."

⁶⁵ Anonymous, "Premier's Broadcast over Z.N.S. Launches."

⁶⁶ Cleare, *History of Tourism*, 166.

Eventually, the occasional complaint that tourists were accosted or insulted by loiterers and drunks began to increase. The exuberant tide of freedom and citizenship had started to flow.⁶⁷

If we use bad service as a barometer of racial consciousness and assume that the PLP's victory January 10, 1967, represents the birth of this consciousness, then it is logical that courtesy campaigns were only necessary in the aftermath of majority rule. However, it is simplistic to assume that stirrings of black nationalist feelings are the only possible explanation for lackluster service. Since the Bahamas relied on an oppressed and hitherto under-represented majority to provide the menial labor in an industry designed to service foreign white elites, we should expect to find resistance in many places and periods unless, of course, the people were so downtrodden that they could not even contemplate disobedience. Such a view seems demeaning to black Bahamians. It is interesting to note that while the idea that bad service began after majority rule first served the purposes of the UBP, it also benefitted the agenda of the PLP by giving them credit for forming the Bahamian national / racial consciousness out of thin air. When an idea can service two separate ideologies simultaneously, it can be difficult to see around.

Simply put, the problem can be described as a chicken and egg question. Which came first, racial consciousness or the popular black political party? Was the "Look Up, Move Up" campaign the first of its kind in the Bahamas or was there a previous need for a courtesy campaign under the UBP? Are the commentators correct to lay the blame for bad service on the doorstep of the PLP? Pindling in responding to UBP claims in the lead up to the April 10, 1967, election gives us a direct answer to at least one of the questions. He said

⁶⁷ Maynard, *Put on More Speed*, 378.

The courtesy campaign started by my government is not the first one in the Bahamas, neither is it the second... What is bothering the UBP is the apparent likelihood that it might be the most effective.⁶⁸

While we can safely put aside his claims of effectiveness, he is correct in condemning the UBP's manipulation of the record. A look back in the history of Bahamian tourism will elucidate this understanding.

Courtesy Conscious

What was perhaps the first Bahamian courtesy campaign was initiated thirteen years prior, in January 1955 by Reginald G. Nefzger, then the President of the Bahamas Hotel Association (BHA) and the managing director of the famous British Colonial Hotel. Stafford Sands had declared 1950 as the beginning of year-round tourism and the BHA was itself formed in 1952 by hotel owners and managers looking to promote their own properties during the previously languid summer season and also to assist Sands and the Development Board in marketing the Bahamas.⁶⁹ At the time, Nassau tourist arrivals had just surpassed the one hundred thousand threshold and the economy, at least for those on the top, was booming.⁷⁰ Party politics was a recent invention and had not yet caught on. The PLP had recently celebrated its first anniversary with a generous estimate of 450 members and was far from the popular movement that it would later become and the 'Bay Street Boys,' namely the dominant whites in control of the government and the economy, had not yet combined their interests to form the UBP.⁷¹

⁶⁸ Anonymous, "Courtesy Drives an Old Story?."

⁶⁹ Cleare, *History of Tourism*, 114, 5.

⁷⁰ Strachan, *Paradise and Plantation*, 138.

⁷¹ Hughes, *Race and Politics*, 47.

The burning issue of the day was racial segregation. Blacks — both Bahamian and tourist — were refused entry into most hotels, restaurants and movie theaters and schools and churches were also divided along color lines.⁷² While tolerated for years, the Bahamian racial situation that bordered on a thinly-veiled apartheid was becoming increasingly problematic. As early as June 1951, Bert Cambridge, a black member of the House of Assembly (MHA), had sought a select committee hearing “to consider the advisability of enacting an anti-discrimination and public embarrassment act,” a request that was effectively put down by the Bay Street clique. The issue was included in the initial PLP platform, released to the public on October 26th 1953.⁷³ Defending the principle, H. M. Taylor, the PLP chairman and MHA, opposed a grant to a hospitality committee in 1954 because it practiced racial discrimination.⁷⁴ In February of 1955, a group of moderate middle-class blacks and whites formed another political party, the Bahamas Democratic League (BDL), which was committed to racial harmony and determined to undermine the “the overwhelming dominance of Bay Street.” Colored MHA and publisher of the evening *Tribune* newspaper Ettiene Dupuch, became the leader of the new group. He did not approve of the more radical tactics of the “infant” PLP organization that he would later describe as “hate propaganda.”⁷⁵

Against this backdrop, the BHA launched its courtesy campaign under the theme “Courtesy Conscious.” Special forms were distributed to tourists allowing them to nominate the person they felt was the most courteous in serving their needs. At the end of the month, the results were tabulated and the winners were announced. Those who were singled out

⁷² Saunders, *Bahamian Society*, 173, 174, 181.

⁷³ Ibid., 180.

⁷⁴ Hughes, *Race and Politics*, 42, 3.

by the program as the most courteous Bahamian of the month were given citations and a £5 prize.⁷⁶ In announcing the campaign, *the Nassau Guardian's* headline read "It'll pay to be courteous to tourists now."⁷⁷ At the end of the year the individual who made the greatest contribution to courtesy would be selected from the pool of monthly winners and receive a "suitable certificate of merit and £15 in cash."⁷⁸ Although Nassau apparently already had a "world-famous reputation for its friendliness and courteousness," the campaign was supposedly designed to increase the stature that the colony possessed.⁷⁹ Interestingly, the *Guardian* found it necessary to interview tourists to give the locals tips on how best to be courteous and, thus, have a better chance of winning.

Stafford Sands congratulated the BHA's effort for initiating the courtesy awards but he felt "strongly that those deriving the greatest benefits from tourist traffic [were] not carrying their share of the load." Sands was setting the colony's sights towards the milestone of two hundred thousand tourists, a goal that he felt could be attained in two or three years but "could be reached a lot sooner with whole-hearted cooperation from those who deal with tourists in Nassau." He called for wide-ranging improvements to Nassau's tourist product from hotel management and staff down to cab and surrey drivers. As far as he was concerned though, those not giving "whole-hearted cooperation" were merely speed bumps along the route towards the Development Board's goals. His targets would be

⁷⁵ Ibid., 40, 1.

⁷⁶ *Guardian*, Tuesday Jan 11, 1955. The £5 went down to £2 if there was more than one monthly winner. According to the Retail Price Index, £5 in 1955 equals approximately \$169.18 CAD today.

⁷⁷ Anonymous, "It'll Pay to Be Courteous to Tourists Now," *The Nassau Guardian*, Tuesday, Jan 4, 1955.

⁷⁸ Anonymous, "Policeman Who Wants to Be Priest among Courtesy Award Winners," *The Nassau Guardian*, Thursday, March 17, 1955.

⁷⁹ Editor, "The Courteous Bahamas," *The Nassau Guardian*, Sunday, January 9, 1955.

reached with or without their help, but he was clear that many of “those who dealt with tourists” were holding back progress.⁸⁰

Sands extended his pitch for continued improvement at the presentation of the first courtesy awards on March 16, 1955. The winners were predominately black with varied service jobs like room clerk, waiter, policeman, surrey driver and maid. At the event, Sands made mention of the competition that Nassau faced “from other Caribbean resorts.” With dramatic changes occurring in the airline industry that made long distance travel faster and cheaper, other, more remote, destinations were increasingly able to appeal to the tourist. This technological trend threatened the Bahamas which had traditionally used its close proximity to the US as a key selling point. Additionally, post-World War affluence was beginning to create a much larger pool of potential tourists and increasing the size of the market. Sands ominously warned that “the future [would] not be as bright” if the standards of courtesy were ever relaxed. The award winners themselves proved the existence of a silver lining, however, and Sands opined that if the level of courtesy displayed by the award winners were maintained, they had nothing to fear.⁸¹

Black Agitation

On the mid-1950s political front, the nascent BDL felt that a concrete step towards bridging the gap between black and white Bahamians would be to attack one of the more potent symbols of white dominance. Collins Wall was such a symbol. The wall was named after a wealthy merchant who had surrounded his Nassau estate with a high stone wall in the 1930s. White communities had developed on his former estate, while on the south and

⁸⁰ Anonymous, "200,000 Visitors But... Cooperation Needed to Reach Tourist Goal," *The Nassau Guardian*, Wednesday, January 12, 1955.

west sides of the wall lay densely populated black areas, many of which worked in the white areas as domestic servants. To avoid a lengthy detour around the wall, blacks scaled it using ladders placed at several points along the perimeter and inevitably several injuries had resulted. The wall, in short, tangibly projected the colony's ethos of quasi-apartheid. In April, the BDL advanced a proposal in the House to install gates into the wall to allow for the passing of pedestrians. To put a hole in the wall would have been a great psychic victory for black Bahamians, but Bay Street predictably opposed the proposal on the grounds that they needed to preserve private property. The motion went nowhere.⁸²

The call for an end to segregation persisted despite Bay Street's stalling and a response to the agitation in an October editorial of the pro-Bay Street *Nassau Guardian* entitled "The Greater Good" made the vital connections between a continued racial divide and tourism. In the piece the present *status quo* was called "the Bahamian way of life" and described as a "vital asset" to the Colony's tourism business.

The creation of disharmony and the enforcement of any violent change in our political climate would serve only to destroy in short order the whole structure of our great tourist business ...

There is a need for caution in listening to the amorphous promises and meaningless threats of those who seek to divide Bahamians from other Bahamians, to disrupt the harmony upon which the prosperity of all of us depends.⁸³

For Bay Street, the connection between courtesy, tourism and racial segregation was a matter of black people understanding their place in the social order. According to this perspective, wealthy white American tourists would only come to the Bahamas if the hotels were kept segregated. If blacks rocked the boat and demanded rights they would be

⁸¹ Anonymous, "Policeman Who Wants to Be Priest among Courtesy Award Winners."

⁸² Hughes, *Race and Politics*, 42. The wall was finally breached in 1959.

fighting to enter soon-to-be-empty hotels. The message of racial integration being preached by Nassau's emerging political parties was branded as seditious propaganda that would only ruin a major selling point — an image of life before the civil rights movement.

The issue finally exploded in November 1955 when a stranded black Jamaican couple were refused lodging at Nassau hotels. It became an international incident when both the Premier and the Governor of Jamaica objected to Nassau's exclusionary practices. Lord Ranfurly, the Bahamian Governor, responded by appointing a committee to look into the matter.⁸⁴ By January 1956, the issue was still unresolved and a letter published in the *Nassau Guardian* under the pseudonym "Dinghy Joe" continued the argument expounded in the *Guardian* editorial. Using a folksy style and fishing metaphors to make his point, the writer stated that "to stir up race troubles here in the Bahamas where we have all lived together always is dangerous to our peas and rice." The push for integration by blacks was economically risky and would disrupt the flow of peas and rice, a reference to a common staple of the Bahamian diet and a reminder that tourism was the colony's biggest breadwinner. Ian Strachan writes that this kind of perspective "is a prime example of how the hotel served as a vehicle of political and social control."⁸⁵ Important social demands could be shot down simply because they might make tourists uncomfortable. That the "Courtesy Conscious" campaign was deployed while racial tensions were coming to a boil in the wider society is probably not a coincidence and can perhaps be seen as a response by the tourism apparatus to counter a threat to the *status quo*.

⁸³ Editor, "The Common Good," *The Nassau Guardian*, Thursday, October 13, 1955.

⁸⁴ Hughes, *Race and Politics*, 43.

⁸⁵ Quoted in Strachan, *Paradise and Plantation*, 138.

Legal segregation ended that same month in 1956 due to the combined efforts of BDL and PLP MHAs and hundreds of ordinary black people who made a forceful showing during the debates in the House.⁸⁶ While the triumph marked both the high point and the beginning of the end of the BDL, it was a springboard to much larger success for the PLP. The moderate middle-class leaders of the BDL shied away from further conflict with Bay Street and were thus not sufficiently radical to satisfy popular tastes. Their reticence led more people to side with a PLP whose rhetoric matched their own longings for equality and freedom.

It is difficult to cast the ending of segregation in the Bahamas, as Gail Saunders does, as a turn of public opinion "due mainly to the PLP's efforts."⁸⁷ Such a position, also shared by Doris Johnson in *The Quiet Revolution*, suggests not only that a majority of blacks were comfortable with segregation before the PLP's formation, but that in little over two years the PLP had succeeded in developing a racial consciousness amongst black Bahamians where none had existed before.⁸⁸ When we take into consideration Saunderson's own comment as co-writer of *Islanders in the Stream* that "despite its broad-based appeal, the PLP made slow progress at first" and Colin Hughes observation that in January 1955 the PLP had but a "handful" of members, the opinion seems all the more incredible.⁸⁹

It seems unreasonable to conclude that such a young organization had already gained critical mass and had completely transformed the political consciousness of Bahamians. A larger, more evolutionary approach is necessary. It appears that Dupuch's failure to press

⁸⁶ Craton and Saunders, *Islanders Vol. Two*, 309. Saunders, *Bahamian Society*, 180.

⁸⁷ Saunders, *Bahamian Society*, 182.

⁸⁸ Johnson, *Quiet Revolution*, 34.

⁸⁹ Craton and Saunders, *Islanders Vol. Two*, 308. Hughes, *Race and Politics*, 41.

the BDL's advantage by forcing binding legislation and a commission of inquiry into segregation allowed the PLP to gain significant traction and thereby through their subsequent electoral success in the May 1956 elections, become a viable opposition with six MHAs.⁹⁰ If the issue of Bahamian national / racial consciousness and the PLP is a story of the chicken and the egg, it is more likely that the consciousness existed before the PLP was founded. In this view, the PLP is the product of that consciousness and not the other way around. That a consciousness was already well developed at the time is shown by a letter written in response to 'Dinghy Joe' on January 12, 1956, by Cleaveland Eneas, a middle-class black dentist, and a BDL member.

[Dinghy Joe] is that Bahamian who will tell me to sacrifice every thing that is principled in me on the altar of the tourist business. That I must creep and crawl and teach my children to creep and crawl in their own land so that we may attract tourists. I do not now believe and will never believe that the tourists who come here require me and mine to crawl as a condition of their coming. Dinghy Joe would demand it of me, but not of himself, and I most heartily resent that discriminatory demand.... He is that Bahamian who does not know that the number of black Bahamians who also resent discrimination is steadily growing. The number on whom it could have been depended to grovel in the dust of discrimination for the sake of his belly is growing steadily less.⁹¹

Although echoes of segregation still lingered long after 1956 in various forms, Eneas' strong and dignified response to Bay Street opinion is a sure sign that a distinct Bahamian racial identity had already hatched. The courtesy campaign, on the other hand, appears in retrospect to be a subtle manoeuvre by the establishment to delay the chickens from coming home to roost. It was designed to ameliorate a system in which the vast majority of participants sensed that the benefits of collective behavioral adjustment went only to those who controlled the infrastructure and policies of that same industry.

⁹⁰ Craton and Saunders, *Islanders Vol. Two*, 309-10.

⁹¹ Hughes, *Race and Politics*, 43. Also quoted in Strachan, *Paradise and Plantation*, 138, 9.

Courtesy as National Emergency

In 1961, six years after the BHA's original award scheme, the courtesy campaign returned to the Bahamas. This was three years after the general strike of 1958 and after the 1960 by-elections in which the PLP had secured several important victories that helped them increase their presence in the House to 10 MHAs. The PLP's influence had even reached the point where it felt that it had a excellent chance of winning the general elections due the following year. Through the political pressure of the PLP and other fledgling black parties, the UBP had become somewhat more responsive to popular demands, or at least more responsive than before. On policy issues, however, the opposition could hardly be differentiated from the government; both supported continued tourism development and foreign investment. It could be said that the difference between the parties lay in their perspective for wealth-distribution derived *from* tourism, i.e. where the money would ultimately go. The variation in their concepts was predictably defined along racial lines. The PLP angled for a bigger slice of the pie for the common black while the UBP, formed in 1958 with hardly a black MHA to be found, advanced the white *status quo*.⁹²

Meanwhile, tourism had continued its rapid growth and arrivals had shot up 224 percent to 341,977 by 1960. Contrary to the 1955 argument, desegregating Nassau's hotels did not kill the tourist industry. In fact the opposite was true, as the Development Board was actually spending money advertising "in key [U.S.] Negro publications to assure the Bahamas of a substantial share of that important tourist market."⁹³ Times had definitely

⁹² Hughes, *Race and Politics*, 80, 1, 6.

⁹³ Anonymous, "Coming Season Seen Most Competitive in Travel History: Board Here Sets Tourist Campaign," *The Weekend Guardian*, August 5-6, 1961.

changed. However, tourism figures had taken a sharp dip in Florida as well as other resort islands in the region due to a mild economic recession, and it was feared that the same would soon happen in the Bahamas.⁹⁴ For its part, Florida had found it necessary to initiate a courtesy campaign to improve business, a move that was apparently a "great success." Continuing its role as government mouth-piece, a *Nassau Guardian* editorial suggested that a similar program was "badly needed" in the Bahamas since it was also suffering from a colony-wide deterioration in civility.⁹⁵

It was not long before the UBP answered the *Guardian's* call. On May 31, 1961, it sent an urgent appeal to the Governor as if it were a matter of national security — for in their minds it probably was.

Whereas, this House is concerned about the deterioration in the degree of courtesy accorded visitors to the colony; ...

Be it therefore resolved, that His Excellency the Governor ... is hereby requested to take such steps as may appear necessary ... to ensure that the necessity of the utmost courtesy to visitors is fully impressed on all persons within the colony who come into contact with visitors.⁹⁶

If the "Courtesy Conscious" drive in 1955 provided a carrot for Bahamian workers, the proposed campaign employed the stick. Gone were the subtle hints, rewards and the general tone of encouragement. The message was far clearer — tourism was the lifeline of the colony and courtesy would kill it. The story was similar to that of 1955, but the animosity towards "those who deal[t] with tourists" was amplified. The *Guardian* editorial lamented that

⁹⁴ Anonymous, "Sands Addresses Chamber on Courtesy Campaign," *The Nassau Guardian*, Tuesday, June 13, 1961.

⁹⁵ Editor, "Time for Courtesy," *The Nassau Guardian*, Friday, May 12, 1961. Editor, "Courtesy Campaign," *The Nassau Guardian*, Monday, June 12, 1961.

⁹⁶ Anonymous, "House to Air Flagging Courtesy to Visitors," *The Nassau Guardian*, Wednesday, May 31, 1961.

there are too many of us who, as individuals are not pulling our weight. We have stressed over and over again that "service is not servility." Yet the commonest complaint heard from visitors is that they have been subjected to surly, uncooperative and inefficient service in hotels, restaurants and other public places.⁹⁷

While Sands had referred to those not "pulling their weight" in generalized tones in 1955, the *Guardian* was much more specific. This time the phrase referred almost exclusively to the black Bahamian worker. That the writer would find it necessary to stress "over and over" that "service is not servility" makes this point clear, as few white Bahamians, less than 20 percent of the population, would be concerned about issues of servility, especially since so few of them actually worked in the service sector.

The Development Board had contacted tourists in their home environment after their Bahamian holiday and had conducted surveys. Apparently these "studies showed that 45 per cent of the tourists — which would be more than 140,000...— found some reason to complain and that more than half of these complaints concern a lack of courtesy shown by service personnel with whom they came in contact."⁹⁸ This was reason for concern. For the Development Board the ideal tourist was one who spread good word-of-mouth and acted as "unofficial salesman."⁹⁹ Sands heard the complaints loud and clear and created a courtesy committee in June, comprised of leaders of main Nassau tourism organizations to oversee the campaign.¹⁰⁰

The coming courtesy campaign would be multi-faceted with full exposure on various media and in the press. Radio ZNS was seen as an essential component in the effort. Sands said that

⁹⁷ Editor, "Time for Courtesy."

⁹⁸ Shell Nulty, "Service Groups Supporting Colony-Wide Venture: Be Courteous!" Monday, June 12, 1961.

⁹⁹ Anonymous, "Sands Addresses Chamber on Courtesy Campaign."

Radio spot commercials not only reach a large percentage of those whose work brings them into direct contact with tourists, but those commercials emphasizing courtesy will deliver the message to hundreds of others of all classes. I have said before that courtesy is contagious, and this may be a very good means of spreading a very worthwhile infection.¹⁰¹

Anthropologist Nicolette Bethel concurs with Sands' assessment, contending that the Bahamas is primarily an oral society and that because of this "radio, and not the press, is the bearer of information, the provider of any kind of central, organised unity in the nation."¹⁰² Therefore the use of radio, an oral medium, was the ideal conduit for the 'infection,' and with monopoly control over the colony's air waves, the UBP used that power to their advantage to remind Bahamians that they were "naturally a pleasant and courteous people."

In his speech, Sands called courtesy "the key part of the real Bahamian way of life." It should be remembered that only a few years earlier the "Bahamian way of life" meant holding onto social segregation. The dynamic had changed, but the phrase still referred to the ways that the colony could be marketed to foreigners. Courtesy had replaced segregation as another key ingredient next to sun, sand and sea in the Development Board's sales pitch. And following the old maxim, "charity begins at home" to its logical end, Sands also concluded that the solution to the problem of service must emanate from the black Bahamian home.

Courtesy should be a lesson learned early. Human relations are all important. For this reason the Department of Education could assist by undertaking a courtesy campaign in the schools, emphasizing its importance in every day

¹⁰⁰ Nulty, "Service Groups Supporting Colony-Wide Venture: Be Courteous!"

¹⁰¹ Anonymous, "Sands Addresses Chamber on Courtesy Campaign."

¹⁰² Nicolette Bethel, "Navigations: National Identity and the Archipelago," *Yinna* 1 (2000).

living as well as its vital significance in keeping our tourist industry successful.¹⁰³

If the black family was failing to produce workers who were courteous, the state should step in and provide the appropriate training.

Public Reaction

A feature of *The Nassau Guardian* of Monday, July 3, 1961 called "The People Speak" gives us a good window on the opinions of ordinary Bahamians on the courtesy campaign. While those interviewed acknowledged that there was a problem with courtesy, they generally preferred the 1955 campaign. While one respondent said that the current campaign was "one of the best things they could ever think of doing," four of the six interviewees wanted a return to cash prizes as rewards for courtesy. If they were going to be nice to tourists, this small sample of black workers wanted to be paid for it, as one respondent coyly said "after all, courtesy always pays." Sands himself was amenable to the idea of monetary reward, but he left this to the discretion of individual storeowners and the BHA.¹⁰⁴

This small sample of public opinion also touched on an issue previously ignored in courtesy propaganda — the unreasonable demands of some tourists. Bryce Maycock, a tour conductor, said that "Admittedly we cannot satisfy all the tourists, because some of them are just impossible and expect too much."¹⁰⁵ Courtesy was generally a one-way street and the 'impossible' guest did not make many appearances in government exhortations to courtesy. There were also Bahamians who simply felt that their leaders were being

¹⁰³ Anonymous, "Sands Addresses Chamber on Courtesy Campaign."

