

**MEMORY OF THE WORLD**  
**Farquharson's Journal**  
(Bahamas)

*Ref N° 2008-43*

**1. SUMMARY**

Farquharson's Journal, a handwritten diary by Charles Farquharson, planter, and owner of the Prospect Hill Plantation, which grew cotton, located on the east side of Watlings Island (now known as San Salvador) is a journal recording the day-to-day happening on the plantation from 1 January, 1831 to 31 December, 1832. Charles Farquharson's manuscript is unique. It is the only plantation journal discovered in The Bahamas.

As most plantation owners were absentee landlords, this journal of plantation life from the lived experience of an owner provides unique insights into the life and times of plantation life. Founded on an economically exploitive system for the benefit of the owners, plantations and enslavement served as the basis for modern-day Bahamian life. Enslavement brought to the Bahamas the forefathers of the majority of present day Bahamians.

In conjunction with archaeology and other records in the public archives, this diary provides an "invaluable insight into the daily life of Bahamian Out Island slave society on the eve of emancipation."

**2. DETAILS OF THE NOMINATOR(S)**

**2.1 Name (person or organization)** D. Gail Saunders (Ph.D)

**2.2 Relationship to the documentary heritage nominated** Former Director, Bahamas Archives (1971-2004); Presently Director General of Heritage.

**2.3 Contact person(s)** D. Gail Saunders, M. Elaine Toote (Director of Bahamas Archives), Mr. Haldane Chase, Secretary General, Bahamas UNESCO National Commission c/o of Ministry of Education, Youth, Sports and Culture, P.O. Box N-3913, Nassau, Bahamas, Tel: 242-502-8215, Fax: 242-323-2129, email: @yahoo.com

**2.4 Contact details (include address, phone, fax, e-mail)** Department of Archives, P.O. Box SS-6341, Nassau, Bahamas, Tel: 242-393-2175; Fax: 242-394-2340; e-mail: archives@batelnet.bs; saunders@batelnet.bs

**3. IDENTITY AND DESCRIPTION OF THE DOCUMENTARY HERITAGE**

**3.1 Name and identification details of the items being nominated**

*Farquharson's Journal, Friday 9<sup>th</sup> September - Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> September, 1831*

Farquharson's Journal also called Journal of Transactions on Charles Farquharson's Plantation on Watlings Island, is an original manuscript describing the day-to-day happening on the plantation between 1 January, 1831 to 31 December, 1832.

Unlike some plantation owners, for example, Lord John Rolle of Exuma, Charles Farquharson actually lived on his plantation and wrote a journal.

**3.2 Description**

The Journal was compiled by Charles Farquharson in his handwriting. It is believed that it remained in Charles Farquharson's custody until his death in 1836. In 1903, the Journal was transcribed by Ormond McDonald, Assistant Resident Justice in San Salvador and published by the Alfred Deans Peggs Research Fund as *A Relic of Slavery. Farquharson's Journal for 1831-1832*. (Nassau, Deans Peggs Research Fund, 1957. Charles Farquharson's daughter Christina, married Henry Stevenson of Nassau who was related to the O'Brien family also of Nassau. The original Journal somehow got into Ms. Aline O'Brien's custody. She left the Bahamas and lived in England until her death. Before her death, on 27 February, 1976, Ms. Aline O'Brien deposited the Journal into the Public Records Office (now the Bahamas Archives). When deposited the original Journal was a soft bound, and hand sewn and covered in light case-bound paper brown cover. Between March-May 1976, the Journal was hand-paper and silk-chiffon tissue repaired by Supervisor of the Repair-Room, Ms. Elaine Toote. After repair, it was hand sewn and bound in goat-skin leather. The title was printed on a piece of leatherette and mounted on the front of the goat-skin cover.

#### **4. JUSTIFICATION FOR INCLUSION/ASSESSMENT AGAINST CRITERIA**

##### **4.1 *Is Authenticity established?***

Farquharson's Journal was kept for sometime along with other papers in an old tin hat box in the attic room in the old homestead of the O'Brien Family in Hospital Lane, Nassau by Miss Helen McGregor O'Brien, better known as Nenna or Aunt Nellie. A large part of the O'Brien Collection was accumulated in the late 1800s. This collection comprises letters, receipts and legal documents, books, photographs and the original copy of Farquharson's Journal. The collection remained intact to a large extent. For some years it, including Farquharson's Journal, was in the safe-keeping of Miss Maude McDonald, whose brother, Ormond McDonald realizing the significance of the Journal when he discovered it in 1903, while Assistant Resident Justice at that island, copied it "with infinite patience and care" thus preserving this unique record of pre-emancipation days. It was believed by Dr. A. Deans Peggs that the original had been destroyed by fire. However, the original, survived and ended up in England.

Some of O'Brien and Stevenson descendants of Charles Farquharson moved to England including Jessie "Dah" McGregor Hamilton Stevenson, the oldest daughter of Christina Farquharson and Henry Stevenson. She 'removed' to England in the 1860s and in early 1900 cared for Aileen and Phyllis O'Brien, children of Andrew and Helen (nee Minns), O'Brien. They went to live in England after their mother's death (Helen Minns O'Brien) in 1914 and stayed with Marion Hepburn grandchild of Charles Farquharson. At some point the papers including Farquharson's Journal were taken to England and ended up with Aileen O'Brien who brought the O'Brien papers, including Farquharson's diary from England to Nassau in 1976. The collection was deposited in the Public Records Office (Bahamas Archives) in March 1976 by Mr. and Mrs. Gordon O'Brien of Nassau.

Mr. Gordon O'Brien was the great, great grandson of Charles Farquharson. He married Dolly Aetha Pluuse of Minnesota.

Farquharson's Journal was examined in detail by several Archivists against a letter that Charles Farquharson wrote to his son and the handwriting matched. Additionally, the copy by McDonald had explanatory footnotes penned in red. These do not appear in the original document which is being nominated. The original also contained the 'bad' spelling referred to by O.J. McDonald, Assistant Resident Justice who made a copy from the original.

##### **4.2 *Is world significance, uniqueness and irreplaceability established?***

Farquharson's Journal which is being nominated for the Memory of The world list is of world importance because of its unique nature; it is not to be found in its original form in any other repository in the world. Farquharson's Journal is one of the few diaries or journals to leave a daily

record for a holding producing a major staple other and sugar. The Radnor Plantation Journal for Jamaica is coffee cultivation 1822-26 and there are some other minor journals for coffee/livestock/pimento properties in Jamaica – but none that solely grew cotton.<sup>1</sup>

Charles Farquharson (1760-1835) author of the Journal, was born in Scotland and came to the Bahamas as a Loyalist, fleeing newly independent America and settled at Prospect Hill. Charles Farquharson kept the Journal between January 1<sup>st</sup>, 1831 and December 31, 1832. He had limited formal education. Obtaining one of the original grants of land on San Salvador, two hundred acres between the Great Lake and Pigeon Creek in 1803, he made the island of San Salvador, then called Watlings Island, his home for more than thirty years. Farquharson later expanded his estate to some 1500 acres.<sup>2</sup>

A marginal non-plantation colony the Bahamas never grew sugar commercially like the Caribbean colonies of Jamaica, Barbados and Antigua. Farquharson's Journal gives a detailed insight into the daily workings of a declining cotton plantation in the last years of British Colonial slavery. Cotton was grown and exported from Watlings to Nassau and then to England from the mid 1780s but it was in serious decline by 1800. The Bahamas did not succeed in replacing cotton after its failure and resorted to salt production, farming, mainly for subsistence, and stock raising. Charles Farquharson's Journal is therefore very important as it is the only Journal that gives insight into the operation of a non-sugar plantation in the Bahamas. It is the only extant handwritten record of Bahamian plantation life. The chores and rhythms of work on the Farquharson Plantation symbolized a non-sugar economy compared to sugar plantations which were more labour intensive. Farquharson's Journal adds to our knowledge of enslavement and the workings of a cotton plantation that is in a non-sugar colony. The Journal records the tasks which the enslaved performed. It relates the cycles of planting, harvesting and processing the cotton and the other main crops such as corn, peas, bean and ground provisions. Much detail is given about the planting and reaping of guinea corn. He gives insight into the chores of weeding, 'blanking' (planting between the rows of growing crops) and picking the crops, or by periodic tasks as clearing new fields, building walls, repairing buildings or 'cleaning roads.' While most of those activities could engage most of the slaves together, from time to time, a few of the enslaved might be employed in other duties including carrying wood, gathering forage, fishing, raking salt, or carrying produce and luggage to and from the dock."