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

hypocrites about the entire exercise. Take, for example, the sarcastic comments of Suzanne Wanklyn of Prospect Ridge who wrote, in a letter published May 31, 1961, that "in the last sessions of the House several members [of the House of Assembly] most certainly forgot their manners at every sitting."¹⁰⁶

The timing of the courtesy campaign deserves mention. Was it a preemptive strike against dips in tourist arrivals or was it a more sinister attempt to beat back black desire for majority rule? A definitive answer is difficult to give but it is noteworthy that the PLP defeat at the polls in the 1962 general elections came as a surprise to many. Colin Hughes argues that "some of the explanation [for the PLP defeat] no doubt lies with the growing prosperity, closely linked to the rising number of tourists" while Saunders and Craton attribute the defeat to wide-spread "fear of the consequences of black majority rule."¹⁰⁷ Both might agree to describe the results as a victory for Bahamian conservatism; expansion of tourism had put the economy in 'bonanza' mode and it seems that many did not want to agitate the water by siding with unproven stewards. One is tempted to suggest that the message of the courtesy campaign was taken to heart or at least reinforced this conservatism.

The above examples should make it abundantly clear, though, that bad service was not invented with the narrow PLP victory on January 10th 1967, but rather, that it has a long history that stretches back at least to the beginnings of mass tourism in the 1950s and that the question of service in the tourism industry was freighted with more than the

¹⁰⁵ Anonymous, "The People Speak: On Courtesy Campaign," *The Nassau Guardian and Bahamas Observer*, Monday, July 3, 1961, 10.

¹⁰⁶ Suzanne Wanklyn, "Bravo! Well Spoken Mr. Symonette," *The Nassau Guardian*, Friday, June 2, 1961.

¹⁰⁷ Hughes, *Race and Politics*, 92. Craton and Saunders, *Islanders Vol. Two*, 314.

simple mechanics of hospitality — it was an issue of social control and reward. Contrary to UBP claims, they had not only employed the courtesy campaign during their time in power, but had pioneered the techniques that the PLP was then using in the “Look Up, Move Up” campaign to manipulate worker attitudes.

The Honeymoon

When the April 10, 1968 election day finally came and the results were announced, it was a clear and dramatic victory for the PLP who won 29 of the 38 available seats, compared to the UBP’s seven. As Michael Craton notes, in “just three years, the political tables had completely turned... Lynden Pindling and his party now had the popular mandate to move more resolutely ahead with what they planned.”¹⁰⁸ And move ahead they did. The new budget presented in May moved tourism from third to fourth on the list of priorities. Leading the way with 10.7 of the total \$66 million budget was education, followed by health and works.¹⁰⁹ Pindling shuffled his cabinet, finally getting rid of labor leader Randol Fawkes, who was again estranged from the party, and among other moves, placed the ‘dynamic’ Cecil Wallace-Whitfield as the minister of education.¹¹⁰

In August, Pindling presented his list of desired constitutional changes. In a move to gain further internal self-governance, the Senate was to be reshaped and placed under further government control, giving Pindling the ability to appoint ten members, to the opposition’s four and the Governor’s three. Changes would be coming to the favorable immigration policies for expatriates and an investigation would be made into the contentious issue of government sovereignty over Freeport that was lost under the

¹⁰⁸ Craton, *Pindling*, 151.

¹⁰⁹ Hughes, *Race and Politics*, 141.

Hawksbill Creek Act.¹¹¹ In September, the proposals were tabled at a constitutional conference in London, and despite some opposition from an emasculated UBP, the changes were accepted by Britain. The only compromise was that the Governor retained some authority over the police. The new constitution went into effect the following year and with it came two symbolic name changes, the archipelago would henceforth be called "The Commonwealth of the Bahama Islands" and the Premier was restyled the "Prime Minister."¹¹²

In the ministry of tourism annual report, the "Look Up" courtesy campaign that had stretched into September was described as a way to get Bahamians to commit to "improving the product."¹¹³ According to the narrow criteria that the ministry still used to define success — tourist arrivals — their efforts seemed to have paid off as the Bahamas finally broke the one million mark of tourist arrivals and the percentage of increase was continuing its meteoric upward trend. The continued growth was good news. The economy was in better shape than it had ever been, the UBP was essentially destroyed and the populace was happy; 1968 ended on the best possible note for Pindling and the PLP.

The Checchi Report

Among the research projects that Ministry of Tourism initiated under Pindling's stewardship was a tourism feasibility study. In 1968, Checchi and Company of Washington D.C. "and a consortium of consultants" were hired to produce a report that would inventory the colony's available tourism assets, "assess the requirements of Government, and lay out

¹¹⁰ Craton, *Pindling*, 155.

¹¹¹ Hughes, *Race and Politics*. 141

¹¹² Craton, *Pindling*, 157.

¹¹³ Tourism, *Annual Report 1967*. 24.

a ten-year plan for accomplishing these.¹¹⁴ In 1969, the American consultants presented their 300+ page plan, one that was dubbed “The Checchi Report,” to the government. Among its findings, the report accurately quantified the impact of tourism on the economy for the first time, showing that the industry produced seventy-one percent of the country’s GNP as opposed to the ninety percent that was earlier assumed.¹¹⁵ Despite this drop in economic impact, there was no denying the overall dependence of the Bahamas on tourism. The industry still employed two-thirds of the labor force and generated over half of government revenue.¹¹⁶

The report called for the government to tackle issues of infrastructure and transportation, with radical and ambitious ideas like linking several of the major islands by bridge to encourage tourist travel to the outer islands.¹¹⁷ It advocated shifting road traffic to right hand drive and the creation of distinctive “Bahama cars” resembling London carriages to encourage tourists to move around Nassau on their own and spend more money in the process.¹¹⁸ It recommended the preservation of local heritage sites and the construction of museums and other attractions to give tourists more to do and thus encourage them to stay longer.

Given the need for improved and increased infrastructure to serve the growing local population and the rising level of tourists, in addition to the government’s ambitious education and health policy, the report tried to project future budgetary needs. It was

¹¹⁴ Maynard, *Put on More Speed*, 279. Bahamas Ministry of Tourism, *Annual Report of Tourism Commonwealth of the Bahamas*, 1969. (Nassau) 26.

¹¹⁵ Checchi and Company, *A Plan for Managing the Growth of Tourism in the Commonwealth of the Bahama Islands* (Washington D.C., 1969), ix, A Feasibility Study Prepared for the Bahamas Ministry of Tourism.

¹¹⁶ Maynard, *Put on More Speed*.

¹¹⁷ Company, *A Plan for Managing the Growth of Tourism in the Commonwealth of the Bahama Islands*, 77.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., xii, 52, 3.

projected that the “needs of the Bahamian people would increase by \$315 million” over the next five years. It was believed that tourism could supply nearly \$200 million, or nearly two-thirds of this total. For this to happen, however, the number of tourists needed to increase from the 1968 level of 1,072,000 to nearly three million tourists by 1974 to produce the required revenue. Surely, these were lofty targets to reach, but given the recent history of tourism in the islands, in which tourist arrivals had increased almost every year since 1950, and with double digit percentage increases for most of the 60s, it was felt that these targets could be both met and surpassed. Once the three million tourist target was reached, the report said, it would not be necessary for tourism rates to grow at all to meet the development goals of the next five years.¹¹⁹

The report concluded that to be able to absorb this amount of tourists the country would need to be prepared “physically, emotionally and competitively.” Physically, the ministry needed to ensure that there were sufficient hotel rooms and accommodations for tourists. Competitively, they needed to prioritize the clean up and beautification of Nassau and its water front. A statistic continually used by Checchi was that over sixty percent of visitors to Hawaii visited its equivalent ‘Out Islands,’ which was far more than was the case in the Bahamas.¹²⁰ However, the Bahamian Out-Islands were not sufficiently developed to absorb Hawaii-like traffic and they needed prompt upgrading to become better magnets for tourist dollars.

Bahamians also needed to be prepared emotionally. The report recommended the implementation of a campaign to “personalize” the benefits of tourism to locals, a program

¹¹⁹ Ibid., x.

¹²⁰ Ibid., 88.

that would take tourism out of the abstract realm of statistics and give the people concrete examples they could understand. One example of this brand of real world math was to show that every two hotel rooms could pay a teacher's salary. They proposed "a campaign to make people realize that tourism is everybody's job in terms of hospitality and that everybody benefits in terms of lower taxes and better social welfare programs."¹²¹

Priorities

As the Checchi report underlined, the demand for capital to pursue large public works projects was intense. The public education system was a prime example of this problem. It had been seriously neglected by the UBP and raising the system to even a minimum acceptable level of efficiency was not a simple task. There was a serious shortage of trained teachers and hiring foreigners was a politically sensitive issue.¹²² This coincided with an overflow of students and hardly enough facilities to accommodate all of them, not to mention the demands from blacks to have a rewritten syllabus that was more reflective of their heritage.

Cecil Wallace-Whitfield, the new and idealistic education minister, seeing the need, moved ahead with controversial plans to solve the problems. He went on a school-building binge but made several impractical choices along the way. For example, he invested in large experimental schools, based on American models, without windows, that were completely dependent on air conditioning and artificial lighting.¹²³ These experiments were inherently unreliable, being subject to Nassau's spotty electricity supply, and were also very costly to run. In July of 1969, Wallace-Whitfield publicly complained that he was being "hamstrung

¹²¹ Ibid., xi, 48.

¹²² Craton and Saunders, *Islanders Vol. Two*, 352, 3.

by an annual allocation in the budget for capital expenditures of five million when he needed nine times as much.”¹²⁴

Neither the minister of finance nor the prime minister were amused with Wallace-Whitfield’s grandstanding. For the time being, tourism was paying the bills for the experiments, but it was now necessary that the industry pay even more. The Checchi report suggested that government raise the annual room tax imposed on the larger hotels, and impose a nightly head tax. This came into effect in 1970 despite the complaints from hotel operators that they were already struggling with high overhead. They claimed that it was already two times as expensive to service a hotel room in the Bahamas as in Puerto Rico and three times the cost of Florida.¹²⁵

When delivering the budget for 1969, the minister of finance, Carlton Francis, warned that, while the Bahamas was presently experiencing good times, the financial foundation of the country was not on solid ground. Every business that the country depended on needed favorable external circumstances to thrive. For example, its position as a “world banking center was sensitive to disorders in the international monetary system” and tourism, its economic mainstay, was a “notoriously fickle industry.” Added to this was the fact that the country had to import most of the goods it consumed, both for locals and tourists — a now ancient ‘problem’ that still benefitted Bay Street — and thus “was affected by price increases in its suppliers, mainly the United States.”¹²⁶

¹²³ Ibid., 352.

¹²⁴ Craton, *Pindling*, 159.

¹²⁵ Hughes, *Race and Politics*, 147, 8.

¹²⁶ Ibid., 146, 7.

Pindling began to realize his job as prime minister conflicted with the demands of the ministry of tourism. He felt that "the management of the growth of tourism should be in the hands of someone who could devote himself more fully to this effort than [he] could, someone who also had the imagination and the dynamism that the job requires."¹²⁷ Therefore, in January 1969 he turned the ministry of tourism over to "loyal supporter" Arthur Foulkes, a journalist trained by Ettiene Dupuch and a founding editor of a PLP newspaper.¹²⁸ Foulkes combined his post as minister of communications with the new assignment, but he was short-lived as minister, barely holding onto the job for nine months.¹²⁹ Pindling shuffled his cabinet again in September and the Ministry of Tourism and Telecommunications passed over to Clement T. Maynard, a prominent Bahamian lawyer and minister of state without portfolio in Pindling's original cabinet.¹³⁰ Foulkes' brief time as minister was not without its high point, as a new record of 1,298,344 tourist arrivals was set in 1969. While Foulkes had little to do with the achievement, it was still a 24.3 percent increase over the previous year, the highest year-over-year increase of the decade.¹³¹

The Reality Check

Although Maynard took over the reins of the ministry of tourism with the trade at its peak, an ill wind was beginning to blow. Advance bookings for the 1970 winter season were substantially down from the previous year and there were signs that the US was in the beginning stages of a recession. US President Richard Nixon's moves to counter

¹²⁷ Bahamas Ministry of Tourism, *Tourism in the Commonwealth of the Bahamas 1968*, 1968. (Nassau) 2.

¹²⁸ Craton, *Pindling*, 170.

¹²⁹ Cleare, *History of Tourism*, 167.

¹³⁰ Ibid., 168.

¹³¹ Hughes, *Race and Politics*, 147.

inflation were already having an impact on American spending and borrowing.¹³² In addition, recently instituted price cuts on fares to Europe meant that a two-week vacation to Spain now cost \$100 less than a comparable trip to the Bahamas.¹³³

In a special and somber communication to the House on January 28, 1970, and the following day at a Kiwanis luncheon, Maynard, undoubtedly under the tutelage of Som Chib, outlined the various international factors at work that would soon begin to affect Bahamian tourism. All of the economic barometers were pointing to a difficult road ahead. It was projected that while the large growth experienced in previous years may not continue, the industry would still continue its upward climb, although much more slowly. What was needed, he said, was a unified national effort to beat back the competition and keep the Bahamas on track to be the "first island destination of the world with two million visitors per year."¹³⁴

Although most factors of the slowdown were beyond government control, there was a familiar tone to his speeches. Maynard said that "I would be doing a disservice to my country if I did not point out that some visitors have left our shores unhappy and dissatisfied with their reception and treatment."¹³⁵ According to ministry surveys, nearly 70 percent of those polled "had something disparaging to say about the Bahamas." These complaints were about such things as "expens[ive], poor or slow hotel service, rudeness or courtesy, dirty or litter-strewn streets; and excessive tipping expected." His statistics were artificially inflated by combining all generic complaints about tourists' experience

¹³² Anonymous, "Bad Service a Factor in Slowdown — Tourism Minister," *The Nassau Guardian*, Thursday, January 29, 1970.

¹³³ Tourism, *Annual Report 1969*. 3.

¹³⁴ Anonymous, "Bad Service a Factor."

together as opposed to singling out just how many were actually service related. No doubt this manoeuvre helped to drive home his point and create a greater impression of imminent crisis. Maynard indicated that slightly over 95 percent had something positive to say about the Bahamas, but the list of positives enumerated by tourists interestingly included no mention of good service.¹³⁶

Local commentators had already been complaining about the poor service in Nassau and had given it an apocalyptic doomsday feel. Former UBP MHA Norman Solomon, then writing a column in *The Guardian* called "As I See It," continued his critique from the House of Assembly. He placed the blame for the bad service on racial consciousness and the US Black Power movement. Recounting his experiences with surliness in Nassau restaurants and presenting negative anecdotes he had gathered from tourists, he asked "What does Black Power mean in the Bahamas?" His answer was that it could destroy the country, concluding that black Bahamians

will learn someday that nobody is right all the time. ... They will learn that the country's bread and water depends entirely upon the ability of its entire populace to cater to the whims and wishes of their foreign brethren ... smartly, and with a smile at that. But by the time they learn will there be a country left?¹³⁷

A *Guardian* editorial bemoaned the "total inability of Bahamians to give service with a smile." In the article, the exogenous, and more important, reasons for the slowdown were minimized and the closer-to-home service issues were made out to be the larger issue causing the crisis. "The handwriting is on the wall," the editorial said, "and what it says is that unless the majority of Bahamian service workers change their attitude, drastically and

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ Ibid.

quickly, they themselves will be the chief engineers of a shattering decline in the economy of the Bahamas."¹³⁸ The PLP was beginning to learn that quality of service was key in managing tourism, regardless of political or racial stripe.

Friendliness Through Understanding

With the alarm bells ringing in unison and the country in a suitable panic, a courtesy campaign was announced as a program of "mutual understanding" on Monday, March 2, 1970. As if reading directly from the Checchi Report, Clement Maynard said "the Bahamian must be made aware in very specific terms of what tourism means to his personal pocketbook and the future welfare of his family and the nation." He diverged from the script as he continued, saying, "the visitor must be made aware of the customs of our country, understand that they may differ from those of his own country, and that his readiness to adapt — rather than resist — will be repaid with a spontaneous desire to please on our part."¹³⁹ The concept was ambitious, Maynard was proposing a program that would condition both sides of the equation to the potential benefit of the government. How much 'understanding' would be coaxed out of the visitors, however, remained to be seen.

The program was called "Friendliness Through Understanding" (FTU) and was officially launched by Prime Minister Pindling on Wednesday March 25, 1970, and like the program in 1961, it was multi-tiered and intensive, targeting every single Bahamian demographic through multiple media, making maximum use of ZNS radio.¹⁴⁰ Similar to the

¹³⁷ Norman Solomon, "What Does 'Black Power' Mean in the Bahamas," *The Nassau Guardian and Bahamas Observer*, Wednesday, January 14, 1970.

¹³⁸ Editor, "Tourism," *The Nassau Guardian and Bahamas Observer*, Saturday, January 31, 1970.

¹³⁹ Anonymous, "'Mutual Understanding' Programme Slated," *The Nassau Guardian and Bahamas Observer*, Tuesday, March 3 1970.

¹⁴⁰ Connie Jo Justice, "'Friendship through Understanding' Campaign Launched," *The Nassau Guardian and Bahamas Observer*, Thursday, March 26 1970. Now we can finally examine the error in Craton's statement

1968 elections, the courtesy campaign was tied into the 'holy season' of Easter.¹⁴¹ Pindling gave a presentation to church leaders prior to launching the campaign on ZNS so that the ministers could incorporate the theme into their Easter sermons. Tying the campaign to Christianity was perhaps an attempt to exploit the feelings of sacrifice that the Easter season can evoke, or as simply a means to give the program the legitimizing blessing of the church as it already had a workable degree of social leverage over Bahamians.¹⁴²

Components of Understanding

Once the FTU program began in earnest, even the most casual radio listener would have heard several messages a day. There were one-minute radio spot ads by world-famous Bahamian actor Sidney Poitier. The content of these spot ads can be ascertained from Ettiene Dupuch's complaints about them:

Several times a day the voice of Sidney Poitier comes over Z.N.S. urging our people to be friendly to tourists.

Black hands, white hands, brown hands and yellow hands must all be clasped in good fellowship if we are to have a good country, Mr. Poitier declares.¹⁴³

Poitier's voice was paired with additional radio spots, featuring a similar message, performed by well-known local writer Susan Wallace.¹⁴⁴

found on page 162 of *Pindling: The Life and Times of Lynden Oscar Pindling First Prime Minister of the Bahamas, 1930-2000*, that "in March, 1970, [Pindling] initiated and starred in a well publicized 'Friendliness' Campaign." Pindling only 'initiated' the campaign in the sense that he launched it with a speech — he likely had as little to do with its development and execution as did Maynard, who, if we read between the lines of his autobiography, was probably no more than a mouth-piece for Chib at the time. On page 161, Craton says that Pindling was the minister of tourism in 1970; this is simply wrong. If, however, he wishes to use 'Pindling' as metonym for the entire PLP government, then of course, he is ultimately correct, but only in the most misleading of ways. When Craton writes that Pindling 'starred' in the campaign, he is likely thinking about his movie role in the 'Look Up, Move On' campaign of 1968, and is likely conflating the two separate campaigns.

¹⁴¹ Hughes, *Race and Politics*, 138.

¹⁴² Bahamas Ministry of Tourism, *1970 Annual Report: Tourism in the Commonwealth of the Bahama Islands*, 1970. (Nassau, Bahamas) 17.

¹⁴³ Etienne Dupuch, "Charity Begins at Home," *The Tribune*, Saturday, May 16, 1970.

¹⁴⁴ Tourism, *Annual Report 1970*. 17.

Beginning April 8th, at 6:30pm there were daily broadcasts entitled "One In A Million" that presented excerpts of actual tourist exit interviews — both good and bad — giving their candid reactions to the islands. It was described as "the programme that lets you know what people are saying about you and your country." The press release continued,

The five-minute spots end with a thought-provoking question addressed to all listeners: "What have I done for our country today?" The reply from each person should be: "All I could do and just a little bit more!"¹⁴⁵

The title neatly manipulated the ratio of tourists to Bahamians for maximum effect and by linking tourist joy or dissatisfaction to individual performance the ads personalized tourism, in a somewhat different way than the Checchi Report had admonished.

School age children were conscripted into the campaign from above and below.

Minister Maynard spoke on the theme of the "Teacher's role in a Tourist Economy" to the faculty and students of the Bahamas Teachers College on May 1st. His audience would eventually graduate to become high school and primary level teachers. Perhaps getting a bit carried away with his message, he described tourism as an opportunity for spiritual growth. He told them that "a consciousness of the importance of service and a willingness to serve are essential to the spiritual growth of any people."¹⁴⁶

The children themselves received their own propaganda. Students from ages 8 to 18 were able to participate in a Friendliness through Understanding essay contest. The "preferred essay topics" were as follows: Courtesy in the Bahamas; Is Friendliness

¹⁴⁵ Anonymous, "Daily Broadcasts to Aid Tourism," *The Nassau Guardian and Bahamas Observer*, Wednesday, April 8, 1970.

¹⁴⁶ Anonymous, "'Education Should Begin at Home' Says Minister," *The Nassau Guardian and Bahamas Observer*, Thursday, May 7, 1970.

Important to Bahamians?; and Are Bahamians still a Friendly People? ¹⁴⁷ The last question is the most intriguing, for it asks the essayist to presume that Bahamians were, at some point in the past, naturally friendly. Given that majority rule had come only three years before, how were the children to imagine generations of racially oppressed and often impoverished Bahamians as 'friendly'? The ability of this seemingly innocuous question to gloss over and mythify centuries of problematic history is impressive and to do so this soon after that very history was the central issue in the colony is nothing short of breath-taking.

The national FTU program inspired others to create similar initiatives. The King's Inn and Golf Club in Freeport decided that it could encourage friendliness through competition. Employees in contact with tourists earned 'Sunshine Points' through the recommendations of tourists on 'Guest Questionnaires' or by sending 'Happy Letters' back to the hotel on their return home. 'Back of the house' employees not in direct contact with tourists were not left out as they could earn their points by staff recommendations. The points would be accumulated over the course of the year and the grand prize winner would receive a trip for two to England.¹⁴⁸ Similar focus on financial reward spawned a 'Mystery Shopper' program conducted in Nassau that gave prizes to the "friendliest retail sales person of the week."¹⁴⁹

As the title of the campaign, "Friendliness through Understanding," implied, there were attempts to help tourists better understand the ways of the native. Leaflets were distributed to visitors upon arrival in the Bahamas explaining to them "the difference

¹⁴⁷Anonymous, "Essay Contest to Push 'Friendship Campaign,'" *The Nassau Guardian and Bahamas Observer*, Saturday, May 30, 1970.

¹⁴⁸Anonymous, "Freeport Club to Promote 'Smile' Campaign Yearly," *Nassau Guardian and Bahamas Observer*, Thursday, May 7, 1970.

between the customs and traditions of the Bahamas and those of the United States."¹⁵⁰

Some of the timely advice given in the pamphlet included the following:

We drive on the left, our currency is the equivalent of yours (even though it doesn't carry a picture of George Washington) We are a proud people, we don't move with the frenzy of a New Yorker or a Londoner — so relax and enjoy the slower pace for which you came. Please enjoy it to the full and return home revitalized. ¹⁵¹

A few gentle pointers were all that the tourist needed to get, while Bahamians were bombarded with the ministry's hard-line message night and day. It was Bahamians who needed to understand that tourism was vital to the country; they who needed to understand that each tourist represented income and their country's future. 'Smile,' the campaign seemed to say, 'your life depends on it.'¹⁵² This was ultimately the only 'understanding' that the program was designed to promote.

The Fergusons of Farm Road

The most imaginative portion of the "Friendliness Through Understanding" program was no doubt its 'Education-Entertainment' component. The Interpublic Group had crafted a radio serial drama, based on the enduring British Broadcasting Corporation show, *The Archers*, to promote the principles of FTU entitled *All about the Alburys*. Initially recorded with foreign actors, Maynard felt that the programs' American accents would not get through to Bahamians — perhaps using the opportunity to exercise authority in an area where *he* was the undisputed expert. The ministry tried to recycle the Interpublic scripts

¹⁴⁹ *Tourism, Annual Report 1970.*

¹⁵⁰ Bill Cole, "Visitor Figures Discreditors Lashed by Tourism Minister," *The Nassau Guardian and Bahamas Observer*, Tuesday, March 3, 1970.

¹⁵¹ Anonymous, "Mutual Understanding."

¹⁵² See Strachan, *Paradise and Plantation*, 131.

using Bahamian vocal talent, but the actors found the scripts to be unappealing. Maynard then turned to the young lawyer and playwright Jeanne Thompson.¹⁵³

Jeanne was the second child of Ellison and Sybil Thompson, a middle-class couple who eventually had five children. Ellison, born on the poor Out Island of Eleuthera, had made a successful career for himself as a civil servant, and had held a wide variety of posts. He began his varied career in 1930 as a public school teacher, then served as an assistant commissioner in the far south Out Island of Acklins and then as a commissioner in Mayaguana. (See figure 1) He returned to Nassau in 1942, working in the public treasury and the Attorney General's chambers. In 1967, he was made First Assistant Secretary in the post office and public works departments and two years later Deputy Permanent Secretary. On February 10, 1970, while the FTU program was likely under active development, he was appointed permanent secretary for the ministry of tourism under Clement Maynard, having been moved at Maynard's behest from his previous post in the ministry of works.¹⁵⁴

Nassauvian Sybil Thompson was a primary school teacher at the time and had been teaching since she finished high school in 1930. Saunders and Craton describe her younger brother, the lawyer and future politician Kendall Isaacs, as a "quintessential product of the brown middle class," and this description could apply equally well to Sybil.¹⁵⁵ The couple essentially separated their five children into two generations, having three daughters in the late 1930s and early forties and then almost two decades later producing another daughter and finally a son.

¹⁵³ Claire Belgrave, *Theatre in the Bahamas: From Ol' Story to Rep Theatre* (Nassau: Guanima Press, 2007), 104. The writer's name is pronounced Jean-nie. Thompson is also this writer's aunt.

¹⁵⁴ Anonymous, "Deputy Is Appointed Permanent Secretary," *The Nassau Guardian and Bahamas Observer*, Tuesday, February 10, 1970.

The two eldest daughters, Dawn and Jeanne, had moved to Jamaica in 1955 to attend the Wolmers girls' boarding school for sixth form, which was the final two years of secondary schooling when students, usually between sixteen and eighteen years of age, prepared for their A-level examinations. Under the UBP, blacks had limited options to attend sixth form, thus the need for the Thompson girls to go to Jamaica. It was at this boarding school that they first met Sonia McPherson.¹⁵⁶ Sonia was the daughter of shopkeepers Lucy and Archie McPherson and grew up with two sisters in a small country town on the north coast of Jamaica. The sugar fields and purifying factory dominated the area where she grew up and employment was seasonal and the people generally poor. The trio became fast friends and even after graduating they kept in contact. Their paths crossed again in London in the early 1960s while they all pursued post-secondary degrees — Jeanne pursued a law degree at Middle Temple at the Inns of Court in London after a year at University College; Dawn obtained a postgraduate certificate in education (PGCE) at Durham University; and Sonia studied french, journalism and politics at L'école Supérieure de Journalisme and l'Institut de Sciences Politiques in Paris and Birkbeck College, London University.

Jeanne returned to the Bahamas with law degree in hand and joined her uncle's practice becoming only the second female lawyer in the Bahamas when she was called to the bar in 1965. By 1970, Jeanne had made a name for herself as a defender of human rights and as a legal activist seeking to get rid of the death penalty. In 1968, she succeeded in getting a stay of execution for a convicted felon by making a last-minute appeal to the

¹⁵⁵ Craton and Saunders, *Islanders Vol. Two*.

¹⁵⁶ Don Mills, *Journeys & Missions: At Home and Away* (Kingston: Arawak Publications, 2009), 107.

Queen.¹⁵⁷ She was very active in the local arts scene and was a leading Bahamian playwright, director, actress and prominent member of the local theatre group, 'the Bahamas Drama Circle.' Her plays up to that point were satiric affairs that skewered recent Bahamian politics, two of which were the evocatively titled and self-explanatory *Peoplexodus* in 1967 and *Le Noir Supreme* in 1969.¹⁵⁸ As a self-proclaimed feminist, she battled what she described as "a considerable degree of prejudice against women lawyers, both inside and outside the legal profession and among the general public."¹⁵⁹

Some time after returning to Jamaica in the mid-sixties, Sonia joined the Jamaica Information Service Radio Unit, headed by Elaine Perkins who would become renowned as the Jamaican radio serial pioneer. Perkins first serial was the pro-development soap opera *Life in Hopeful Village* conceived by then minister of development Edward Seaga to promote the five-year development plan. Perkins eventually left *Hopeful Village* and the government service to pursue the development of her own commercial soap opera, *Dulcimina: Her Life in Town*, which became immensely popular. Perkins departure left Sonia in charge as the show's main writer, a post she held for nearly two years. In 1967, she married Don Mills, a Jamaican civil servant and veteran of the Jamaican Central Planning Unit.

The following year Don was recruited by the Bahamian Ministry of Development to serve as its permanent secretary and thus began the task of transferring his family to the Bahamas. There was apparently a delay in processing his request through the official

¹⁵⁷ John Lambert, "Jeanne Thompson — Girl Lawyer: Modern Day Portia Plays Poker, Ponders Marriage," *The Nassau Guardian and Bahamas Observer*, Saturday, April 13, 1968.

¹⁵⁸ Belgrave, *Theatre in the Bahamas: From Ol' Story to Rep Theatre*, 148.

¹⁵⁹ Lambert, "Jeanne Thompson — Girl Lawyer."

channels, and Sonia relates that they were surprised to be told, informally, by prime minister Hugh Shearer, that the main reason for the delay was the concern that the minister of development, Edward Seaga, had about finding a replacement for Sonia to keep *Hopeful Village* alive.¹⁶⁰ The transfer eventually came through and the Mills family finally came to the Bahamas. Sonia was employed with the ministry of tourism, and served in a number of capacities, where she was eventually placed in charge of 'collaterals' which is to say, promotional brochures and informational literature for tourists.

The arrival of the Mills family in the Bahamas also served to reunite Jeanne and Sonia. Thus when Jeanne was offered the opportunity to write a Bahamian radio serial by the minister of tourism, she immediately called her good friend. Although Thompson had written a number of plays, she had no prior experience with the radio serial format or the soap opera aesthetic, and she was reluctant to take on the project. Mills had no such trepidation and encouraged Thompson to take the job. Although Mills' involvement was not officially sanctioned, the pair agreed to work together on the serial.¹⁶¹

Feeling that the ministry seemed to appreciate alliteration, they changed 'Albury,' a common white Bahamian name, to its opposite, the black folk name of Ferguson. They then combined this with a reference to the Over-the-Hill area where Thompson had grown up and created *The Fergusons of Farm Road*.¹⁶² The pair recruited actors from Thompson's immediate family, the Nassau theatre community, working-class Bahamian straw vendors and even a few work acquaintances. The program they produced remains to this day a

¹⁶⁰ *Hopeful Village* survived until 1975. See Cambridge, "Mass Media Entertainment", 346.

¹⁶¹ Belgrave, *Theatre in the Bahamas: From Ol' Story to Rep Theatre*, 104.

¹⁶² Jeanne Thompson, interview by author, Nassau, Bahamas, January 21, 2009. The series title was apparently not an automatic choice — an early draft of the first episode has the family living on Peter Street.

singular instance of Bahamian creative collaboration and, as far as this writer is aware, was also the first national narrative ever provided to the Bahamian people in an extended popular format. The genesis of the *Fergusons* also has a distinct pan-Caribbean flavor as it traces its lineage directly to the early Jamaican pro-development serials.

The inaugural broadcast of *The Fergusons of Farm Road* aired on ZNS at 7:30pm, Wednesday May 13, 1970 and was repeated the following day at 12:30pm. Under the headline "Courtesy Show on ZNS," a press release in the *Guardian* announced *The Fergusons* as an "all-Bahamian soap opera."

All the parts are played by Bahamians and through the characters they portray, the theme is set to emphasize the importance of courtesy and a constructive outlook not only towards the resort's visitors but between Bahamians and their fellow country men and women.¹⁶³

Under the original terms agreed on between the parties, the *Fergusons* were only to exist for 13 episodes and then it was to fade away with the rest of the FTU courtesy campaign. The show immediately attracted the attention of Bahamians who had never before heard a fictionalized version of their daily lives, and within weeks they began to congregate around their radios to hear the latest fifteen minute installment.¹⁶⁴ Had the colony finally found a medium that conveyed the importance of courtesy to their mainstream industry without invoking colonial attitude of subservience and obsequiousness?

Stay tuned.

¹⁶³ Anonymous, "Courtesy Show on Z.N.S." *The Nassau Guardian and Bahamas Observer*, Wednesday, May 13, 1970.

¹⁶⁴ Belgrave, *Theatre in the Bahamas: From Ol' Story to Rep Theatre*, 148, 9.

Chapter 4

Dramatizing Courtesy, Manipulating Identity: An Analysis of The Fergusons of Farm Road

Radio leaves an elusive, intangible record that makes its history difficult to chronicle.

The most a historian can reasonably expect are written scripts and, more recently, archived recordings of past broadcasts. The historian of radio phenomenon is therefore often left to imagine the context and reception of the object of analysis. How did it actually sound? What was the intonation of the delivery? What was the impact on the audience? This analysis of *The Fergusons of Farm Road* encounters similar shortcomings. It is based primarily on unreleased primary sources — scripts for the show that were in the possession of the series' script writers, Ms. Jeanne Thompson and Mrs. Sonia Mills — as the complete audio record of the show has for the most part been lost or destroyed by the national radio station, Zephyr Nassau Sunshine (ZNS). The audio recordings that have survived do not cover the series initial broadcast period of the summer of 1970 that coincided with the "Friendliness through Understanding" (FTU) courtesy campaign. This audio is either from late 1972 or early 1974 and has only survived through a series of events best described as luck. (See audio CD appendix) Consequently, the scripts are the essential, and virtually the only, blueprints available for understanding what Bahamians were listening to nearly forty years ago.

The scripts themselves are written in Bahamian Creole English (BCE) — known locally as Bahamian Dialect, the vernacular of the Bahamian people, for which there is no

standardized orthography.¹ Janet Donnelly, linguist at the College of the Bahamas, says that “creoles are, in fact *bona fide* languages” which are “just as structured and rule-governed as other languages.”² BCE is therefore not a dialect of English but is rather a fusion of English and several African languages and its African component is “largely masked by the mostly European vocabulary.” Donnelly observes that “what many people construe [in BCE] to be ‘bad English’ is really an overlay of an African syntax.”³ Official ZNS policy of the 1970s clearly conceived of the local creole as ‘bad English’ and therefore prohibited newscasters and other radio personalities from using it on air; the *Fergusons* was a notable exception to this rule.⁴

With these preconditions understood, this chapter will examine the original block of 13 episodes, which are most directly related to the FTU program. These episodes were broadcast between Wednesday May 13, and Thursday August 13, 1970. Synopses and rewrites exist for many of the episodes, and this gives additional insight into the writing process. Since the audio from ZNS for the original thirteen episodes is most likely lost,⁵ it is impossible to know exactly how the scripts were performed and broadcast, but what we do have is sufficient to understand the characters, the story and how these were being deployed in the service of the FTU courtesy campaign.

¹ Some early drafts show the influence of Jamaican Creole, presumably from Mills’ contributions.

² Janet L. Donnelly, “African Roots/Routes: African Influences on Bahamian Vernacular English,” *Yinna* 2 (2007): 49.

³ Ibid.: 50, 53.

⁴ Storr, “Development of Broadcasting in the Bahamas”, 262.

⁵ This is an issue that is discussed in more detail in the following chapter,

Introducing the *Fergusons*

The fictional *Fergusons* were presented as a typical middle-class family who lived in a "five room clapboard house" in the 'Over-the-Hill' black area of Nassau.⁶ If you recall, 'Over-the-hill' is the local term for the valley area south of a low-rising hill in Nassau that separated urban dwelling blacks from white-dominated Bay Street. 'Farm Road' was a well known street in this area. The father, Ezekiel Ferguson, also known as Zeke, was a "taxi-driver by profession, preacher by calling" who preached every third Sunday in the church of the Risen Redeemer on Third Street the Grove.⁷ His wife, Wilhelmina (or Mina, as she was more commonly known), was a housewife and part-time straw vendor, who sold her straw-work as "more of a hobby than a job" thus making the family dependent on Zeke's single income.⁸

The Fergusons, like Thompson's own parents, were a relatively large family by contemporary Bahamian standards with six children and, like Thompson's parents, they had also separated their offspring neatly into two generations, with three adult working children and another three still attending grade school. The eldest son, Eldridge, was married with a child and was living and working in the Bahamian second-city of Freeport and appears only in name.⁹ The oldest daughter, Princess, had completed high school and was working outside the home at 'The Pirates Gold' gift shop.¹⁰ The second son, Samuel, had recently found employment, and worked behind the information desk of the fictional

⁶ Jeanne Thompson and Sonia Mills, "Episode 8," in *The Fergusons of Farm Road* (Nassau: 1970), 8.

⁷ A fictional church on a real Nassau street. Jeanne Thompson and Sonia Mills, "Episode 1," in *The Fergusons of Farm Road* (Nassau: 1970), 1.

⁸ Jeanne Thompson and Sonia Mills, "Episode 9," in *The Fergusons of Farm Road* (Nassau: 1970), 8.

⁹ Jeanne Thompson and Sonia Mills, "Episode 3," in *The Fergusons of Farm Road* (Nassau: 1970), addendum.

¹⁰ Jeanne Thompson and Sonia Mills, "Episode 7," in *The Fergusons of Farm Road* (Nassau: 1970), 6.

'Palace' hotel.¹¹ Thus, all of the adult members of the household relied on tourism to make their living and this was not far from the lived reality of most Bahamians.¹² Unlike the Thompson children, however, none of the Fergusons had yet obtained a university education, and the thought of any Ferguson child attending university was far fetched.¹³ Of the three children still attending school, it seemed that the youngest daughter, Blossom, had the best chance to get a higher education. The two youngest boys, Earl and Othniel, were apparently not close to being considered academic material.

The depiction at the heart of the *Fergusons* — a strong and faithful father figure at the head of a nuclear family — was a statistical anomaly.¹⁴ Dr. Timothy McCartney, writing in 1971, identified four types of Bahamian family. The Fergusons were what he described as a 'structured family' with a legally married couple and children, all living together. He noted that

all the information collected by sociologists, ministers of religion, etc., points to the fact that only 2 out of 6 Bahamian families are structured — which means that less than half of all Bahamian families consist of a regular unit of a married couple and their children all living together.

To this we must add that even in structured families the father's presence is often insignificant to the point of non-existence as far as parent-child relationships and an identifiable male image and authority figure are concerned.¹⁵

The type of family portrayed in the *Fergusons* was thus very much in the minority and was essentially a Bahamian ideal as "the vast majority of Bahamian children [were] brought up in homes which are dominated by females." By comparison, the lovable villain

¹¹ Jeanne Thompson and Sonia Mills, "Episode 10," in *The Fergusons of Farm Road* (Nassau: 1970), 2.

¹² Company, *A Plan for Managing the Growth of Tourism in the Commonwealth of the Bahama Islands*.

¹³ Thompson and Mills, "Fergusons, Episode 3," 6, addendum.

¹⁴ Paula Grace Anderson, "Paradigms of Powers: Gender Analysis in Bahamian Literature," *Yinna* 1 (2000): 91.

of the series, and by far its most popular and enduring character, Mistress Clara Rolle (better known by her nick name, Miss Lye), was the head of her single-parent household and had only two children. McCartney described this family as the “unwed mother and children” type, where a woman,

either unmarried or separated, lives alone with her children without a permanent partner in the house. The children may be fathered by more than one man, and she may or may not get support from their fathers. She is, however, the head of her household and responsible for the upbringing of her children.¹⁶

Miss Lye was a working-class food vendor who lived so close to the Fergusons she complained that if she “spit lil hard in mi own house, them Fergusons have something to say about it.”¹⁷ Little is said of her daughter Janet, but she had already sent her son, Edmond,¹⁸ to the “formetary” school, a remedial school for wayward children. It was also clear that although they were neighbors and belonged to the same church, Miss Lye and the Fergusons occupied separate moral universes. Miss Lye had no consistent male presence in her home and there was a well-known history of domestic violence. The story of how she received her nickname is a telling case in point.

Mrs. F: Well I hear that when she was friendly with Janet father he was two timing her with one other woman. One of Miss Lye friend tell her bout it and the next time he come round there she start to ask him concerning it.

Mr. F: Don’t tell me she throw lye on him.

Mrs. F: Wait let me tell you the story man. Anyway the man start talking bigety saying if he got another woman so what and all that kind of thing. Miss Lye aint say nothing else. She grab up one bottle and throw something in the man eye. He start holler

¹⁵ Timothy O. McCartney, *Neuroses in the Sun* (Nassau: Executive Printers of the Bahamas, 1971), 139.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Thompson and Mills, "Fergusons, Episode 7," 4A.

¹⁸ The son is briefly referred to as Staniel in Ibid.

and when the neighbours come they find him blind with the
lye.¹⁹

Mina Ferguson's euphemism, "when she was friendly with Janet father," strongly implies that each of Ms. Lye's two children had different fathers. The brief tale also served to give us a vivid picture of a home life filled with violence, betrayal, moonlighting and transient male figures. It was little wonder that the Fergusons were actively trying to get out of the inner city and move to the suburbs.

Mr. F[erguson]: You know is years my wife and myself been talking bout moving from Farm Road to another area. We got some young chirren and we feel like they would do better in a place where the houses dem not so close together. We got problems with them mixing in bad company. ²⁰

This desire mirrored that of many Bahamians of the time. In 1960s Nassau, there was a definite movement away from Over-the-Hill into newer developments on the outskirts of town, that is once the money from the tourist boom began to trickle down to the level of the average Bahamian.²¹

For her part, Miss Lye thought of herself as poor and felt that the Fergusons were in a far better financial position than she was. When she complained to an expatriate teacher about an incident between her daughter Janet and Othniel Ferguson, she said,

Miss Lye: I shoulda know you was ga take up for the Fergusons. Poor people aint got a chance round here. ²²

Although the Fergusons were far from Bay Street levels of wealth, they did have a car, and owned their own home, which was "better off than some people," and their level of income

¹⁹ Jeanne Thompson and Sonia Mills, "Episode 5," in *The Fergusons of Farm Road* (Nassau: 1970), 2.

²⁰ Thompson and Mills, "Fergusons, Episode 8," 9.

²¹ Ward Minnis, "In Search of Suburbia," in *Forum 2003: Looking Back, Looking Within, Looking Ahead: Examining Bahamian Culture, Environment, Technology, Science, Society and Economy to Promote Economic Development, Heritage Preservation and a Culture of Equality and Peace* (Nassau: 2003), 5.

²² Jeanne Thompson and Sonia Mills, "Episode 6," in *The Fergusons of Farm Road* (Nassau: 1970), 1.

was probably much better than Miss Lye.²³ Due to this financial disparity and perhaps because of their anomalous stability, there was definite tension between the households. Miss Lye resented the Fergusons because, as she said, "You'll always playing bigety like you better than me."²⁴ Bigety is a Bahamian / Southern US word that means haughty, prideful or conceited, thus Miss Lye took great pleasure whenever the Fergusons encountered difficulties or public embarrassment and felt that it was her duty to laugh at their shortcomings. The hostility was shared by both families with a few exceptions. As a preacher in the church, Ezekiel ostensibly held no ill will towards Miss Lye, however his wife, Mina would not, under ordinary circumstances, allow her to even enter their home. Thus, it appears that *The Fergusons of Farm Road* has a distinct middle-class bias even though Thompson claims that she tried to write a class-neutral show.²⁵ The show's set-up also strongly hinted that proper social decorum and engagement with the tourist economy promoted stability and prosperity at home.

The Story

The plot for the first thirteen episodes involved the transformation of young Samuel Ferguson, who eventually became the series' "hero."²⁶ When the story began, Samuel was the very personification of all the negative traits that the "Friendliness through Understanding" campaign was supposed to counteract. He gave terrible service to any tourist he was not interested in dating. Those who qualified for his attentions, however, were given the red carpet treatment, which usually included guided tours of Nassau's

²³ Thompson and Mills, "Fergusons, Episode 9," 7.

²⁴ Thompson and Mills, "Fergusons, Episode 6," 7.

²⁵ Thompson, interview.

²⁶ Anonymous, "Courtesy Show on Z.N.S."

nightclubs after work hours. In a pivotal scene from the second episode, he kept an important guest, the middle-aged Mrs. Harrington Hayes, waiting at the hotel information desk while he set up a date for himself and his friend with two New Jersey girls. The date was finally set, but unfortunately for Mrs. Hayes, the transaction was completed three minutes past the start of his lunch break. Samuel abruptly left for lunch and left Mrs. Hayes unsatisfied. When he met up with his friend Rufus Collie at a restaurant he complained:

Samuel: Man, it was after one and this old woman come there asking all kind of foolishness. If she was young I might oblige her but I aint after no old head.²⁷

Needless to say, Samuel remained on his lunch break for nearly two hours. For her part, Mrs. Hayes filed a complaint with the hotel manager, Mr. Bertram, who called Samuel into his office to discuss the matter. Samuel was extremely belligerent at the meeting and complained that many of his friends who were hired at the same time as he was had already been promoted while he was still stuck behind the information desk. Bertram countered that it was not the policy of the hotel to give "promotions on the strength of one month's work." The manager was also not pleased with Samuel's tendency to date young tourist girls. Threats were exchanged — the manager threatened to fire Samuel, while Samuel threatened to quit his job to save Bertram the trouble. After the meeting Samuel was placed on two week's probation and had to apologize to Mrs. Hayes. In the fourth episode, Samuel finally managed to make the apology. The outline described the scene like this:

Scene 3

Samuel at Hotel desk.