Farquharson's Journal is also important for the insight it gives into the master's attitude towards enslavement and the enslaved. Farquharson's Journal reveals that while he worked his slaves continually throughout the day, the week, the year, in a system close to gang labour, he recognized the "delicate balance between his own dependence on his slaves, and their dependence upon him, above all for food and clothing. Farquharson seems unwilling to drive his slaves through sickness and inclement weather, his reluctance to resort to corporate punishment on the estate, and more privately, his invariable practice of referring to his workers not as slaves but as on a ship or an English farm – as 'the people' or 'the hands.'"<sup>3</sup> Farquharson recognized that while protest and negotiation were necessary, features of master slave relations, violent resistance and overt rebelling was not to be tolerated. Alick, the leader of the revolt or 'mutiny' at Farquharson's Plantation was severely punished, banished to Nassau and later sold.

Significant information into the leisure of his slaves is given by Farquharson. For example on Wednesday 26, December 1832, he recorded:

*Some of our people gon (sic) abroad to see some of their friends and some at home amusing themselves in their own way threw (sic) the day, but all of them home in the evening and had a grand dance and keep it up until near daylight.<sup>4</sup>*

This 'grand dance' which occurred on one of their three days holiday at Christmas later developed into the national festival of the John Canoe – Junkanoo which has traveled the world and won international acclaim.

Farquharson was related to the family of the Stevensons and the O'Briens of Nassau. His daughter Christina married Henry Stevenson of Nassau. Christina and Henry's daughter, Helen Margaret married Charles B. O'Brien of Nassau. Both the Stevensons and O'Briens "branched out tremendously." Some lived in Nassau, others moved to England and the United States.

Charles Farquharson was acquainted with William Nairn, a British Naval Officer "who had the honour of commanding the boat that put Wellington ashore before Waterloo." Nairn after being discharged from the navy following the Battle of Waterloo, came to the Bahamas, married a daughter of Major Archibald Taylor, a Loyalist from Carolina, and settled on Watlings Island (later renamed San Salvador).

San Salvador has the distinction of being the first landfall by Christopher Columbus in the Americas. Columbus landed at San Salvador on 12 October, 1492.

Charles Farquharson had contacts with ships captains who sailed between American ports in the southern United States and Jamaica. Such captains included Captain McKinney, (*The Blossom*) and Captain Salter (*The Enterprise*). The latter captain was sailing from Savanna to Jamaica "with an assorted cargo."

### **Uniqueness**

Farquharson's Journal (1831-1832), written by Charles Farquharson, is the only known surviving Journal of a Bahamian slave plantation. The manuscript is irreplaceable but fortunately, it was copied by Ormond J. McDonald, Assistant Resident Justice, Watlings Island, in 1903. The Deans Peggs Research Fund, Nassau, Bahamas had it published in 1957 as *A Relic of Slavery*. Farquharson's Journal for 1831-1832. The printed copy is therefore accessible to the students and the public. However, the original manuscript is unique as it is hand-written by Charles Farquharson with his misspellings unaltered and unexplained. The Journal is the only one of its kind (a non-sugar plantation) found in the Bahamas, the Caribbean and as far as we know, the world.

### **Irreplaceability**

As this document was handwritten in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century about the life and times of the Bahamas in that period, it cannot be replaced.

### ***4.3 Is one or more of the criteria of (a) time (b) place (c) people (d) subject and theme (e) form and style satisfied?***

#### **(a) Time**

Written in 1831-1832, Farquharson's Journal is the only slave Journal in The Bahamas to have survived. Slave Journals were common in sugar producing colonies but not in The Bahamas, a non-sugar colony. No doubt other Journals were written, but only Farquharson's has survived.

#### **(b) Place**

The Journal was written in San Salvador, formerly known as Watlings Island, an island located in the southeast Bahamas which is accepted as the first landfall of Christopher Columbus in the New World and the Americas. It also was used by the United States Navy and Coast Guard during the immediate post Second World War. San Salvador is a rural area. Farquharson's Plantation grew crops such as corn, cotton, oranges, pigeon peas, black eye peas, yams, sweet potatoes, snap beans, castor oil, cabbage and pumpkins. A considerable variety of stock was also raised.