1st encounterMrs. Hayes. He apologizes, not abjectly, rather truculently as a matter of fact, but acceptably.

Helps her to book a tour.²⁸

²⁷ Jeanne Thompson and Sonia Mills, "Episode 2," in *The Fergusons of Farm Road* (Nassau: 1970), 4.

Contrary to his manager's advice, however, Samuel and his friend Rufus Collie, continued to date the tourist girls on their own time. While his friend managed to get his "business straight" with his date, code that he likely had sex with her, the girl Samuel was paired with became troublesome and later alleged that he attempted to rape her, claiming that, because she resisted and ran away, he stole \$400 from a handbag she left behind. Samuel was thus arrested on charges of "assault and larceny," a charge that carried a possible two year sentence in prison.²⁹

With this dramatic turn of events, the Ferguson family was thrown into a panic. Samuel protested his innocence and claimed that the girl was drunk and demanded sex but he merely wanted to get rid of her and simply left her in her room. His father, while not thoroughly convinced of his son's innocence, agreed to find a lawyer to speak on his behalf. Unfortunately for the Fergusons, no Nassau lawyer would work for them on credit, meaning that Zeke had to pay the \$750 legal fee up front. Needless to say, the required sum was far out of the family's capacity, making Zeke mortgage most of his property to an "evil conchy joe" usurer named Mr. Pinder. With the charges public, the Fergusons became the laughingstocks of Nassau, and the entire family suffered dearly at the hands of vicious gossips, such as Miss Lye, who were only too happy to see them hit hard times.³⁰

Samuel's case was brought to court quickly, so as not to inconvenience the accuser, who needed to return to her home in New Jersey. During the proceedings, Samuel's lawyer was able to cast serious doubt on the girl's story but was not able to get the assault charge

²⁸ Jeanne Thompson and Sonia Mills, "Episode 4," in *The Fergusons of Farm Road* (Nassau: 1970), Synopsis.

²⁹ Thompson and Mills, "Fergusons, Episode 6," 7. Thompson and Mills, "Fergusons, Episode 7," 3.

³⁰ Thompson and Mills, "Fergusons, Episode 9."

dropped. The magistrate ruled in the girl's favor, thinking mainly of the impact a light sentence would have on the tourist industry. She said,

Magistrate: Stand down Mr. Ferguson ... You work in the industry. I needn't tell you that this country exists on tourism. I cannot encourage this kind of behaviour towards anyone and I certainly will not tolerate behaviour like this towards our visitors. It is completely loathsome and indefensible... I find you guilty of assault and I sentence you to 18 months at hard labour.³¹

Just as Samuel was being taken away to serve his sentence, Mrs. Hayes made a dramatic *deus ex machina* entrance. It turned out that she was the lone eye-witness to the events in question and was therefore able to completely exonerate Samuel.

Even though Samuel was freed from the charges, he found that his reputation had been irreparably damaged. He lost his job and was unable to find work at any other Nassau hotel. This was in addition to being laughed at and ridiculed by a host of uncaring neighbors. Adding to Samuel's stress was the personal guilt he felt because his father had to support him in addition to paying back the money borrowed for the legal fees. However, since the trial, Mrs. Hayes has begun to use Zeke's taxi regularly, and as a result, an interesting friendship was developing between Mrs. Hayes and the Ferguson family. She was revealed to be a wealthy investor who, along with her husband, owned a "chain of hotels," one of which was under construction on a Bahamian Out Island. Coincidentally, she was looking for young Bahamians to recruit, and wondered whether she could hire Samuel. She subtly tested Samuel's attitude to see if he had changed and learned his lesson. Samuel had indeed changed and was filled with remorse for his errors, and therefore apologized in his own unique way. Having passed the test, Mrs. Hayes gave him the job, bringing the story

³¹ Thompson and Mills, "Fergusons, Episode 10," 10.

arc to an end with a celebration, which was also attended by Miss Lye, who had “crashed the party,” and the episode ended with good resolutions all round.³²

Religion On Farm Road

The basic character and story arc of the ‘salvation’ of Samuel Ferguson is, of course, deeply concerned with the goals of the FTU courtesy campaign, but it also shows the influence of religion on the *Fergusons* story. This should come as no surprise to us, for as we have seen, Bahamians are an intensely religious people, and the successes of the incumbent Progressive Liberal Party were being mythologized along the lines of the Judeo-Christian story.³³ Christianization is evident in the Fergusons even in small details such as the names of the two main characters — Ezekiel and Samuel — which also happen to be names of ancient Israelite prophets. Thompson has downplayed the significance of the names, saying that she uses a character named Zeke in all of her work.³⁴ While this may be true, the choice of the character on which to bestow the name of Ezekiel, in this particular setting, seems hardly accidental. As a “preacher by calling,” would his name have given his warnings about Bahamian society and the need for courtesy more weight?

These exhortations to courtesy and rectitude started early in *The Fergusons of Farm Road*, as the first episode began with a full-blown sermon by Zeke. This opening monologue represents a significant structural difference between the first episode and all the others that followed. It is the only episode that does not begin with the god-like voice of the narrator, but instead commenced with Zeke Ferguson expounding on the word of God.

³² Jeanne Thompson and Sonia Mills, "Episode 12," in *The Fergusons of Farm Road* (Nassau, Bahamas: 1970), Synopsis.

³³ Johnson, *Quiet Revolution*, 87.

³⁴ Thompson, interview.

While at first this may seem a strange creative decision, a look at the content of the sermon makes it clear that this device was an opportunity for the ministry of tourism's message to come through quickly and undiluted to the audience with the necessary Biblical resonance. The sermon, which takes up more than a third of the script, is a polemic on charity. He began by quoting another prophet, Isaiah, citing chapter 13 verse 11 of that prophet's testament:

And I will punish the world for their evil, and the wicked for their iniquity; and I will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible.³⁵

Thus, established right at the outset, almost as an epigraph, is the entire story of Samuel Ferguson. Samuel is both punished and laid low, and like many of those exemplified in the Bible that are smitten for their evil, he has the requisite change of heart. This gave the following thirteen episodes the flavor of parable and also immediately placed tourism as something akin to the Lord's work.

Ezekiel continued tying the business of tourism to religious metaphor by taking the Paradise myth that the country relied on in its advertising and repackaging it for local consumption.

The serpent has crept into the garden one time before and he come back again and creep right into this Paradise of ours, this little garden of Eden that the Lord give us and that other people come from all other parts of the globe to come and look at, and wonder.³⁶

According to Zeke's exegesis, the islands were a paradise, a veritable Garden of Eden, given to Bahamians by God for them "to guard it and protect it," so that other people, namely tourists, could come, look and enjoy. However, all was not well in paradise, for just as Satan had come into the Garden of Eden in the Genesis account, a serpent had also infiltrated the

³⁵ Thompson and Mills, "Fergusons, Episode 1," 1.

Bahamas and threatened to destroy it. That devil was courtesy. Simply put, Bahamians were not as charitable or as courteous as they once were; their abundant prosperity had made them wicked and they must now all repent before divine retribution was meted out.

Driving home his point and making plain his case for the wickedness of the Bahamian people, Zeke Ferguson then asked:

When last you do a good deed for your brother? Now in this country where we have thousands, as a matter of fact, millions of brothers coming to us, where that is our livelihood, how many of us show a little charity to those strangers within our gates.³⁷

Notice the way that Zeke was able to evoke ‘tourism’ without even using the word, neither was the word ‘service’ used, instead being courteous to tourists was framed as the Christian thing to do. He even styled ‘tourists’ as brothers, even though 90 percent of the visitors at the time were white, and were apparently not to be confused with the white oligarchs of the UBP who were dethroned only three years prior and who were definitely not thought of as “brothers.”³⁸ In his brand of rhetoric, bad service to white tourists was essentially a sin against God and if unrepentant, they would surely be punished for their lack of brotherly love. The trick was, of course, to convince Bahamians that tourism was neither service nor servitude but could instead be spiritual communion.

Campaign Against Youth Culture

In the Bahamian Eden, the serpent had not seduced a comparable Eve, as he had in the Biblical story, but had instead insinuated himself into the younger generation. Ezekiel Ferguson continued

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid., 2.

³⁸ Cleare, *History of Tourism*, 166.

May very well be that's what happening to the fruit of our body, this young generation that look like they running full speed down that wide, lovely road that lead to eternal damnation. Hell fire! (Praise the Lord)³⁹

The dangers of tourism to local populations has long been argued in terms of the so-called "demonstration effect," whereby the presence of well-heeled, scantily clad tourists cavorting on island streets and beaches corrupts the natives and seduces the young to desire a hedonistic lifestyle.⁴⁰

According to Zeke, a similar phenomenon had occurred with the Bahamian youth who were not in church but were "outside seeking the pleasures of the flesh, worshipping Mammon." Under different circumstances he might very well have equated this 'Mammon' worship with licentious American-inspired lifestyles, but instead he placed the blame on the prosperity that tourism had brought. Understandably, the sermon downplayed any association between the visiting "brothers" and the waywardness of the young, leaving this connection to be dealt with later in the plot. It was sufficient initially to isolate money as a prime tool of the devil, because apparently "godliness reigned over the land" before the sudden influx of tourist money. Things had changed for the worse though and Ezekiel warned that the likely future for the current crop of young ones was "eternal damnation."

This punishment should not be confused with an afterlife of spiritual torture, however, for Zeke made clear that he had an economic apocalypse in mind.

You know what that mean. That this same sea that we so proud of will dry up, the fruit of the sea will wither away, and the fruit of the land will turn to ashes and shrivel you mouth. We can't even go back to sponge that time my brothers and sisters. ⁴¹

³⁹ Thompson and Mills, "Fergusons, Episode 1," 3.

⁴⁰ Pattullo, *Last Resorts*, 84, 5.

⁴¹ Thompson and Mills, "Fergusons, Episode 1," 3.

If the sun, sand and sea would disappear, what would happen to the tourists who came to visit Eden? What would happen to the abundant prosperity of the longest 'boom' in Bahamian history? The evocation of the once-successful sponging industry was a powerful reminder to Bahamians of the fickle nature of staple industries. After years of depending on the harvest of naturally occurring sponge in Bahamian waters to buoy the economy, a "fungoid" destroyed them overnight in 1938, leaving Bahamians to face yet another economic drought.⁴² The recent collapse of Cuban tourism after Castro, also on Bahamian minds at the time, might also have been a clear illustration of the ministry's message. Would the unruly ways of the young lead to a tourist blight? The warning was abundantly clear.

Interesting too was the subtle way that Ezekiel's condemnation deftly tied into the emerging national myth that used the image of ancient Hebraic suffering as a justifying metaphor for the current administration. In the Biblical account, when the Israelites left the land of Egypt, their task was to remain faithful to God, however when they failed to fulfill their obligations to the Most High they brought divine retribution on themselves and were punished. Similarly, after having been released from bondage to the Bay Street Boys, the Bahamian people also had to remain faithful to God to avoid the prophesied apocalypse.

Ironically, it was Zeke's son Samuel who epitomized the problems he described. Samuel spent his time 'seeking the pleasures of the flesh,' and paid his due to Mammon with regular visits to Miami to purchase the latest styles in American clothes. He used his job behind the information desk at the Palace Hotel as a recruiting post to arrange liaisons with pretty young tourist girls. The full extent of these relationships was strongly hinted at

⁴² Craton, *A History*, 253.

in the scripts, especially during the trial, since the women he dated obviously had access to private hotel rooms. Samuel felt that Bahamian women "ain't ready" and he "don't never date them unless it ain't no foreigners in town." He was in love with America; with its women and with its culture. When he took the tourist girls to the disco, he knew more of the latest American dances than they did.⁴³ Samuel seemed to have squandered his newfound freedom by becoming beholden to US-inspired hedonism.

The ministry of tourism was well aware that it was entirely possible to date tourist girls and get to work on time. It was just as possible to wear the latest American styles and give good service to tourists. However, in the simplistic moral environment in which the *Fergusons* existed, the interpretation for Samuel's flaws was similarly simple. In the second episode, he bragged to a friend, as if to drive home the point of Zeke's sermon, "Man I don't know the last time I set foot inside a church."⁴⁴ Samuel does not go to church and we are led to believe that if he were more of a Christian, he would leave those foreign women alone, he would not love America as much, and he would, most importantly, give good service to the tourists regardless of their sex or status. Therefore, when Ezekiel confronted his son by saying: "I want to tell you if you keep on the way you going you'll end up bad" we already know what he is talking about.⁴⁵ Samuel is clearly on that road to damnation and we are not at all surprised when Miss Lye informs the Fergusons that their son had been arrested by the police.⁴⁶ The implication, of course, is that his punishment by God had begun.

⁴³ Thompson and Mills, "Fergusons, Episode 3," Version B, page 4.

⁴⁴ Thompson and Mills, "Fergusons, Episode 2," 4.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 7.

⁴⁶ Thompson and Mills, "Fergusons, Episode 6," 7.

The Need for Punishment

Punishment and discipline are dominant themes in the *Fergusons* and like the divine retribution alluded to in the opening sermon, traditional Bahamian parenting also favors corporal punishment. Given his taste for fire and brimstone, it is not surprising that Ezekiel was an ardent proponent.

Zeke: If you woulda let me cut his [skin] for him yesterday for them sheets and Janet mout he mighta think twice before he try anything again. But no, all you gotta say is he only mischievous, he soon grow out of it and all kind stuff. I hope you satisfy.⁴⁷

The above quote came from an argument Zeke had with his wife, and it echoed the advice of Proverbs 29:15, which declares: "The rod and reproof give wisdom: but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame."⁴⁸ The son that initially brought shame on the Ferguson family, and the one referred to in the above quote, was not Samuel, but rather his school-aged brother, Othniel. In the second episode, we learn that he threw mud on Miss Lye's freshly-washed laundry, and later that he got into a fight with her daughter, Janet, at school. The corporal punishment that Zeke wanted to give his son for his behavior was perhaps one of the few points that he and Miss Lye would agree on and echoes the theme of conduct and consequence that runs through the whole series.

Zeke's wife, Mina, on the other hand is portrayed as a permissive parent who believed her children could do no wrong. When they got in trouble she took up for them regardless of the circumstances and tried to protect them from their father's wrath. Zeke complained bitterly about her indulgences,

Zeke: I mean if you woulda tell me about them times when Othniel used to get send home from school for rudeness and when he

⁴⁷ Ibid., 5.

⁴⁸ King James Version

used to trouble Miss Lye if you woulda let me know I woulda punish him from then and he woulda stop doing them things. But you wouldn't tell me nothing you never punish him yourself and he keep on because he think he coulda get away with it.⁴⁹

Mina had an insular, conspiratorial world-view, and believed that all of Nassau was trying to bring her and her family down and thus gave no credence to any report she received about their behavior. Zeke believed that had she been more strict and less permissive, their children would give them fewer problems. It is likely that most Bahamians would have agreed with his assessment. He even applied this reasoning to his older children. In a confrontation with Samuel in the second episode he threatened to beat him right there in the hotel,

Samuel: Look Dad, cut it eh. I have some work to do so if you don't mind...

Zeke: Watch your mouth boy. You think I scared to cut your skin right here. (pause) No, on second thoughts I'll leave you to the Lord.⁵⁰

The authority of parents, and other community members, to discipline their children was a primary value in Bahamian society and the Ferguson children needed discipline to stay in line.⁵¹ Similarly, the courtesy campaign itself was an exercise in social control rooted in moralistic values and a comparable rod of instruction that was being applied to wayward Bahamians. The point being that both families and tourism need tight social control to succeed. Failing that, they, like Samuel, would be left to the Lord, and Zeke had already enumerated how devastating His reproof could be.

Still, the strong denunciations of wayward young people and the inclination towards messages of reproof and punishment in the *Fergusons* is somewhat surprising given the

⁴⁹ Thompson and Mills, "Fergusons, Episode 6," 8.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 6.

⁵¹ McCartney, *Neuroses in the Sun*, 10.

relative youthfulness of the PLP cabinet. Pindling had just turned forty in March, 1970 and minister of tourism Maynard was only a year older; the script writers, Thompson and Mills, at the time, were only 31. One can only imagine the general reaction if a similar story-line had been run under the UBP regime when such didacticism would have been dismissed as overt Bay Street manipulation. Perhaps it was felt that evoking an aged voice of experience, as opposed to advice from the younger generation would be the best way to give the message the needed weight. It could also be argued that the patriarchal posture that the PLP was increasingly assuming necessitated such a rhetorical position. Of course, this is not to say that there were no efforts to soften the heavy finger pointing at the young. For instance, in the same first episode that prominently featured the sermon, young Blossom, a "symbol of the generation gap,"⁵² was asked by the visiting Bishop what she thought of her father's sermon, and she quoted scripture as counterpoint.

Blossom: I don't agree with him sir. Everybody always saying is the younger generation, but The Lord say is the sins of the fathers that is visited on the children.⁵³

Her vivid rebuttals did not last long, however, for the Bishop soon told her "When your father talk to you, open your ears and close your mouth" and over the course of the series the perspective of the older generation is continually verified.

Other Foreigners

Despite the PLP's inclination to use Biblical metaphor to influence the Bahamian youth, very little of the contemporary Bahamian political landscape made it into *The Fergusons of Farm Road*. There were no references to local politics, political parties, or

⁵² Nancy Savage, "Fergusons of Farm Road Bring Good Humour to Serial," *The Tribune*, Thursday, May 14 1970.

⁵³ Thompson and Mills, "Fergusons, Episode 1," 7.

current events. Politics, according to Ms. Thompson, would only have distracted from the message, and was therefore not included. However, a few flickers did seem to make it through onto the show. One such scene, that does not serve to advance the main plot, involved the next-door-neighbor Miss Lye and an expatriate teacher at the school her daughter, Janet, attended. Othniel Ferguson had gotten into a fight with Janet prompting Miss Lye to go to the school to see what was being done about the incident.

What is striking about this scene is that the teacher involved is an expatriate, which was an issue in Bahamian schools at the time, as Wallace-Whitfield, the minister of education, faced with few qualified Bahamians, had little alternative but to hire more British, Canadian and West Indian teachers.⁵⁴ The conversation between Miss Lye and the teacher hinged on the major issue in the story of punishment and its efficacy.

Miss Lye	What you say you do to him?
Teacher	I suspended him for two weeks.
Miss Lye	What that mean?
Teacher	He can't come to school for two weeks. I sent him home.
Miss Lye	You send him home! What kind of punishment you think that is?
Teacher	In England it's considered a very harsh punishment.
Miss Lye	Oh, yeah? Well just remember you in the Bahamas now and getting send home aint nothing. You shoulda beat his tail. ⁵⁵

The exchange between the two did not end well, as Miss Lye threatened the foreigner and vowed to get her "satisfaction" from the police if she could not get it at the school. There were several things in play in this interchange. First, there was a strong hint of the changing times — the traditional local view versus the new standards that many perhaps felt were being imposed by external forces. When told that beatings were no longer

⁵⁴ Craton and Saunders, *Islanders Vol. Two*, 353.

⁵⁵ Thompson and Mills, "Fergusons, Episode 6," 2.

permitted in school, Miss Lye asked in disbelief: "Since when they stop beating? They used to beat me and all my other children."⁵⁶ The common attitude of Bahamian parents, as shown above with the example of Zeke Ferguson, and obviously shared by Miss Lye, is that corporal punishment was essential for the proper development of children and the best protection against delinquency. These are still contentious issues in the Bahamas even today.

The foreign teacher did her best to explain the position on punishment — that it was not as effective as Miss Lye thinks — but because there was no follow up to the conversation in subsequent episodes and given the overriding importance of punishment in the story line, it seems as if the teacher's dissenting view would be lost. Additionally, the teacher seems the odd person out in this series. The Friendliness through Understanding program and *The Fergusons* were designed to enhance the level of co-operation between tourists and locals, however the teacher did not fit into either category. She instead appeared as an interloper who did not understand local customs and only got in the way. Perhaps many listeners sided with Miss Lye when she menacingly said: "just remember you in the Bahamas now."⁵⁷

White Bahamians

A secondary goal of the FTU campaign was to enhance the relations of Bahamians towards other Bahamians.⁵⁸ In a brief memorandum written by Thompson and Mills which appears to pitch the program to the Ministry, it says that although the "primary concern [of the campaign] is courtesy to our visitors from overseas, we believe it would also be the

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

intention to promote courtesy as an integral part of the Bahamian way of life."⁵⁹ This ideal, while it echoes Stafford Sands' rhetoric from 1961,⁶⁰ does not seem to take white Bahamians into consideration.

For example, is it merely a coincidence that the only white Bahamian character to make an appearance in *The Fergusons* is portrayed as a villain? In trying to raise the money to pay for his son's legal defense, Zeke Ferguson having been refused by the bank and every other avenue, had to get a loan from an "evil conchy joe man." The term 'conchy joe' is a variation of 'conch' which, if you recall, is the local term for a white Bahamian. This character, named Mr. Pinder, was not only 'evil' however, he was apparently the 'devil' as well.

Blossom: Who is Mr. Pinder?

Mrs. Ferguson: One conky joe devil does lend money.

Blossom: Why you say Daddy ga have to give him your soul?

Mrs. Ferguson: Cause that's the only way he does lend money.⁶¹

When Zeke finally gets the loan from Mr. Pinder, it was at an exorbitant interest rate, nearly twice that of the bank, and this was after mortgaging almost all his possessions to the man as well. Zeke ended the episode with the plea, "Oh Lord my father, look down and be merciful, my very soul sell to the devil now."⁶² The *Fergusons* thus provided an interesting bifurcation of whites — the necessary white tourist versus the antagonistic white on Bay Street whose agenda conflicted with the Bahamas' new national interests.

⁵⁸ Anonymous, "Courtesy Show on Z.N.S."

⁵⁹ Jeanne Thompson and Sonia Mills, "Notes," in *The Fergusons of Farm Road* (Nassau: 1970).

⁶⁰ Anonymous, "Sands Addresses Chamber on Courtesy Campaign."

⁶¹ Thompson and Mills, "Fergusons, Episode 9," 6.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 10.

Given the history of the colony, it was not surprising that this Bahamian white was cast as a financial power broker. The white minority was long in charge of the colony's economy, and the new freedom of the majority did not do much in reality to alter its financial situation. That current fact, combined with the long history of repression no doubt led to resentment from black Bahamians towards whites. That Mr. Pinder was portrayed in this manner, however, would not seem to do much to increase the 'understanding' afforded to other white Bahamian 'conchs' that the program was ostensibly to provide, but only to reaffirm stereotypes. Perhaps this detail also reinforced the PLP message that black Bahamians had better get their act together, even if it meant being nice to US whites, or else Bay Street whites would take back control.

Driving home the Point

It is clear from the writers' notes that accompany the scripts that the Fergusons had predetermined pedagogical content. That there were deliberate subjects that were supposed to be addressed in each episode is borne out in some of the writers' synopsis. For example, episodes 12 and 13 had the following points attached

Messages: Don't be a dropout
 Family unity, dignity, pride..assents to be emulated
 BE COURTEOUS. ...

Message: Courtesy pays (Zeke's attitude has won the day)⁶³

It is apparent that these directions came from the ministry, and it is interesting that education and traditional family values were highlighted as traits to be encouraged in Bahamians. These goals are similar to other pro-development serials in the region, like *Hopeful Village* that Mills wrote while in Jamaica, that tried to educate people in rural areas

about literacy and modern farming techniques.⁶⁴ However, the capital letters underlining courtesy, tell us all we need to know about what was the crucially important development issue in the eyes of the Bahamian state.

Tying the all-importance of courtesy with the theme of "Friendliness through Understanding" the characters learned things that would help them 'understand' tourists better. For example, Zeke learns that not all tourists are rich.

Tourist: We don't mind the walk. In fact, its a change after so much driving. I'm a taxi driver where I come from you know.

Mr. Ferguson: What? You's a taxi driver too! I never would of thought it.

Tourist: I guess you thought all tourists were millionaires huh?⁶⁵

He took the tourist and his wife to Ms. Lye's food stand on Rawson Square to get some local cuisine, as Miss Lye had the "sweetest pot" in Nassau. Miss Lye was, however, intolerably rude to Zeke and his two guests and he was forced to take the tourists elsewhere. The important lesson for the audience here was that while Ms. Lye's rudeness caused her to lose money, Zeke's courtesy gained him business, as the tourists requested that he be their official "chauffeur" and take them on a guided tour of Nassau.⁶⁶

This lesson that 'courtesy pays' is further demonstrated with Samuel over the arc of the thirteen episodes. It was because of his discourtesy that Samuel was charged with attempted rape and nearly goes to prison. It was also because of his discourtesy that he was not able to get his job back when he was cleared of the charges. It was only because of the courtesy his father showed to Mrs. Hayes that Samuel was given a chance at redemption. Again, courtesy had a definable dollar value. That civility between Bahamians

⁶³ Thompson and Mills, "Fergusons, Notes," Synopsis for Episode 12, 13, page 2, 4. Capitals theirs.

⁶⁴ Cambridge, "Mass Media Entertainment", 134 - 8.

⁶⁵ Thompson and Mills, "Fergusons, Episode 4," 3.

seemed almost non-existent in the series does not seem to matter — despite the fact that such understanding was an advertised feature of the show — of primary importance was that the direction of courtesy followed the flow of dollars and was thus expressed mainly to tourists.

Mixed Messages

It would seem, though, that in spite of its clear focus, *The Fergusons of Farm Road* still sent mixed messages to its audience. It was not difficult for the audience to find information in the series that went against the grain of the ministry's intentions. Take, for example, a scene in episode two between Samuel and the hotel manager:

Manager	Samuel, it isn't the job but what the person makes out of the job that counts. It's better to be a good road sweeper than a bad manager.
Samuel	That's the sort of stuff people with good interesting jobs always the telling other people to make them feel good. ⁶⁷

While the manager's comments would have made a good spot radio ad for the FTU program, the response by Samuel, while likely a verbalization that many Bahamians might have muttered or thought to themselves as they heard ministry propaganda, gives validity to another point of view. When the manager confronted him directly on his surliness, Samuel again was quick with a witty reply.

Manager	What do you think would happen if I had the same attitude that you're displaying now?
Samuel	Our hotel would probably have to close down.
Manager	Right, so you see how important it is to be polite.
Samuel	Important to the hotel owner but not to me. ⁶⁸

⁶⁶ Ibid., 4.

⁶⁷ Thompson and Mills, "Fergusons, Episode 3," 2.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 2, 3.

At this point in the story Samuel had no interest in the survival of tourism in the Bahamas, and, although Samuel does change over the course of the thirteen episodes, we need to remember that this change occurred over three months of real time. Which version of the character would the audience remember — the Samuel who expressed what they might have felt about their jobs or the Samuel who eventually conformed? Instances like the above occur regularly in the scripts, especially in Miss Lye's treatment of tourists. Was the counter balance of Zeke Ferguson's example enough to offset the impact of the 'bad' examples? The Fergusons was, thus, capable of moral complexity even if its overriding message of courtesy was cast in manichaeian terms.

In this vein, the most curious detail of all in the initial *Fergusons of Farm Road* story arc is probably the fact that the main villains are tourists. The beautiful young women who were Samuel's accusers were proven in the end to be merely opportunistic liars out to punish a Bahamian who was not interested in having sex with a drunken girl. How did portraying these two young girls in such a negative light fit into the ministry of tourism's plan for understanding the mainstay of the industry?

It seems odd that tourists would be portrayed in anything but a positive way in ministry propaganda. Is it not also true that Samuel is only providing the young ladies with entertainment that they seemed to have desired? His parents have an interesting conversation about the matter:

Mrs F.	I believe he was only being nice to the people. Ain't you hear them tell you on the radio we must be nice to the tourist them?
Mr. F.	I don't think they mean for us to let our niceness go too far. ⁶⁹

⁶⁹ Thompson and Mills, "Fergusons, Episode 8," 3.

In this intriguing bit of meta-narrative — in which a component of the FTU campaign references itself — the central problem with Samuel's behavior is made clear: Yes, Bahamians are supposed to be nice to tourists, but not too nice. The ministry seemed to be placing limits on what was acceptable service and what was inappropriate and these boundaries followed the contours of the conservative Christian ethic. The young girls were not simply tourists, they were also temptations, and as such they needed to be avoided. While Miss Hayes is offered as an acceptable tourist, one who did not jeopardize Bahamian social values, the New Jersey girls were the very manifestations of the hedonistic lifestyle that Zeke Ferguson railed against in his opening sermon. The ministry was taking an opportunity to comment on a practice that was prevalent among Bahamian men who had developed an international reputation for providing sexual services for foreign women on vacation.⁷⁰ It was service, yes, but it was not Christian, and as such it needed to go.

However, even here there was ambiguity. It was reported that Samuel's friend Rufus Collie had his "business straight" with his date, code that apparently means he was successful in seducing her. What message does this send? When Samuel called his drunken date "a bad investment" did this suggest to Bahamians that his friend had made a 'good investment'?⁷¹ By allowing Samuel's accomplice to get away scott free the story sends conflicting signals. There was a definite message to be sure, but there appears to be enough wiggle room in the narrative to allow for each listener to come away with their own conclusion.

⁷⁰ Ian Gregory Strachan, "Goin' Back Ta Da Islan': Migration, Memory and the Marketplace in Bahamian Art," *Yinna* 2 (2007): 36. Strachan, *Paradise and Plantation*, 15, 16.

⁷¹ Thompson and Mills, "Fergusons, Episode 7," 7.

National Narrative

The Fergusons of Farm Road clearly satisfied untapped demand for popular fiction, extending and secularizing local traditions of moral and Biblical storytelling. Thus, when the voice of the narrator finally enters the first episode after the lengthy sermon, the rich baritone of actor and coroner Winston Saunders said

And so begins the story of Brother Ferguson and his family. In a sort of way this is the story of all of us — our strength, our weakness, our faults, our trials and our triumphs: of the things that make us what we are. This is the story of the Fergusons of Farm Road.⁷²

The program's tagline promoted it as a "true to life drama of a Bahamian family." Thus, an additional aim of the program was to define Bahamian-ness through the lens of this fictional family — "the things that make us what we are." The underlying promise to the audience is also that by listening to the Fergusons they would come closer to knowing themselves. Notably absent from this description is, of course, any mention of "what we do," and as we can see, what Bahamians did was cater to tourists. It seems that a goal of the ministry of tourism was to wrap Bahamian national identity around the goal of good service through a Christian ethic. It was as if they were saying: we are Bahamians, we are Christian, and this is how we do things. To say that the national identity was both Christian and traditional was an inventive way for the government to take the paradoxical stand of being pro-American tourist and anti-American culture at the same time.

The message was that despite the build up of tourist amenities, despite the casinos and the hotels and the water-sports, it was the supposed Christian simplicity of the Bahamian people that was the real tourist attraction. Note this conversation between Mrs. Hayes and Zeke Ferguson:

- Mrs. Hayes ... I can assure [you] that I [am] delighted to discover that there was a country with real people behind the sophistication of the casinos and the hotels.
- Mr. F: You must be one of the few tourists what interested in what is like to live here. ...
- Mrs. Hayes I honestly think that a dozen Bahamians like you would do more for the tourist trade than a thousand dollars worth of advertising.⁷³

The *Fergusons* tried to teach Bahamians that they should not abandon their traditional values just because of the deluge of visitors from North America. It was these values that were the real product differentiators and it was these values that would ultimately save tourism. As the Ferguson family had become the main attraction for Mrs. Hayes, so the average Bahamian was to be "walking tourist attractions" for other guests.⁷⁴ A shrewd observer might therefore conclude that the series was a conscious effort at social control that used well-rooted socio-religious values to engineer compliant behavior that would bolster the local economy and thereby service the new national goal of independence.

If the *Fergusons* were to be a representation of the country as a whole, it is of course interesting that the real hero *cum* saviour of that radio family was not God, but rather, a foreign investor. The history of the islands and their reliance on foreign capital, particularly that from the United States, and their continued search for more such investors made this a necessary and perhaps uncomfortable detail. Bahamians could definitely see themselves in the *Fergusons*, and this final detail made the resemblance between the show and local reality complete.

⁷² Thompson and Mills, "Fergusons, Episode 1," 3.

⁷³ Thompson and Mills, "Fergusons, Episode 12," 9.

⁷⁴ Pattullo, *Last Resorts*, 62.

Chapter 5

"An Identity of Its Own: Analysis, Impact and Conclusions

According to the ministry of tourism, the Friendliness through Understanding (FTU) program as a whole, and *The Fergusons of Farm Road* in particular, was a great success. On Friday June 26, 1970, after the *Fergusons* would have been on the air for about a month and a half, the minister of tourism, Clement T. Maynard, appeared on a radio program called "Let's Talk" to discuss the early results of the FTU program. He said that "recent studies have shown that 90 percent of departing tourists were "very satisfied" with their stay in the Bahamas.¹ This would suggest that there was a dramatic upturn in overall tourist satisfaction, presumably driven by FTU, since it was only in January of that same year that nearly 70 percent of tourists polled "had something disparaging to say about the Bahamas."²

It is admittedly difficult to tell from Maynard's shifting statistical footing if there was real change or not. While Maynard may have been guilty of muddling his methodology — satisfaction and disparagement being two distinct sentiments — certainly the general perception seemed to be that visitors' experiences in the Bahamas had taken a turn for the better. Regardless of its impact, the ministry saw fit to end FTU the following month, earlier than it had initially planned, as the attention-grabbing impact of the campaign was beginning to diminish. In their 1970 annual report, they explained that "the intensive program [FTU] was carefully watched and withdrawn in July when it was felt that a fatigue

¹ Anonymous, "Let's Talk Radio Show: Tourists 'Satisfied' Says Minister," *The Nassau Guardian and Bahamas Observer*, Monday, June 29, 1970.

² Anonymous, "Bad Service a Factor."

factor had set in." However, the Bahamian audience was far from 'fatigued' with *The Fergusons of Farm Road*, and the series would become "a continuing feature of ZNS" since it had, in the ministry's words, "become very popular and ha[d] achieved an identity of its own."³

Cultural Phenomenon

To say the Fergusons were 'very popular' appears to be an understatement. In the short time that it had been on the air, the show had become a *bona fide* cultural phenomenon. What had begun merely as a vehicle of tourist promotion had already installed itself as a fixture of Bahamian life. John Lent, writing in *Third World Mass Media* agrees, saying that the show's popularity was "uncontested."⁴ In speaking with those present at the time, the success of the show becomes evident. Dr. Keva Bethel⁵, who went on to become the president of the College of the Bahamas, said that the Fergusons were almost required listening for every Bahamian family. Nicolette [Her daughter, later to become an anthropologist] says she can remember we used to listen to it sitting around the table ... I think everybody used to listen, and Miss Lye was a household word.⁶

Cyprianna McQueeney, who played the role of Miss Lye's daughter, Janet, in the series, was only seventeen at the time and today remembers the atmosphere surrounding the show in vivid detail. She says "practically every household that owned a radio" listened to the Fergusons and "if you didn't own a radio, then you went to wherever radio was." She remembers that when the program came on the air "the town stood still ... and the next day everybody couldn't wait to talk about it." In the wake of each week's episode, everyone was

³ Tourism, *Annual Report 1970*. 17.

⁴ This was from an April 26, 1971, interview with ZNS general manager John Dodge, quoted in Lent, *Third World Mass Media*, 175.

anxious for the next installment and “couldn’t wait till the next week to see what happened.” She says that she does not know anyone “who did not listen [to the Fergusons] and who didn’t have a big discussion” about it.

McQueeny also enjoyed being a local celebrity. Although her face was obviously not seen over radio, when she spoke to strangers, she was immediately identified as an actor on the *Fergusons*. People would say to her: “I know that voice. I know that voice. Miss Lye is your mother?”⁷ This sort of audience-actor connection — what is sometimes called “para-social affiliation” — was a common occurrence in Jamaica with radio serial actors who were referred to by some as the “movie stars” of Jamaica.⁸

Resistance to Understanding

While the audience could not get enough of *The Fergusons*, the ‘fatigue’ felt for the rest of the FTU campaign clearly surfaced in various ways. For some, the entire premise of the courtesy campaign was faulty. Even some supporters of the government “rejected the proposition that any decline in tourist growth was attributable to surliness or poor service by Bahamian employees.”⁹ One such supporter who strayed from the party line was Arthur Foulkes, who had himself served briefly as minister of tourism in 1969. He wrote in the Progressive Liberal Party (PLP) paper *The Bahamian Times* that

The fact is simply that a very large percentage of the visitors to the Bahamas come from Florida and other areas south of Mason-Dixon line, where a black man is considered by many whites to be an upstart and a rude person if he dares to make it clear that he refuses to be treated as an inferior being. Put another

⁵ She was at the time married to E. Clement Bethel, now deceased, who was to become the first director of the Bahamian department of culture.

⁶ Keva Bethel, telephone interview by author, Nassau, Bahamas, July 29, 2009.

⁷ Cypriana McQueeny, interview by author, Nassau, January 29, 2009.

⁸ Cambridge, “Mass Media Entertainment”, 205.

⁹ Hughes, *Race and Politics*, 148.

way, some visitors refuse to treat service people as people and then they cannot understand why they are treated coldly in return.¹⁰

Foukes reminds us how difficult it was for average Bahamians to separate a job serving tourists from attitudes deeply imbedded in the island's troubled history. Or, in the words of Bahamian cultural critic and scholar Ian Strachan, writing in 2002,

The trouble in the Caribbean is that the region's history of slavery and the present social and economic realities that have resulted from that history make an industry founded on white leisure and black labor more than an ordinary consumer-producer relationship.¹¹

Asking additional probing questions was contemporary newspaper writer Roger Woods, in his column "Topic Tropic" who also questioned the entire premise of the courtesy campaign and wondered if the wrong groups were being targeted. Instead of focusing solely on the "waiters, the hotel workers, [and] the shop assistant," he wondered if "the various managements behind all the various workers" were really the crux of the problem. He concluded that "the help do have a good many faults ... but is it really all their responsibility?"¹²

Meanwhile, Ettiene Dupuch, eccentric editor of *The Tribune*, was more concerned with the moral implications of FTU and criticized the tendency to place a dollar value on courtesy and fought the banal clichés of the FTU campaign with a few of his own. In his daily editorial under the heading "Footnote to history" he wrote,

Recently the Prime Minister launched a Friendship campaign and movie star Sidney Poitier has been carry[ing] the ball for him ever since. ...

Right. But.....

If our people are being encouraged to be friendly to the tourist only for the sake of his money, the Premier is trying to build a race of hypocrites.

¹⁰ Arthur Foulkes, *The Bahamian Times*, Wednesday, April 1, 1970.

¹¹ Strachan, *Paradise and Plantation*, 115, 6.

¹² Roger Woods, "Tropic Topic," *The Nassau Guardian and Bahamas Observer*, Saturday, January 31, 1970.

Remember mister.... Charity begins at home. We must build goodwill among our own people before we can hope to see it shine through to brighten the day for our visitors.¹³

How this goodwill was to be developed amongst Bahamians, he did not say, but the questions that he raised regarding the didactic nature of the campaign are still pertinent.

Jeanne Thompson, co-writer of *the Fergusons*, was herself critical of the paradise myth perpetuated in tourist advertising and the expectations that it promoted. She began writing a fortnightly column in the *Nassau Guardian*, entitled "Satirically Speaking," in early 1970. In one of her first columns she lampooned the ministry of tourism and its multi-million dollar ad campaigns:

So much has been said recently about local causes of a predicted reduction in the tourist growth factor that it might be advisable for the Ministry of Tourism to adopt a new trend in advertising "Tell it like it is and not like you wish it could be." For instance: ...

See the Bahamas for yourself — the fabulous Isles of June. Where service has become a displeasure. Spend hours over an indifferently prepared and badly served meal. Be insulted because your tip is too small. Shop leisurely because you have to.

These advertisements can be illustrated by appropriate photographs which are readily obtainable, and after this type of intensive promotion the Bahamas should have an overabundance of satisfied tourists.¹⁴

Perhaps the most consistent voice of protest to the FTU courtesy campaign was Eddie Minnis, who was, ironically, the voice of Samuel on *The Fergusons of Farm Road*.¹⁵ Minnis, a well-known local painter and resident artist at the British Colonial Hotel, had recently become the first Bahamian political cartoonist. His editorial cartoon 'Pot Luck' appeared six days a week in the *Nassau Guardian*. He was also soon to turn his stint on the Fergusons

¹³ Dupuch, "Charity."

¹⁴ Jeanne Thompson, "'Tell It Like It Is — Not Like You Wish'" *The Nassau Guardian and Bahamas Observer*, Thursday, February 5, 1970.

¹⁵ Eddie Minnis is also the author's father.

into a successful local music career with his first hit song capitalizing on the show's most popular character, "Miss Lye." (See audio CD appendix)



Figure 12. *Pot Luck* cartoon from *The Nassau Guardian* April 4, 1970.

His *Pot Luck* cartoon for April 4th, 1970, critiqued Prime Minister Pindling's vision of the "New Bahamian," which was, of course, the cornerstone of the "Look Up, Move Up" campaign from 1968. It is not clear that the PLP government re-used this particular piece of rhetoric in its FTU campaign, but regardless Minnis makes the connection between the two campaigns clear. What had the 'New' Bahamian become under the weight of recent developments in tourism? By attaching a label to the trouser leg of a 'New Bahamian,' the cartoon implies that the campaign had merely transformed locals into products to sell. Additionally, this particular Bahamian had been reduced to a set of bright, smiling teeth with no visible facial features. This could intimate that distinctive features of the local personality were being wiped clean to make way for tourist's pleasure. The wings behind

the obscured face might point to the fact that, through various courtesy campaigns, Bahamians were being encouraged to recreate a mythological paradise myth for their visitors. However, the lack of a halo to complete the stereotypical image perhaps suggests that the wings were merely a sham that hid a more malevolent intent.

It is, perhaps, difficult for us to imagine the immense pressure that these campaigns placed on the average Bahamian. In the same talk show on which Clement Maynard discussed the alleged success of the FTU program, US Consul-General Turner B. Shelton said that because

people carry away the impression [of] a country from hit and miss encounters at stores and airports and felt that if an individual is discourteous to a visitor he or she should stop and think that they are really doing a serious amount of damage to the over-all image of their country.¹⁶

According to Shelton, the local must be on constant alert for these 'hit and miss' meetings with tourists and ensure that they always wear a smile, as a frown might perhaps do 'damage' to their country's reputation.

Minnis' cartoon for 11 April 1970 (See figure 13) touched on the issue of damaging one's country by riffing off of the daily five-minute radio show that reported tourist exit surveys, called 'one in a million.'¹⁷ The short programs always ended with the Kennedy-esque phrase "what have I done for my country today?" Minnis here portrays Pindling waking up in the morning to ask "What have I done TO my country today?"¹⁸ The suggestion is, of course, that while average Bahamians were being drilled to view tourism as a national service and were placed under immense pressure to perform, those in

¹⁶ Anonymous, "Tourists 'Satisfied'."

¹⁷ See page 153 for more on the 'One in a Million' program.

¹⁸ Anonymous, "Daily Broadcasts to Aid Tourism."

positions of power, like a Pindling, were exempt and could concentrate on their personal political agendas, which in Minnis' opinion, did not service the interests of the people.



Figure 13. *Pot Luck* Cartoon appearing in *The Nassau Guardian* 11 April, 1970.

The artist described his motivation at the time as coming from a sense of activism. He felt that the Bahamas suffered from an immature, poorly activated democracy that was incapable of making its leaders understand what it wanted through demonstrations or other forms of grass-roots action. According to Minnis, the tendency was for people to grumble amongst themselves as opposed to taking concrete action. Through his cartoons, Minnis strived to show the distance between reality and the solutions that the politicians held out and how superficial their plans ultimately were. When asked about the intent of this series of cartoons he said that

Many times the people's attitude was a direct responsibility or a direct result of their reaction to their political leaders because they would come to power and

give the people the impression, [that they were] no longer subservient, ... free and so on and as a consequence the very attitudes that they were trying to correct were the ones they had engendered because of their political campaigning... And so many times I was simply trying to say 'ok you are blaming the people for this but you're directly responsible for a lot of the attitudes that the people now have'.¹⁹

Minnis was also a budding poet, a talent that he later turned towards songwriting, and at times he used the space allocated to his cartoon "Pot Luck" as a platform for his written work. The poem from Tuesday March 24, 1970 is especially poignant and is perhaps the most eloquent challenge to the FTU Campaign:

*You give me no wage
You say the tourist
Will feed me with tips
Your prices take all
The tourist have to spend.
What can they tip me then?*

*So I must serve and smile
While you are paid
And I am not*

*You give me a prosperity that makes meals
Hard to buy.
You sell my land for emeralds
And make my visions of a home
An impossible dream*

*So I must serve and smile
While the tourist walk by
They can not see me.*

*You accept tales of my courtesy
Without asking me why
And you think I must be punished
Your campaigns
To teach me manners
Are futile!*

*How can I smile
When I am hungry?*

¹⁹ Minnis, interview.

*How can I be courteous
To one who expects servitude?
How can I look happy
When I am not?*

*The tourist give you bread.
I need double work
To buy crumbs,
The tourist make you comfortable.
But they cause my hurt
To be so dear.*

*So to a world
That scolds me for my grumbling,
I beg you,
Look to my heart,
Then you will see
Why I am so angry!*

Minnis here highlights the divide in opinion between authorities who have no interest in understanding the underlying causes of the courtesy that they are trying to eradicate and the people who struggle to survive and the anger and resentment that they felt. Thus, while the FTU campaign may have fixated average Bahamians with the exploits of the *Fergusons*, it also produced a disquieting national dialogue along lines of race, class and political advantage.

The End of the Farm Road

After its thirteenth and supposedly final episode aired on Thursday, August 14, 1970, *the Fergusons of Farm Road* was renewed for another 'season' of thirteen episodes despite the cancellation of the FTU program by the ministry of tourism revealing that the show had lost none of its popularity with the Bahamian people. However, this apparent endorsement was soon undermined. In an October 1970 memo from Sonia Mills to the tourism

permanent secretary, who was Jeanne Thompson's father, Ellison Thompson, it is clear that the future of the show was in serious doubt.²⁰

The letter was written in late October, two weeks before the second contracted series of episodes were to end with the airing of the 26th episode on November 4th, 1970. Even at that late date the writers did not know which "officer in the Ministry [was then] responsible for dealing with" the show. There was also no "formal procedure set up for the vetting and preparation of scripts, the monitoring of production, [or] the processing of payments to the cast." They had not even been paid for the eleven episodes that they had produced up to that point; each episode cost approximately \$2000 BSD.²¹ Mills and Thompson needed the information quickly so they would know how to write the twenty-sixth episode. Would it be the final broadcast or would the series continue for another thirteen episodes?²²

Although it is a draft, and there might have been changes in the final version, Mills' memo makes it plainly evident that the ministry had no idea what to do with *the Fergusons* since it was now free of the FTU superstructure. Mills makes a good pitch that "a soap opera in the vernacular is the ideal vehicle for public information under the guise of popular entertainment," and that it could be a useful tool for the government to tackle a host of related development issues in a manner that could be easily digested by the people. Highlighting the political uncertainty at the time, there was even "unofficial" word that ZNS had "hopes to continue the serial" if the ministry abandoned it.

²⁰ Sonia Mills to Permanent Secretary, Nassau, Bahamas, October 21, 1970. Draft.

²¹ Thompson, interview.

²² Mills, Draft memo.

What the writers seemed to be asking for was some indication that the ministry had a plan or if they wanted to be involved in producing the show at all. This is not to say that there was no direction from the ministry whatsoever, because interviews with both writers made clear that there was sporadic direction, but it appears that the direction did not come on a regular or predictable basis and that they were, essentially, writing in the dark.²³ Despite its evident success, the ministry appeared to have no strategic instinct for the *Fergusons* and despite this official ambivalence and the state of limbo in which the show existed, it found its *raison d'être* in its resonance with Bahamian popular culture. *The Fergusons of Farm Road* would thus run for 137 consecutive episodes.

In early 1971, which was towards the beginning of the third 'season,' there was a shake-up in the creative team producing the show when Sonia Mills and her husband had to leave the Bahamas. According to her husband, Don Mills' memoir, the couple left the country because "it was clear that a very competent and qualified Bahamian ... was available to take over [his] assignment" at the ministry of development.²⁴ Mills' unexpected exit left Thompson with full writing and producing responsibilities, a situation with which she was not thrilled. Thompson says that she tried to find someone else from the Bahamian community to replace Mills, but she did not "find anyone who [her] spirit took to" and so she continued writing and producing the show on her own.²⁵

According to Thompson, and her assessment is validated by a reading of later episodes, each successive 'season' found the content of the *Fergusons* dealing less and less with tourism pedagogy and heading more towards the realm of pure entertainment. It is

²³ Ibid.,

²⁴ Mills, *Journeys & Missions: At Home and Away*, 111.

little wonder then that the ministry tried to divest itself of the responsibility of producing the show. In an interview with Angela Cleare, who was one of the early Bahamian recruits in the ministry of tourism, she said that Som Chib, the Indian-born director of tourism, saw continued expenditure on the *Fergusons* as a waste of resources and actively pushed for its termination.²⁶ One distinct attempt to end the show appears in the scripts as a draft for the 91st episode, which would have been at the end of the seventh 'season.' This script actually brings the series to an end with a roundtable discussion by the characters on the importance of tourism to the Bahamian economy.²⁷ The rewrite, though, eliminates the definitive ending and, as soap opera style serials are apt to do, kept its narrative possibilities going.

Chib eventually got his wish, and after two years of renewing the show in thirteen episode 'seasons,' the last episode of the *Fergusons* was broadcast on Wednesday, December 27, 1972. The ministry gave the cast and crew of the show a grand farewell banquet on Tuesday, January 2, 1973. As *The Nassau Guardian* reported:

Minister of Tourism, Clement T. Maynard, personally thanked those present for their participation in the Programme. He said The Fergusons had done an excellent job in furthering the basic ideas of tourism.

"The message of good service, courtesy and making people happy by letting them know you care was meaningfully and delightfully conveyed through characters Bahamians can identify with," Mr. Maynard said.

The Minister indicated that the discontinuance of the programme had nothing to do with the quality of the serial or the script. The programme, he said, had delivered the message of tourism and for the time being, had come to an end.²⁸

²⁵ Thompson, interview.

²⁶ Cleare, interview.

²⁷ Jeanne Thompson, "Episode 91," in *The Fergusons of Farm Road* (Nassau: 1972).

²⁸ Anonymous, "'Fergusons of Farm Road' Cast Gets Tourism Ministry Treat," *The Nassau Guardian*, Friday, January 5, 1973.

Notably absent in the press release is any indication that Ms. Thompson was actually in attendance, although Mr. Chib is seen in a photograph smiling broadly.

Despite the show's popularity, its cancellation evoked no letters to the editor, no mentions in newspaper columns. It would appear that the only remaining trace of complaint regarding the cancellation of this cultural phenomenon was again voiced by Eddie Minnis in his *Pot Luck* cartoons. (See figure 14) However, it is difficult to take his cartoon as definitive proof of public discontent, for as a principal actor on the show he would have lost his twenty dollars per episode talent fee and would have been more upset than most at its cancellation.



Figure 14. *Pot Luck* Cartoon appearing in *The Nassau Guardian* 11 January, 1973.

Minnis nonetheless, would later have this to say about the end of the show:

No one could understand why something that was so popular, [something] that had become a part of the Bahamian cultural scene, the first time we ever had a Bahamian soap opera, why that would be yanked, because it wasn't that Jeanne [Thompson] ran out of ideas... I felt that even if the ministry of tourism didn't

do it, ZNS if they had made any effort they could have easily found sponsors because I'm sure that persons would have lined up to sponsor such a program. I didn't understand the politics of it, and I still don't. But my cartoon depicted my dismay and disgust at what in fact had happened.²⁹

His complaint about the need for a private sponsor is intriguing, because when it was cancelled, the *Fergusons* already had such a sponsor. The press release announcing the farewell banquet mentions that the show was sponsored by both the ministry of tourism and the "Finance Corporation of [the] Bahamas" (FINCO), a private bank that used Minnis, the popular cartoonist, to create many of their print ads.³⁰ This co-sponsorship existed as early as April 1971, and, according to an interview with ZNS general manager John Dodge, quoted in *Third World Mass Media*, ZNS was footing part of the bill as well.³¹

End of the Honeymoon

Whether or not the FTU courtesy campaign or the *Fergusons of Farm Road* really succeeded in its intended pedagogical aims is difficult for the historian to determine, but if the measure of success remained tourist arrivals, the campaign was not enough of a success. In 1970, there was a 2.3 percent decrease in the number of arrivals to the Bahamas. This was the first time since the end of the Second World War that the country had had a year-on-year decrease in tourist arrivals.³² In its 1970 annual report, the ministry chose to look on the bright side, concluding that "in the long view, it [the 1970 tourist slump] may even be considered beneficial because of its shock value in dramatizing the importance of tourism to the economy of the country."³³

²⁹ Minnis, interview.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Lent, *Third World Mass Media*, 175.

³² Craton, *Pindling*, 162.

³³ Tourism, *Annual Report 1970*. 4.

Along with the global recession and the slowing of the tourist trade, the PLP was rocked by allegations of political corruption. Historians Craton and Saunders describe the resulting environment:

The reputation of Bahamian off-shore banking was eroded by the government's unfortunate combination of slackness and interference and by the infiltration of less than impeccable financial operators, money and methods. Several of the weaker banks failed in 1970, and others, alarmed by hints of changes in government policies... transferred to more efficient, reputable, and safer jurisdictions, notably Bermuda and the Cayman Islands.³⁴

Undoubtedly, the most serious and far reaching scandal was the sudden implosion of the "principal domestic air-carrier and one of the major carriers of tourists to and from the Bahamas," Bahamas Airways Limited (BAL).³⁵ Run by the British Overseas Airways Corporation (BOAC), BAL had an accident free track record but had never turned a profit. In 1968, BOAC sold 85 per cent of its shares to the Hong Kong-based Swire group. In the face of continuing losses, Swire tried to get the government to bail it out in return for part-ownership. The government refused, as would later be revealed, because close friends of the prime minister sought to launch a competing airline. Dismayed at the government's reluctance to assist, and feeling insecure in their position, Swire flew all of its aircraft out of the country on October 9, 1970 resulting in the immediate and unexpected loss of 750 jobs "without compensation."³⁶

In response to these scandals, Pindling and the PLP became increasingly sensitive to criticism and clamped down on public dissent, particularly on radio. In June, another scandal erupted when a new and popular radio talk show which provided a forum for public comments was cancelled without warning. After initial speculation about whether or

³⁴ Craton and Saunders, *Islanders Vol. Two*, 356.

³⁵ Hughes, *Race and Politics*, 151.

not the government was involved, PLP senator Doris Johnson came out with a definitive statement and was unrepentant about the matter:

I don't believe that the majority of the people of this country would like to be subjected to phantom voices over their radio station... because if they hear the voice they want to be able to say 'I see the man, I know the man.' We don't want to be like Blind Jacob here ... Let them come out and identify themselves if they want to come out and say anything about the government.³⁷

With barely disguised threats such as these, it is not surprising that many did not speak on the record regarding government policies.³⁸

Not only was the PLP fighting against external discontent but there was also chaos brewing within the party. A major rift had developed between Lynden Pindling and Cecil Wallace-Whitfield, the energetic and controversial minister of education. Culminating at the 1968 party convention, Pindling confronted Wallace-Whitfield and asked for his resignation.³⁹ The dispute was later minimized, and referred to as a misunderstanding, but their differences came to a boil at the 1970 party convention in October when Wallace-Whitfield announced his immediate resignation from cabinet and asked rhetorically: "Does this party have room in it for the questioning youth or only for a few of the old timers and hordes of boot-lickers and yes men?"⁴⁰

The combined effect of Wallace-Whitfield's dramatic action and a no-confidence motion tabled in the House by labor leader Randol Fawkes, which gained the support of a significant number of PLP dissidents, split the party. The splinter group, displaying little

³⁶ Ibid., 150. Craton, *Pindling*, 162, 3; Craton and Saunders, *Islanders Vol. Two*, 356.

³⁷ Bill Cole, "'Your Time' Committee Request Rejected: Senate Leader Reveals Govt. Part in Radio Show Killing," *The Nassau Guardian and Bahamas Observer*, Friday, June 12, 1970.

³⁸ It was not until the PLP was removed from office in 1992 that the radio monopoly of ZNS was finally broken and opinion radio talk shows were again permitted on the air. Stuart, "From Monopoly to Duopoly", 232, 3. Presently, Nassau alone has 11 radio stations.

³⁹ Hughes, *Race and Politics*, 159.

imagination, called themselves the “Free PLP.” More established opposition parties such as the UBP, were unable to capitalize on the political opportunity that the PLP discord afforded them because of their own disorganization and decay. After its 1968 defeat, the UBP seemed unsure in its place in the new and self-consciously black Bahamas, and its members seemed resigned to political obscurity.⁴¹ Much of the anger and frustration that did exist was focused on the personality cult of Pindling. One of the Free PLP dissidents, Arthur Foulkes, former minister of tourism, memorably referred to Pindling saying that: “Even Moses was not permanent and everlasting because he slipped up and displeased God... We will elect other leaders to take us to the Promised Land.”⁴² If the PLP had not realized it before, the ‘honeymoon’ of national euphoria was officially over.

The Drive to Independence

Beset by problems on all sides, with the local economy stagnant, tourism flat, and the cost of living rising at a steady but ‘unspectacular’ rate, Lynden O. Pindling and the PLP government decided to simplify the issues by “concentrating the minds of the people on the question of national independence.”⁴³ Pindling announced in February of 1971 that it was his intention that the country would become independent no later than 1973.⁴⁴ Ever since internal-rule had been ushered in by the UBP in 1964, the question of independence had persisted, and the call had only grown louder with majority rule in 1967. The only real question was *when* the seemingly inevitable step would be taken.

⁴⁰ Craton, *Pindling*, 172.

⁴¹ Hughes, *Race and Politics*, 159, 160.

⁴² Craton, *Pindling*, 172, 3. Hughes, *Race and Politics*, 160.

⁴³ Craton and Saunders, *Islanders Vol. Two*, 358. Hughes, *Race and Politics*, 166.

⁴⁴ Given his quasi-mystical fascination with the number ‘10’, 1973 would seem the perfect year for independence. 1+9, 7+3.

By October 1971, the splinter Free PLP had changed its name to the Free National Movement (FNM) and soon merged with what remained of the UBP.⁴⁵ By February, they had a full slate of thirty-six candidates ready to challenge the PLP in the next election which was constitutionally due, at the latest, in February 1973. On August 10, the date for that election showdown was revealed to be September 19, 1972. Independence would be the issue on which the debate would turn, the PLP pushing for immediate independence and the FNM saying, essentially, 'independence later'.⁴⁶ The PLP campaigned on a slogan of "Peace, Love, Prosperity" and emphasized national unity with posters showing "white and black Bahamians standing side by side" while the FNM, without much of a plan themselves, used fear tactics, suggesting that the Bahamas would be swallowed up by some communist entity without the protection of Britain.⁴⁷

The election itself was a landslide victory for the PLP which won twenty-nine seats to the FNM's nine. In lieu of an actual referendum to determine the will of the people regarding the issue of independence, the overwhelming nature of the PLP win was taken as the people's *de facto* verdict on the issue. That the PLP only lost seats in predominantly white areas suggests that the old racial antagonisms still lingered and were perhaps still a crucial divider of the electorate.⁴⁸

As the move towards independence gained momentum, it was thought that radio could play a major, if not the pivotal role in creating the contours of the new nation. Seeing this potential, Pindling himself took over the reigns of ZNS in January, 1972, to ensure that

⁴⁵ Craton and Saunders, *Islanders Vol. Two*, 357. Hughes, *Race and Politics*, 187.

⁴⁶ Hughes, *Race and Politics*, 188.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 189.

⁴⁸ Craton and Saunders, *Islanders Vol. Two*, 359.

this process was effectively carried out.⁴⁹ In his view the station was to be a 'pace-setter' and was "to mould the country into one nation, to maintain it, to sustain it, to define and re-define its objectives so that Bahamian people can move as one people and one nation."⁵⁰ With such lofty goals in mind, it is odd that the *Fergusons* was cancelled when it was, on the eve of independence. If Pindling was at all serious about using the airwaves to 'mold' the people and create a national unity, one would imagine that a program like the *Fergusons* would have been high on the list of things to keep, especially since most Bahamians regarded it as an exceptional representation of their "society and culture."⁵¹ Instead, one of the first implementations of the nation-building-through-radio project was the launching of a new national anthem. It was given priority air-time leading up to the official independence celebrations on July 10th, 1973 so that it could be effectively sung by all once the Union Jack was lowered.⁵²

The *Fergusons* revived

The *Fergusons* were not completely dead yet, however, and the characters returned for several 'special' episodes, one of which, entitled "Miss Lye goes to Goombay Summer," was sponsored by the ministry of tourism.⁵³ Another was produced for the department of statistics, and found the cast of the show in full pedagogical mode, this time to encourage Bahamians to be compliant with the civil servants conducting the 1973 census.⁵⁴

These brief cameos culminated on Wednesday October 2, 1974 when ZNS restarted the familiar voice of national consciousness. Thompson, and no one else interviewed in this

⁴⁹ Stuart, "From Monopoly to Duopoly", 154.

⁵⁰ Storr, "Development of Broadcasting in the Bahamas", 311, 2.

⁵¹ Ibid., 262.

⁵² Stuart, "From Monopoly to Duopoly", 155.

research, seemed clear about the reasons why ZNS made this decision. Appearing under the headline of "Fergusons' Return to Radio Bahamas," the press release read simply:

It will indeed be a pleasure to have this programme returned to the air, especially since it is the only 'Bahamian soap opera' to date and Radio Bahamas has not been able to replace it.

This time around the show was completely free of involvement from the ministry of tourism and concentrated fully on entertainment without the need for courtesy pedagogy.

Fittingly, Thompson labeled all of the scripts she wrote for this incarnation of the *Fergusons* as "New Series." Regarding how long the show would be returning, the press release added:

...the new series, ... is scheduled to run for a period of six months in the first instance. Any extension, the *Guardian* was told, will depend on listener interest.⁵⁵

It is odd that a radio station with no mechanism (or seeming concern) for determining listener interest would use 'interest' as a measure for determining its commitment to the 'new series'. Despite this oddity, which perhaps best translates into saying that the show would last as long as they felt like it, the show was renewed at the six month juncture and ran for at least 46 episodes, likely completing its run with a full year's worth of 52 episodes.⁵⁶

⁵³ Thompson, interview.

⁵⁴ Jeanne Thompson, "Department of Statistics Special," in *The Fergusons of Farm Road* (Nassau: 1973).

⁵⁵ Anonymous, "'Fergusons' Return to Radio Bahamas," *The Nassau Guardian*, Saturday, September 28, 1974.

⁵⁶ The majority of the surviving audio is from this series. And although not mentioned in the *Guardian* press release it is clear from a casual listen to these programs that FINCO was again involved.

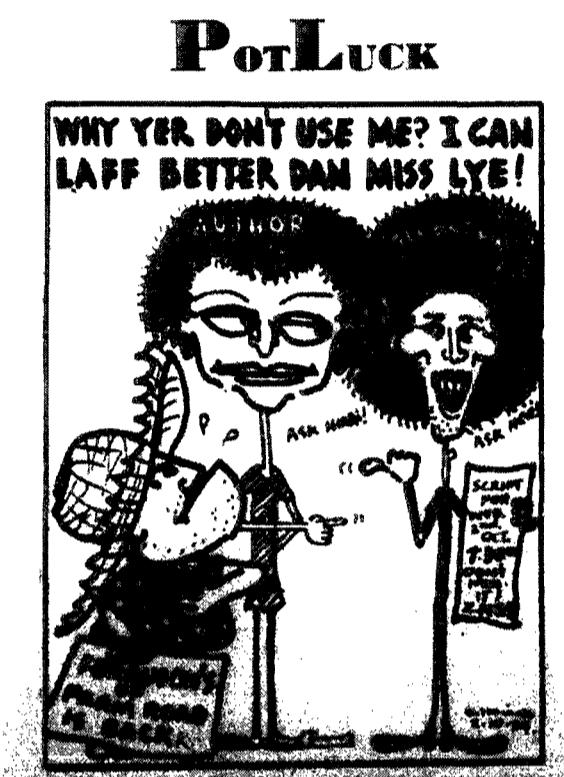


Figure 15. The *Fergusons of Farm Road* is back! *Pot Luck* Cartoon appearing in *The Nassau Guardian* 2 October, 1974.

It is interesting to note the story arcs of the characters in the 'new series' seem to mirror that of the country as a whole, especially that of Samuel. At the beginning of the 'new series' Samuel had been promoted to assistant manager of his hotel and in the process became one of the first Bahamian managers. His personality had also completely transformed; he was responsible, he wore Bahamian clothes, dated Bahamian women and even looked to be on the verge of proposing when the show was finally cancelled. He even tried to correct the slacker ways of a friend who regular listeners might have mistaken for his earlier self.⁵⁷ His brother Othniel, the hot-headed and troublesome firebrand from the initial series, was now entrusted by his Uncle Lee to manage his gas station. It is easy to

⁵⁷ Jeanne Thompson, "Episode 2," in *The Fergusons of Farm Road: New Series* (Nassau: 1974).

superimpose these story arcs over the national story that was developing at the time and see how the lives of the Ferguson children mirrored it. They, like the black population in particular had moved from immaturity to full-blown independence in a short period of time; the country was growing up and so were the *Fergusons*.

Again, overt public reaction to this second renewal and cancellation was hard to discern. The only discernible trace of public response when the *Fergusons* returned to the air was the, now customary, "Pot Luck" cartoon, (See figure 15) and nothing else; there were no jubilant letters to the editor, no mentions in any other article in the news papers at the time. And when the show went off the air in 1975, for what proved to be the final time, there was a similar, and now familiar, silence.

The Continuing Bahamian Courtesy Campaign

Given the dependence of the islands on tourism it should not surprise us that the FTU campaign was followed by others like it. In his 2007 memoir, Clement Maynard, former minister of tourism, reflecting on FTU and the *Fergusons*, observed that "each promotional effort was effective for a short time only, and continuous occasional reinforcement was required."⁵⁸ The tools of marketing and social leverage have to be constantly reinvented in order to be effective and just as the ministry promoted the Bahamas to tourists externally, the courtesy campaigns were related, and almost obligatory, *internal* promotional efforts, and both were refreshed at regular, and predictable intervals.

The promise of FTU was that 'mutual understanding' could be developed between Bahamians and foreigners and this attitude was epitomized in the relationship between

⁵⁸ Maynard, *Put on More Speed*, 379.

Mrs. Hayes and the Ferguson family.⁵⁹ Taking this idea to its logical conclusion, and borrowing liberally from a similar program in Jamaica called "Meet the People," the ministry of tourism initiated the 'People to People' campaign on December 15, 1975.⁶⁰ This program paired-up tourists with a Bahamian couple or family for an evening dinner, afternoon drink or visit to church to give them a "deeper insight into the Bahamian character and Bahamian lifestyle."⁶¹ Maynard describes this program as the natural outcome of a process of "formalizing the innate friendliness of Bahamians."⁶² It should be noted that the local volunteers were all rigorously trained and vetted before such encounters with tourists — presumably to enhance their 'innate' qualities. The local inhabitant had, in essence, became an attraction. Of course, the program was savaged by Eddie Minnis, both in his cartoons and in one of his songs that suggested that the Bahamian male had been performing similar 'services' for years and the ministry was merely 'legalizing' the practice.⁶³ (See *People to People* on the audio CD appendix) According to his account, the song was quickly banned by the PLP and could not be played on ZNS radio until decades later.⁶⁴

It should also be noted that the *Fergusons* was not the last radio serial to be produced in the Bahamas, although all of them were written by Ms. Thompson. She wrote an additional soap opera-style program for the ministry of tourism called *Sam Finley's Sand Castle*, written and produced in 1976 while Thompson was working for the ministry as

⁵⁹ Anonymous, "Mutual Understanding." Thompson and Mills, "Fergusons, Episode 12," 9.

⁶⁰ Maynard, *Put on More Speed*, 346. Cleare, *History of Tourism*, 213.

⁶¹ Maynard, *Put on More Speed*, 345.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Eddie Minnis, "People to People," (originally aired 1976).

⁶⁴ Minnis, interview.

their “public relations representative at the Bahamas Tourist Office in London.”⁶⁵ This serial was tied into another courtesy campaign. Unlike the *Fergusons*, which was Nassau-centric, *Sand castle* was set in the Out Islands.⁶⁶ Thompson also wrote and produced eight episodes of a public service program entitled *Clinic*, which aired in 1977, for the ministry of health, to encourage Bahamians to make better health care choices.⁶⁷ Neither of these programs received anywhere near as much attention as the *Fergusons*, and they do not seem to have left any lasting impression on the minds of Bahamians and perhaps no one outside of Ms. Thompson and those involved in their production remembered that they even aired.

Rediscovering the *Fergusons*

In his 2002 book *Paradise and Plantation: Tourism and Culture in the Anglophone Caribbean*, Ian Strachan discusses a courtesy campaign run by Clement Maynard during his second tour of duty as minister of tourism in the 1980s. This particular program was entitled “The Bahamas: Our Pride and Joy” and followed the standard script. It was described as a “sensitizing campaign that... would remind Bahamians of the importance of being good hosts and that would encourage them to take pride in their work rather than see it as demeaning.”⁶⁸ It was most likely during this campaign that Maynard requested that the *Fergusons* be revived again, not as a new series, but through replaying all of the old episodes on the ZNS station in Freeport, Grand Bahama.⁶⁹ According to tourism researcher

⁶⁵ Anonymous, “Jeanne Thompson Joins Tourism Staff in London,” *The Nassau Guardian*, Saturday, March 13, 1976.

⁶⁶ Thompson, The outer islands were redubbed the ‘family’ islands in 1971 by the PLP. See Craton and Saunders, *Islanders Vol. Two*, 359.

⁶⁷ Thompson, interview.

⁶⁸ Strachan, *Paradise and Plantation*, 116.

⁶⁹ Cleare, interview.

Angela Cleare, employed at the time by the ministry, he made the task of locating the episodes stored at ZNS a top priority. Reassembling the full series was not an easy task, however, and after some effort the majority of the reel-to-reel tapes were found. It seems that no distinction was made between the original and the 'new' series as both ended up in Freeport.⁷⁰ That this distinction existed at all seems to have been forgotten. It is not clear how the show was received with its new audience when played in 1984.

Maynard's decision to have the show played in Freeport ensured the audio of the *Fergusons* is accessible today. While researching this project in 2009, this researcher went to ZNS Nassau in hopes of finding audio of the show, despite having heard from Thompson and others that ZNS had recorded over the original tapes long ago. No one spoken to up to that point had any idea that the show had been replayed in Freeport. After some back and forth at the station, this researcher was finally directed to call ZNS' Freeport branch. Not believing there was much chance of success in that quarter, the station manager, Byron Stubbs, was persuaded to check to see if there was in fact anything in his archives. He found a box of reel-to-reel tapes with 'Fergusons' written all over it. It appears that once the series had been replayed, all of the tapes were shipped back to Nassau; all except that single box, which was apparently left behind.⁷¹ Since ZNS Nassau reportedly purged its archives in 2000, that box is probably all that is left of the storied series.⁷²

⁷⁰ Ibid., interview.

⁷¹ Byron Stubbs, telephone conversation with author, Nassau, January 29, 2009.

⁷² Infinite thanks to Mr. Stubbs for getting the reel-to-reel audio into a twenty-first century digital form. Please see the audio CD appendix for sample episodes.

Regional Calls for Courtesy

The Bahamas is by no means alone in the use of courtesy campaigns to manage its people. Polly Pattullo, writing in *Last Resorts: The Cost of Tourism in the Caribbean*, refers to these types of campaigns as 'tourism awareness programs' and she reports that they have been used extensively throughout the Caribbean.⁷³ Pattullo writes that with "varying degrees of success, intensity and sophistication" these programs are designed to educate local populations to understand "the nature of the tourist industry." They can range from sophisticated discussions of the impacts of tourism on the community and career opportunities within the industry to a crude promotion of the simplistic "idea that tourists' needs are paramount: in other words, Be Nice to the Tourist."⁷⁴ It appears that most of these 'awareness programs' fall into the latter category. She writes that 'awareness programs' are often approached "as an educational exercise in which the burden and learning process have been placed on the Caribbean national rather than on the tourist." She cites as an example a campaign that ran in Dominica in the early 1980s that featured posters that read: "SMILE. You are a walking tourist attraction."⁷⁵

The Bahamas has also not been unique in the use of the soap opera style serial to promote the message of 'Be Nice to the Tourist.' Vipert Cambridge reports that in 1983 the Jamaican Tourist Board hired soap opera luminary Elaine Perkins to create a series that could "modify [the] attitudes and behaviors of street vendors towards tourists in Jamaica." The serial was called *Life in the Hotel Mimosa*, and like the *Fergusons*, was a weekly series. The *Hotel Mimosa* was a small hotel on the north coast of Jamaica that depicted the

⁷³ Pattullo, *Last Resorts*, 70.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 71.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 62.

"struggle of hotel owners, legitimate vendors and tourists against harassment from undesirable elements."⁷⁶ Sonia Mills has also continued in serial production and in the late 1990s produced a similar 'tourism awareness' radio serial called *Nora's by the Sea* for the Jamaican tourist board.⁷⁷

The Last Laugh

Today, no listener who was alive during the hey-day of the *Fergusons* would remember that the ministry of tourism had anything to do with the show. This is understandable because we are now well over thirty years removed from the last broadcast in Nassau and the scripts have never been made available in any other format. For its listeners, the show only exists as a series of pleasant memories. It appears, though, that if anything did stick in the minds of listeners it would probably be the character of Miss Lye and, most specifically, her distinctive laugh. A question about the Fergusons today would probably yield the following typical response

I don't remember all the things that they did [on the show] but I know we all enjoyed Miss Lye. ... Miss Lye had a laugh there, only Miss Lye could do that laugh.⁷⁸

Cyprianna McQueeny concurs

The biggest star of the show, of course, was then my mother, Miss Lye, who was just the most colorful character in the world, ... She was the kind of person you loved to hate.⁷⁹

In 1972, Eddie Minnis launched what turned into a prolific and successful music career as a calypsonian with a hit song dedicated to the character.⁸⁰ The song builds on Miss Lye's popularity as the series' villain and liberally featured her famous laugh. The chorus asked,

⁷⁶ Cambridge, "Mass Media Entertainment", 144.

⁷⁷ Mills, interview.

⁷⁸ Mrs. Carl Bethel, telephone interview by author, Nassau, Bahamas, January 29, 2009.

⁷⁹ McQueeny, interview.

"Miss Lye, oh Miss Lye, why you carry on so?" Officially, the song was not related to the series, in that it was not sponsored by the ministry of tourism. But in the minds of the audience, the two were very much related, especially since Minnis was also a voice actor on the show. When this researcher asked Dr. Keva Bethel what she remembered about the *Fergusons*, she included the song as part and parcel of the whole experience:

Well of course, there are two things that I remember: Miss Lye and her laugh obviously ... and the music, that is "Miss Lye, Miss Lye why you carry on so?" Cause to be very honest the actual details of episodes and so on now escape me.⁸¹

Miss Lye's overwhelming popularity would appear to undermine any claims of pedagogical success that the *Fergusons* as a component of FTU can claim, as she was the character who was the rudest to tourists, and if anything she was the model that Bahamians were *not* to emulate.

What does the popularity of Miss Lye mean? Vibert Cambridge relates a similar example from the Jamaican radio serial *Naseberry Street*, which was produced with the Jamaican Family Planning Association and written and produced by Elaine Perkins. The serial, which ran in the 1980s, was designed to promote the idea that "birth control is good for you" and Perkins wanted to create a 'credible' story with credible characters. One of these characters was named 'Scattershot.' He was a male-stud type who abused teenage females and was designed to be the show's negative role model. However, research studies in Jamaica indicated that 'Scattershot' was by far the most popular character amongst the target socio-economic group. His popularity led to sponsor/writer tensions where it was felt that his popularity was "contrary to the objectives of the serial" and the sponsors

⁸⁰ See the audio CD appendix.

⁸¹ Bethel, interview.

sought to have him written off of the show. Perkins stuck with her original storyline which was to set the character up for a 'fall' where it was revealed that he had contracted AIDS.⁸² In the case of the Fergusons though, there was never a corresponding 'fall' for Miss Lye. Yes, she lost money because she was rude, but this was the only real consequence of her actions. Was this enough to dissuade Bahamians from looking to her as a hero? One could, of course, also argue that the tourism message of the show was subliminally taken in by Bahamians and that the underlying message of the show still left a mark and that Miss Lye's popularity can have both positive and negative outcomes. Either way, the fact that she is the only character that Bahamians clearly remember by name poses interesting questions about the way that the Bahamian audience ultimately interpreted the *Fergusons*.

The Next Generation

Many times over the years, Jeanne Thompson has been approached, not often seriously, about reprising her writing duties on the *Fergusons*. The early twenty-first century environment is perhaps as good as it has ever been for this to actually happen, as the Bahamas appears to be in the midst of a modest *Fergusons* revival. The Pompey Museum in Nassau sponsored a reading of the first three scripts of the show in 2008. Charging ten Bahamian dollars for tickets,⁸³ with light refreshments, the event, which featured Thompson and several others of the original cast, entertained a packed house. It was so successful that the museum decided to have another reading. While the second reading did not generate the full house of the first, there was continued strong interest. One of the original producers of the *Fergusons* and a minor actor in the 'new series' that aired

⁸² Cambridge, "Mass Media Entertainment", 175, 6.

⁸³ The Bahamian dollar has, since its creation in 1966, been kept at the same level as the US dollar. See Craton and Saunders, *Islanders Vol. Two*, 343.

on ZNS in 1974, Greg Lampkin, organized a re-production of the first episode in the hopes that one of Nassau's 11 radio stations would be interested in a re-recorded and slightly updated version of the original scripts. His production has yet to find a sponsor.

When this research was initiated in January 2009 the author was invited to speak in Nassau on the topic of the *Fergusons* at the Bahamas Historical Society. The talk was well received and according to the organizers the turnout was a far larger audience than their usual, to the point that the space was standing room only. During the question and answer period a current member of the ministry of tourism expressed her continued frustration with getting the message of courtesy across to Bahamians, a sentiment with which many in the audience agreed, suggesting that the *Fergusons* be brought back to reprise their role as tourism educators. This suggestion was well received by the audience and by Ms. Thompson, who was also in attendance.

Talks have continued between Ms. Thompson and the ministry to the point that she recently wrote an episode of what she calls, *The Fergusons of Farm Road: The Next Generation*. In this continuation of the story, Miss Lye and Ezekiel Ferguson have passed away and the once troublesome Othniel has taken up his father's profession as a preacher but still lives with his mother Mina in the little house on Farm Road.⁸⁴ With this new series the ministry is hoping to enhance Bahamian attitudes on a variety of fronts:

Uplifting tips for dealing with the downturn in the economy and job security; Public urinating; Cursing in public and talking loudly; impolite behaviour -not saying please, and thank you, enough; Providing surly service, ... [the] tendency to give Bahamians substandard service; Keeping our places and spaces clean; ... the stray dog situation; Domestic tourism — supporting Bahamian, ... Miss

⁸⁴ The actress who played Miss Lye, Lerlene Collie, is now deceased and it is generally believed that the character can not be played by anyone else.

Bahamas hosting Miss Universe and asking Bahamians to help her to do her part.⁸⁵

The Miss Universe pageant was held at the Atlantis Resort on Paradise Island on August 23, 2009, but the next generation of *Fergusons* did not make it to the air in time to exhort the Bahamian people to help out their local beauty queen. The worldwide economic downturn of 2009 has affected government spending to the point that all ministries, including the ministry of tourism, suffered large budget cuts. These cuts probably slowed the decision to produce the proposed *Next Generation* and negotiations for the new show are ongoing and are, as yet, not finalized.

Barriers to Cultural Development

The success of radio serials in other Caribbean countries like Jamaica, and the obvious success of the *Fergusons*, combined with the continued and as-yet abortive attempts to revive it, raises the question: why have radio serials not persisted in the Bahamas? One would imagine that with 11 radio stations in Nassau currently competing for listeners that a radio serial might be used by a station to differentiate itself from the competition. However, the present media landscape of the Bahamas lacks several key features that might encourage the development of alternative forms of radio entertainment. First, the Bahamas has no radio ratings system. It is known that the *Fergusons* were extremely popular through oral tradition, and the decision by the ministry to extend the show supports this conclusion. However, it is not possible to accurately quantify the show's popularity. This situation persists today.

⁸⁵ Thompson, interview.

Second, the cost of radio serial production is also far higher than that of other forms of radio programming. Vipert Cambridge estimates that the cost of production is ten to twenty time more expensive than imported radio serials.⁸⁶ Even these imported programs are more expensive and complicated than producing a talk show or getting a disc jockey to play music. Without the data or methods to measure the listening audience, advertisers have only their untutored instincts to go by when deciding where to spend their marketing dollars. As it stands, each of Nassau's radio stations can claim to be number one in listeners and no one can dispute the claim.

In Jamaica, which has the most experience in radio serial production in the region, Cambridge reports that the "public sector has produced over 90 percent of all domestic radio serials."⁸⁷ He says this has been in part because "all governments in post-independence Jamaica have considered the promotion of Jamaican cultural expression a major element in the national development program."⁸⁸ In comparison, the commitment of Bahamian governments towards cultural development has not been nearly as strong. Clement Maynard accurately summed up the attitude of the PLP government towards culture in an editorial he wrote in 1976, for the *Nassau Guardian*.

What do we have besides sun, sand and sea?

First, we have proximity to a major tourist market — North America.

We have an infrastructure of airports and docks, and facilities such as hotels, restaurants, clubs, shops and sporting amenities.

We have a national personality reflected in our annual Goombay Summer Festival, Junkanoo parades, music, straw-goods and other handicrafts. All of these are our resources. But, as Minister of Tourism, I must ask you to

⁸⁶ Cambridge, "Mass Media Entertainment", 167.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 263.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 168.

understand that they are of no merit to us unless they attract usage; in other words, *unless they attract business*.

... My ministry and the government are fully committed to tourism, which is far in front of all diversification efforts on the frontiers of development.⁸⁹

In Maynard's view, culture and expressions of the 'national personality' are of 'no merit' if they do not attract tourist business. His words seem to echo Nobel laureate Derek Walcott's observation about the attitude of Caribbean governments towards culture — that "the state is impatient with anything which it cannot trade."⁹⁰ Of course, it should be noted that the Bahamian people themselves have displayed little initiative to construct their own forms of cultural re/presentation over the years. It is quite conceivable that the *Fergusons* or something like it could have been produced privately without the involvement of a government agency. However, the ambivalence and at times outright antagonism of government structures, evidenced in the attitude towards the *Fergusons* when it did not appear to directly impact the bottom line, has definitely hindered cultural development and can partially explain the lack of initiative evidenced by the people.

Let us return to Maynard's comment for a moment. While we understand that he is speaking from his position as the minister of tourism, and he must evaluate the local situation through the lens of his responsibilities, it is difficult to go with him all the way. It is easy to agree with his comments about infrastructure, like hotels; these things have little merit without tourists. However, it is exceedingly difficult to be in complete agreement with his contention that the only use of culture is to attract tourist business. Does Junkanoo, the Bahamian winter street festival, merely exist to provide the country with a competitive advantage in the worldwide tourism marketplace? Is there room in his

⁸⁹ Clement T. Maynard, "Tourism Minister Seeks New Markets," *The Nassau Guardian*, Saturday, March 13, 1976. Italics his.

conceptions for anything cultural that is intended purely for local consumption? Or does he see his role as minister of tourism as having to find ways to utilize everything in the Bahamian environment to entice the tourist? Is there nothing that the local inhabitant can claim as their own? The success of *The Fergusons of Farm Road*, itself born as a tourism promotion, would seem to indicate that intrinsic Bahamian culture does indeed have an autonomy all of its own.

Maynard is, though, quite correct to say that he and his PLP government were “fully committed to tourism.” And this has not been merely a PLP phenomenon, as we have seen the previous UBP government had a similar fixation. In his 1968 book *The Growth of the Modern West Indies*, Gordon K. Lewis, speaking mainly of the UBP, observed that “entire departments of [Bahamian] local government, the public library, and the police force, for example, are treated as tourist attractions rather than public services.”⁹¹ And now, in 2009, under an FNM administration the situation has not progressed much further. It is, in fact, quite difficult to over-estimate the impact that tourism has had on the Bahamas. Ian Strachan contends that there is “no [Bahamian] life that the hotel has not affected, directly or indirectly, in the past fifty years.” This means simply that tourism is, by necessity, inextricably intertwined with the Bahamian’s sense of self. Strachan continues, saying that, “there can be no tenable theory of Bahamian culture and identity in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries unless it includes a consideration of the impact of tourism.”⁹²

This connection can perhaps best be seen by a quick look at the symbols that the new Bahamian nation chose to represent itself. Gaining independence in 1973, the Bahamas had

⁹⁰ Derek Walcott, *What the Twilight Says: Essays*, 1st ed. (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1998), 7.

⁹¹ Lewis, *The Growth of the Modern West Indies*, 328.

the opportunity to create its own myths and symbols, virtually from scratch, but this occasion was not used for reinvention. Let us first look at the Bahamian flag. (See figure 16) The symbolism behind its design and colors has been described as follows:

Black, a stronger colour, represents the vigour and force of a united people, the triangle pointing towards the body of the flag represents the enterprise and determination of the Bahamian people to develop and possess the rich resources of land and sea symbolized by gold and aquamarine respectively.⁹³

The choice of a *black* triangle seems to undermine the suggestion that it symbolizes a "united people." Yes, the Bahamian people are over 80 percent black, but considering the history that we have reviewed, how can this be a serious plea for togetherness that purposefully excludes a significant minority of the population? Additionally the qualities supposedly represented by the color black, the synonyms vigor and force, merely echo stereotypes of black people carried down from the days of the trans-Atlantic slave trade.⁹⁴

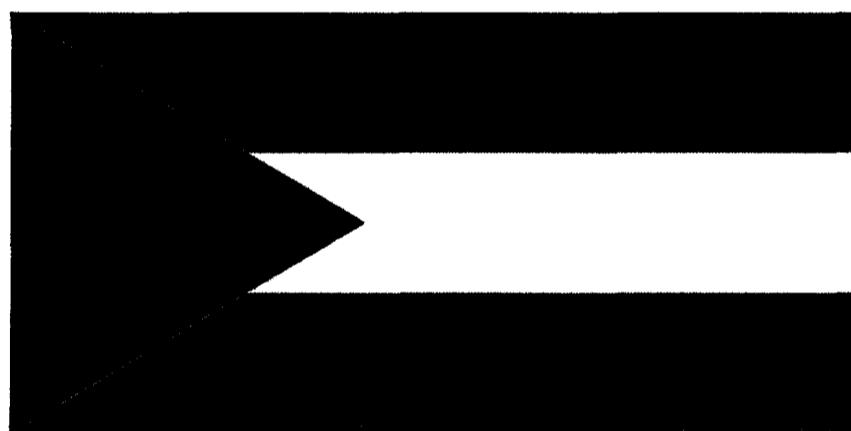


Figure 16. The Bahamian Flag

⁹² Strachan, *Paradise and Plantation*, 128.

⁹³ Hughes, *Race and Politics*, 193.

⁹⁴ C. L. R. James, *The Black Jacobins: Toussaint L'ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution* (New York: Vintage Books, 1938; reprint, 1963), 5.

That the country possesses no mineable resources makes gold an odd color to represent the land, especially considering the all-too-literal choice of black to stand for the people and the even more obvious choice of aquamarine to denote the sea. Unless of course, gold is meant to evoke thoughts of a beach or the sun. With this imagery in mind, it is even possible to see the top-most bar of the flag as the sky, of course, without a cloud to be seen. As Nicolette Bethel aptly put it, the "Bahamian [flag] has a suspiciously commercial ring."⁹⁵ Indeed, it appears that the Bahamian flag is a barely disguised tourist brochure — sun, sea, sand and black labor all wrapped in beautiful weather for the enjoyment of another.

Even the national anthem, "March On, Bahamaland," written in 1972 by Timothy Gibson bears an uncomfortable resemblance to the courtesy campaign slogan from the 1968 "Look Up, Move Up, The World is Watching" courtesy campaign. The text of the anthem are as follows:

*Lift up your head to the rising sun, Bahamaland;
March on to glory, your bright banners waving high.
See how the world marks the manner of your bearing!
Pledge to excel through love and unity.
Pressing onward, march together to a common loftier goal;
Steady sunward, though the weather hide the wide and treach'rous shoal.
Lift up your head to the rising sun, Bahamaland;
'Til the road you've trod
Lead unto your God,
March on, Bahamaland!*

The phrase "Lift up your head" can be easily compared to the "Look Up" from the courtesy campaign slogan. The influence of the "Move up" portion can be seen in the phrases "march on to glory" and "pledge to excel." The plaintive cry "See how the world marks the manner

⁹⁵ Nicolette Bethel, "Roots or Routes: Migrations of Identity in the Bahamas," *Yinna* 2 (2007): 79.

"of your bearing" could be a direct borrowing of "the world is watching." And, of course, the "common loftier goal" that the country has been marching towards was perhaps best described by Som Chib, the first Director of Tourism,

Since we are a country in which tourism contributes 70% of the Gross National Product, we have no alternative but to keep tourists coming in ever increasing numbers, to keep them happy with their experience, and to send them home as our most effective salesmen! ⁹⁶

An Identity of Its Own

It is little wonder that the subject of Bahamian national identity is still a contentious one for native writers and intellectuals. In 2000, in the first issue of *Yinna*, the journal of the Bahamas Association for Cultural Studies (BACUS), Bahamian writer Patricia Clinton-Meicholas complained that

now 25 years after independence, the concept [of national identity] is still nebulous. As important as it is to statehood and national unity, we have thus far failed to define or develop a clear understanding of who we have been, who we are and who we want to be as a people.⁹⁷

By the time the second issue of *Yinna* appeared seven years later, the situation had not improved. Anthropologist Nicolette Bethel began her essay on identity by saying that "it is not at all uncommon for Bahamian intellectuals to assert that The Bahamas has little or no sense of national identity." She then proceeded to articulate a theory of multiple Bahamian identities that is essentially an evasion of the initial question, poetically saying that "trying to get a handle on what is Bahamian is like trying to catch a fish with one's bare hands."⁹⁸

Yet, despite the ambiguity and insecurity surrounding the Bahamian identity, when one listens to people talk about the *Fergusons* it is clear that a part of the reason why the

⁹⁶ Tourism, *Annual Report 1970*. 20.

⁹⁷ Patricia Clinton-Meicholas, "Uncovering the Bahamian Self," *Yinna* 1 (2000): 104.

show was so successful was because it resonated deeply with the people — a *sui generis* voice of national identity. Leading Bahamian historian Gail Saunders believes that the *Fergusons* was popular because it

made Bahamians feel, pride. [It] made Bahamians feel we had culture and this was a part of it and that we could see ourselves in it and we liked it. I think the best thing in the world is to be able to laugh at yourself and I think people really did, maybe not realizing. It sort of mirrored a part of our society with which Bahamians could identify and I think that was the strong thing about it.⁹⁹

Cypriana McQueeny is even more explicit:

This was the first time we were able to... [get] a look at how we lived, how we spoke, act, what our culture was, what our people are like, we got to look at ourselves and laugh. We were truly able to laugh and say "That's one rowdy woman eh?" ... [And it was] in vernacular ... this wasn't allowed on radio. I don't know if it was because of the *Fergusons of Farm Road* but certainly we became aware of ourselves. Who we are, how we are. We felt good about ourselves, proud [and said] "Yeah, that's how we is."¹⁰⁰

As they rightfully point out, part of the reason that the *Fergusons* was so popular was that Bahamians saw themselves in the show. The ultimate irony in all of this is that it is probably because the show was made to revolve around tourism that it hit its mark so effectively. In essence, the show was not popular in spite of the ministry of tourism's involvement, but likely *because of* it. Removing tourism from the *Fergusons* would be like trying to take all the hotels out of Nassau; you can't have one without the other.

In her essay, Clinton-Meicholas asked rhetorically whether Bahamians had "sufficiently studied the impact of our proximity to the United States or how, or whether the two great forces in our lives, religion and tourism, coexist?"¹⁰¹ In the *Fergusons*, these two 'great forces' take center stage and do more than just coexist, they feed off of one

⁹⁸ Bethel, "Migrations of Identity," 81.

⁹⁹ Diane Gail Saunders, telephone interview by author, Nassau, Bahamas, July 27, 2009.

¹⁰⁰ McQueeny, interview.

¹⁰¹ Clinton-Meicholas, "Uncovering," 104.

another. This thesis argues that it is precisely the way that the show navigates this uneasy space between the holy and the secular while simultaneously dealing with the pervasive US influence that gives the *Fergusons* its power and accounts for its lasting kudos. That this heady mix was filtered through a compelling family saga told in the Bahamian Creole vernacular was icing on the cake. Bahamians could not help but see themselves represented in the show; in a very real sense, they are *The Fergusons of Farm Road*.

Thus, it is not so much that Bahamians do not have a national identity, or that they have multiple selves that they navigate between, but instead that Bahamians do not like what it is that they are. All the insecurity about identity stems from an unwillingness to accept, on a fundamental level, that tourism is the “tyrannical leading feature” of modern Bahamian life.¹⁰² It is as Jean Holder of the Caribbean Tourism Organization said in speaking of the broader Caribbean,

There appears to be a deep-seated resentment of the industry at every level of society — a resentment which probably stems from the historic socio-cultural associations of race, colonialism and slavery. ... the Caribbean is forced to choose between an industry it "deep down" does not really want, and the economic fruits of that industry which it needs and which, it seems more and more, only tourism will provide.¹⁰³

In the Bahamas, this resentment is compounded by the almost complete dependence that the country has on the industry. Bahamians have little choice but to do what they do not like doing. The country's history involved a protracted process through which blacks gained access to the machinery of state. However, it has become clear that while the majority is in charge, it is not in control. Political independence has been a pyrrhic victory and the levers that actually operate the bread-and-butter tourist industry are still far

¹⁰² Lewis, *The Growth of the Modern West Indies*, 326.

¹⁰³ Quoted in Pattullo, *Last Resorts*, 63.

beyond the country's grasp — this realization breeds insecurity. The insecurity is acutely felt when a Bahamian grabs onto something because it says nation, and at the same time is unsure whether or not it must also sell someone, somewhere a vacation. Nothing exists purely for the native.

The laugh of Miss Lye in the face of this existential dilemma is the ultimate form of passive resistance; namely to find the humor in the Bahamian predicament despite its overwhelming and inescapable tragedy. Is it any wonder that the courtesy campaign is a recurring feature of the local landscape and that the ministry's message needs 'continual reinforcement'?¹⁰⁴ The success of *The Fergusons of Farm Road* brought the reality of this dilemma into almost every Bahamian home on a weekly basis. It made pleasure out of the national pain. And just as the ministry is loathe to actually use the word 'service' in their courtesy campaigns, Bahamians do not seem to want to accept that what they do has any bearing on who they are. Welcome to the Bahamas: home of smiling natives with broken hearts.

And so the unease continues.

¹⁰⁴ Maynard, *Put on More Speed*, 379.

Appendix 1:

A Script of *The Fergusons of Farm Road* — Episode 1

Episode 1 The Fergusons of Farm Road for b/c 6/3/70 and 7/5/70 / 67 -

Theme: Instrumental version "Hoist up the John B sail"....
Establish Hold for about 30 seconds cross fade to
Organ music in church Cut to

Bro. Ferguson: (slight reverb) I take my text from the words of the prophet Isaiah. Chapter 13, Verse 11. "And I will punish the world for their evil, and the wicked for their iniquity; and I will cause the arrogance of the proud to cease, and will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible." The arrogance of the proud and the haughtiness of the terrible, those are the words my brothers and sisters, but I want to add the wickedness of the disbeliever and the waywardness of the disobedient. (From congregation: Amen, Alleluiah) Brothers and sisters in the Lord, I wonder if y'all look around you and see the wickedness that is on the face of the earth these days. All over the earth. And no more anywhere, like right here (thumps pulpit) in this little country of ours. Brother against brother, sister against sister, Son against father, daughter against mother. You ever wonder to yourself what the Lord think about all this. Remember the Lord ain't sleeping. He eye wide open looking down on his world. He mouth wide open calling all sinners to repentance. But brethren our ears cork up. We deaf. And none so deaf as those who WILL NOT hear. The wilful, the wayward, the disobedient. (Pause) (A few amens in the church). Sometimes you ever wonder when he going come and take back his world. This lovely world that he leave here in our safekeeping. He leave us to guard it and protect it. But not! From the time of Adam and Eve we HAVE BETRAYED HIM. That is what brethren. Betrayed him, through Disobedience The serpent crept into the garden one time before and he come back again and creep right into this Paradise of ours, this little garden of Eden that the Lord give us and that other people come from all other parts of the globe to come and look at, and wonder.

When the time come to pay the wages of sin my brothers, y'all going to be ready to pay? I am a poor humble sinner myself, I ain' no prophet, but let me take you to the 28 Chapter of Deuteronomy.

"But it shall come to pass if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe to do all his commandments and his statutes which I command thee, that all these curse shall come upon thee and overtake thee. Cursed shalt thou be in the city, cursed

/shalt thou be in

- 2 -

shalt thou be in the field; cursed shalt be thy basket and thy store, cursed shalt be the fruit of thy body and the fruit of thy land, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep; Cursed shalt thou be when thou comest in and when thou goest out." Well we ain' got no kine, that is to say cattles, and no sheep, but what we got shall be cursed anyway. Whether it be the conch in the sea or the fruit on the land.

You know there are some of us in this country, whose head not as grey as mine who don't remember when things wasn't so bountiful. Look around you. You won't see many of them here. No. you know where they are. Outside! Instead of praising the Lord, they outside seeking the pleasures of the flesh, worshipping Mammon. Forsaking the joys of the worship of the Lord and the inheritance of the heavenly kingdom. You and I remember the days brothers and sisters when the sponge at the bottom of the sea was our meat and drink. When only by the sweat of your brow you could get a half plate a grits.

But those were the days when godliness reigned over the land. And the Lord heard our prayers and smile on us. Today every one of us have two cents to shake in our pockets. It might not be a pocketful, but at least we have one cent to ~~say~~^{bet} against another one. But memory don't serve long, and wickedness take over. And I say unto you, the right arm of the Lord shall smite. (Pause - Allahu jah)

When last you do a good deed for your brother? Now in this country where we have thousands, as a matter of fact, millions of brothers coming to us, ~~where~~ is our livelihood, how many of us show a little charity to those strangers within our gates. Mark you I not going to say to you that you must allow advantage taking, No sir I not saying that we is to show charity to the stranger and not to our brother. Every one of us was made in God's image, and you have to learn to love your own brother FIRST before you can love your neighbour or the stranger within your gates. But what I saying to you is this ... know yourself, search your heart, and if within you there is no charity, and all that is in your heart is greed and malice and hate ... watch yourself. For you hear what the Lord say. If thou dost not follow my commandments, cursed shalt thou be, and the fruit of thy body.

/May very

May very well be that that's what happening to the fruit of our body, this young generation that look like they running full speed down that wide, lovely road that lead to eternal damnation. Hell fire! (Praise the Lord)

Praise the Lord you say sister. Praise his name. Is a hard steep climb up that rocky road that lead to salvation. How many of us ready to make it. But think about it my brothers and sisters, if the Lord was to come for his world today ... when that trumpet blow ... where it would meet you? Seeking after iniquity? Or on your knees before your Maker?

The day of repentance is here. TODAY! For tomorrow it might be too late. And cursed shall be the fruit of our body and the fruit of the land. You hear what he say. "The Lord shall make the rain of thy land powder and dust! from heaven shall it come down upon them, until thou be destroyed." You know what that mean. That this same sea that we so proud of will dry up, the fruit of the sea will wither away, and the fruit of the land will turn to ashes and shrivel you mouth. We can't even go back to sponge that time my brothers and sisters. We will just have to lie down and wait for the fire and brimstone to shower down on wi all head.

And to you few young people here today ... I say ... go forth and call your brothers and sisters back into the fold ... Tell them (start fading) that the day of Salvation is at hand... Tell them to turn from Mammon and raise their eyes to the Lord (Fade out)

(Hold under...)

That was the voice of Ezekiel Ferguson - taxi driver by profession, preacher by calling. And so begins the story of Brother Ferguson and his family. In a sort of way this is the story of all of us - our strength, our weakness, our faults, our trials and our triumphs; of the things that make us what we are. This is the story of the Fergusons of Farm Road (Pause)

Cut Theme:
Narrator:
Cut to
It is the third Sunday of February, and like on all third Sundays, this is Brother Ferguson's day in the pulpit in the Church of the Risen Redeemer, 1st Street, the Grove. Ezekiel had just delivered himself of a rousing sermon, accepted the praise of the congregation with humility (start to fade) and is on the way home for a well-earned Sunday dinner (fade out).

(Interior of running car)

Mrs. F. : Why you had to preach so long? Look like the Bishop going get pot cake for dinner today instead of peas and rice.

Mr. F. : I don't fancy I talk long.

Mrs. F. : Oh no! you didn't see Miss Lya diving conch in the front bench key? What you think she does come to church for?

Blossom : Her bed must be uncomfortable.

Mr. F. : Hush you mouth child. Children are to be seen and not heard.

Mrs. F. : (Laughing) Blossom you know you musn't trouble your father when he just finish preaching.

Blossom : But all I say.....

Mr. F. : Hush you mouth. You talk too much.

Mrs. F. : Alright Zeke.

Mr. F. : (mumbling to himself) These present day children....

Mrs. F. : I don't think I could take on the Bishop today you know.

Mr. F. : I'm just asking you one favour Mina. Please don't bother to disgrace me and yourself today with no out-of-the-way story in front of the Bishop.

Mrs. F. : Who me?

Mr. F. : Yes you. You remember the last time he was to the house I just message to stop you before you.....

Mrs. F. : Oh come on Zeke. Don't bother with that. Nothing out of the way about that lil joke, and after all the Bishop not a baby you know, you don't think he know what's happening.

Mr. F. : If he don't know I don't want him to find out in my house.

Mrs. F. : Same thing... So I will have to be on my P's and Q's for the whole live long day. That's the very reason why I don't want him there. Sunday is my day to relax. You don't hear the Lord say Sunday is to be the day of rest.

Mr. F. : Well he coming a'ready so just make up your mind....

Mrs. F. : Why it had to be today?

Mr. F. : He got to eat Sunday Dinner somewhere.

Mrs. F. : When he marry young woman he should learn to cook. If he woulds marry one woman his own age she would stay home and cook his food instead of gallivanting to Miami every month.

Mr. F. : Mina, I tired talking to you about charity. If you can't find anything good to say about anybody, keep quiet.

Mrs. F. : Oh, gee. You want to shut every body mouth today. Is you always talking about how she wear her dress so short.

Mr. F. : Me!?

Mrs. F. : Oh Lord Zeke. Not because you just finish preach. You's the very one. Anyway her dress well short. All you could see is two bony knee sticking out. This grown woman. And my legs better than her own. Aint that's true Blossom?

Blossom : Yes mama. You don't see how her foot funny down the bottom part.

Mr. F. : (very annoyed now) Mina ..don't you encourage this child in her forwardness. Is you always encouraging her, why she is so disrespectful. I surprised at you.

Mrs. F. : Don't bother get vex and fly pass the house you hear Zeke. You cross like wasp today. Just stop the car, let me out, (fading) let me go look about me pot, or you and the Bishop going eat crackers and drink water for dinner today.

Fade in sounds of pots etc.

Mrs. F. : (Singing a hymn) (From off mike...she is in the kitchen)

Blossom : (On mike) Mama, the Bishop coming.

Mrs. F. : Okay let him sit down. I soon finish in here.

Mr. F. : Come in Bishop (he calls out)

Bishop : (Footsteps approach, he enters house) Praise the Lord.

Mr. F. : Come right in and make yourself at home Bishop. Have this seat.

Bishop : Thank you brother. Good afternoon children.

Blossom : Good afternoon Bishop.

Bishop : Sister Ferguson not here?

Mr. F. : Yes Bishop. She's in the kitchen looking about the dinner. She must be didn't hear you come in. (Calls out) Mina, the Bishop here.

Mrs. F. : (From off mike) Coming (She approaches) Afternoon Bishop. Excuse me I didn't hear you when you come in. Make yourself comfortable I just looking about the lummah. It soon be ready now. (Going off again) Zeke get something for the Bishop to drink.

Mr. F. : But...

Bishop : Thank you brother. Sometimes I take a little cordial.

Mr. F. : I does usually take a little tonic wine before my lunch.....

Bishop : That's a good idea brother.

Mr. F. : Blossom bring two glasses form.

Blossom : Yes Daddy.

Bishop : Brother that was a good sermon this morning - amen. You come really preach that wewf.

Mr. F. : Thank you Bishop. I try my best.

Bishop : And that's all the Lord ask for.

Bro. F. : Amen.

Blossom : See them here Daddy.

Bro. F. : Thank you my dear.

Blossom : Mama asking you to send a malt tonic for her.

Bishop : I didn't know that Sister Ferguson does drink.

Blossom : Nothing strong in malt tonic sir.

Bro. F. : Nobody ask you any question young lady. Here take this to your mother, and tell her to hurry up. The Bishop must be hungry now.

Blossom : Alright Daddy.

Bishop : So where the other children.

Bro. F. : I don't see Earl from we get home from Church. He must be down the road playing ball. Princess gone to spend the day with a friend, Samuel working today, and the Lord know where Othniel is. I went to talk to you about Othniel too Bishop. The Lord knows what we going do with that boy. We take no interest at all in his books or in the home. I afraid he going come to a very bad end.

Bishop : He need prayers brother. Plenty prayers. All these young people these days look like they going down the road to hell. The selfsame thing you were saying in your sermon this morning.

Bro. F. : I know what I talking about Bishop, because is two of them I have on my hands.

Bishop : You mean Samuel. I thought that Samuel had settled down now that he is working at the hotel. After all he's a big man now.

Bro. F. : Yes Bishop even Samuel is a problem. The boy just don't seem to have no interest in what he doing you know. He is a bright boy. (Bishop responds) when he went there first everybody had nothing but good to say of him. That didn't last two weeks.

Bishop : "A foolish son is a grief to his father, and bitterness to her that bare him". Proverbs 17, 25.

Bro. F. : Amen Bishop. Their mother don't know what to do with them. I keep telling her that all we can do is pray, but although she is a righteous woman, she beginning to despair.

Mrs. F. : (footsteps coming on mike) Well, the food ready. Blossom, Blossom, go see if you can find Earl. Tell him to find himself here right now.

Bro. F. : Let's sit at the table. Bishop you sit down up at the top.

SOUNDS : (People sitting at table. Plates being put on etc.)

Mrs. F. : Bishop, you can please say the grace.

Bishop : You not going to wait for the children?

Mrs. F. : They could say their own grace when they come.

Mr. F. : Go ahead Bishop.

Bishop : Thank you brother. Dear Lord. Bless this food that we are now about to eat and may it do our bodies good for Jesus sake. And Lord Bless these kind friends who have invited your servant to share their meal with them. Amen.

ALL : Amen.

Blossom : (enters) Earl say he coming now mama.

Bro. F. : That boy looking for trouble you know. Awright you sit down child and say your grace.

Sound : (Blossom sits)

Bishop : Sister...this food certainly look good. I've see a meal like this since Cynthia gone.

Mrs. F. : I hope it taste good Bishop.

Bro. F. : (teasing) If is one thing Bishop. She's a good cook. Give me a little trouble some time but a never have a complaint about her cooking.

Mrs. F. : You go on you hear Zeke. Help yourself Bishop.

Bishop : Thank you sister.

Mrs. F. : So when you wife coming back.

Bishop : She said she would be here Friday.

Mrs. F. : She stay long this trip

Bishop : You know how you women stay. Besides she have a lil church work to do. She does look about whatever business we have with the Church in Florida.

Mrs. F. : Oh...I see

Bro. F. : So how the organ fund going?

Mrs. F. : Blossom...leave that piece for your father.

Bishop : We collecting slowly brother. But people not giving like they could.

Bro. F. : Yeah. They saying things tough. People talking about laying off workers and the number of tourist dropping.

Bishop : Yes. Well that's why I was so please to hear your sermon this morning.

Bro. F. : Excuse me...let me full up your glass. (Gets up from table).

Bishop : Thank you. I wish more people was like you and understand the meaning of charity and respect for their brothers.

Bro. F. : Amen.

Bishop : So what you thought about your father's sermon Blossom?

Blossom : I don't agree with him sir. Everybody always saying is the younger generation, but The Lord say is the sins of the fathers that is visited on the children.

Mrs. F. : (laughs) You hear that Zeke. You daughter call out back the Bible on you.

Blossom : (getting more courageous) And furthermore, Daddy say that the Lord going to wither up the earth, but in Genesis The Lord say "I will not curse the earth any more for man's sake for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth, neither will I again smite any more everything living, as I have done.

Bishop : But you quoting your Scriptures child.

Blossom : I learn that in Bible Knowledge class at school sir.

Bro. F. : (Coming back to table) You'll learning to be disrespectful to your elders. That's what. Who tell you that you know the interpretation of the Bible.

Blossom : Is the Bishop ask me a question you know Daddy.

Bro. F. : Don't back talk me child.

Blossom : I wasn't....

Bishop : When your father talk to you open your ears and close your mouth.

Blossom : I was just....

Bro. F. : Hush your mouth child. You leave this table right now (Pause) You going feel my hand when the Bishop gone!

Sound : Gentle link music.

NARRATOR : Poor Blossom. Parents never understand do they? But Blossom is the least of the Fergusons' worries. It is Othniel and Samuel who are going to be their father's grief and their mother's bitterness.

Little does Brother Ferguson know this quiet February Sunday that there is more than enough trouble in store for him...and his family. Listen again next week for another chapter of the "Fergusons of Farm Road"....a true to life drama of a Bohemian family.

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Ethics Approval Forms, Carleton University



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Ethics Clearance Form

This is to certify that the Carleton University Research Ethics Committee has examined the application for ethical clearance. The committee found the research project to meet appropriate ethical standards as outlined in the *Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans* and, the *Carleton University Policies and Procedures for the Ethical Conduct of Research*.

New approval

Renewal of original approval

Original date of approval:

Date of approval **22 November 2008**
Researcher **Edward Minnis**
Status **M.A. student**
Department **Department of History**
Supervisor **Professor Duncan McDowall**
Title of project **Adventures in Broadcasting the National Identity: The Fergusons of Farm Road 1970-74**

Ethics approval expires on: **22 November 2009**

All researchers are governed by the following conditions:

Annual Status Report: You are required to submit an Annual Status Report to either renew clearance or close the file. Failure to submit the Annual Status Report will result in the immediate suspension of the project. Funded projects will have accounts suspended until the report is submitted and approved.

Changes to the project: Any changes to the project must be submitted to the Carleton University Research Ethics Committee for approval. All changes must be approved prior to the continuance of the research.

Adverse events: Should any participant suffer adversely from their participation in the project you are required to report the matter to the Carleton University Research Ethics Committee. You must submit a written record of the event and indicate what steps you have taken to resolve the situation.

Suspension or termination of approval: Failure to conduct the research in accordance with the principles of the *Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans* and the *Carleton University Policies and Procedures for the Ethical Conduct of Research* may result in the suspension or termination of the research project.

Leanne J. MacDonald-Hicks
Research Ethics Committee Coordinator
For the Chair of the Carleton University Research Ethics Committee
Prof. Antonio Gualtieri



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New clearance

Renewal of original clearance

Original date of clearance: 22 November 2008

Date of clearance 11 September 2009
Researcher Edward Minnis
Status M.A. student
Department Department of History
Supervisor Professor Duncan McDowell
Title of project The Ferguson's of Farm Road: At the Intersection of Tourism, National Identity and Bad Service

Ethics approval expires on: 31 May 2010

All researchers are governed by the following conditions:

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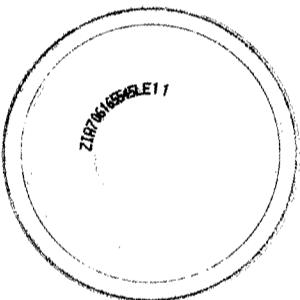
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Leslie J. MacDonald-Hicks
Research Ethics Board Coordinator
For the Chair of the Carleton University Research Ethics Board
Prof. Antonio Gualtieri

Audio CD Appendix

**At the Intersection of Tourism,
National Identity and Bad Service:
The Case Study of *The Fergusons of Farm Road.***



Audio CD Appendix.

**A component of a thesis submitted to
the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of**

Master of Arts