#### **(c) People**

The people involved were the few Europeans who remained on San Salvador as Plantation owners (many had left because of the failure of cotton) and the enslaved people. Charles Farquharson by 1834 was perhaps the only white planter remaining. The existing plantations were run by mixed-

race owners or slave overseers. For example, Prince Storr, a former slave raised in Nassau was sent to be overseer of the Sandy Point and Polly Hill Plantations.<sup>5</sup>

Some of the Europeans who remained were William Nairn and Archibald Taylor, already mentioned and John Dickson, stepson of Charles Farquharson and owner of Dixon's Hill and Sarah Lauder believed to be the owner or part owner of the Fortune Hill Plantation.

Charles Farquharson also welcomed guests from time to time, including a Doctor Bridon and Vincent Wylly, a relative of William Wylly, a Georgia Loyalist who had first fled to New Brunswick, Canada then The Bahamas where he was appointed Attorney General.<sup>6</sup> Wylly in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century acquired plantations at Clifton, Tusculum and Waterloo in western New Providence. He became a controversial figure opposing some of Governor Dunmore's and the House of Assembly's policies.

John Murray Earl of Dunmore, a Loyalist was the last Royal Governor of Virginia and became Governor of the Bahamas in 1787. Britain was still important in the minds and lives of Farquharson, Wylly and Dunmore. Loyalists from America tried to recreate the lives that they had left behind. William Wylly is also known for publishing a set of regulations for his slaves which promoted marriage, family life and provision for Baptism, regular church services and Sunday Schooling. Wylly was also known for challenging the authority of a master over his slaves, one such confrontation was with the House of Assembly leading to what is known as the "Wylly Affair." The uproar and further happenings caused by Wylly's judgement led to the delay of the Slave Regulation Act which was finally passed in 1821.<sup>7</sup> Wylly's Clifton Plantation is being preserved by the Clifton Heritage Authority established in 2004.

**(d) Subject and theme**

Farquharson's Journal gives insight into the workings of a decayed cotton plantation and a look at plantation society in the immediate pre-Emancipation period. It is one of the only such detailed diaries to survive and gives a different experience than those of other non-sugar plantations and sugar estates as well. It is an example of the diversification which existed in the Colonial Caribbean and the fact that "sugar did not control the whole structure of life..."<sup>8</sup> It adds to our knowledge of cotton growing, not only in the region, but in the world generally.

**(e) Form and style**

The Farquharson's Journal gives almost daily accounts of the happenings on the plantation in clear and concise language.

**5. Legal Information**

5.1 Owner of the documentary heritage (name and contact details).

Bahamas Archives (Department of Archives)  
P.O. Box SS-6341  
Nassau, Bahamas  
Fax: 242-394-2340 or 242-393-2855  
Tel: 242-393-2175  
e-mail archives@batelnet.bs

5.2 Custodian of the documentary heritage (name and contact details, if different to the owner).

Ms. M. Elaine Toote  
Director of Archives  
Bahamas Archives (Department of Archives)  
P.O. Box SS-6341  
Nassau, Bahamas  
Fax: 242-394-2340

### 5.3 Legal status

(a) category of ownership

Mr. and Mrs. Gordon O'Brien deposited Farquharson's Journal along with the other O'Brien Family Papers in the Bahamas Archives which owns the collection.

(b) Accessibility

The original of Farquharson's Journal is closed to the public. *A Relic of Slavery*, an edited version of the Journal by the A. Deans Peggs Research Fund is available to Researchers at the Archives and copies are sold by some bookshops.

(c) Copyright status

The Bahamas Archives (Department of Archives) holds the copyright for the original.

(d) Responsible administration

Ministry of Education, Youth, Sports and Culture.

### 6. **Management Plan**

There is an unwritten management plan. However, Farquharson Journal has been repaired using archival standards and is stored in an acid-free box within the Archives Repository which is air-conditioned and humidity-controlled. Only designated Research Room staff have access to the Repository.

### 7. **Consultation**

*7.1 Provide details of consultation about this nomination with (a) the owner of the heritage (b) custodian (c) year national or regional Memory of the World Committee.*

Constant consultation has been carried out between the nominator, the Director of Archives, Ms. Elaine Toote and Assistant Director, Ms. Patrice Williams, the custodians and representatives of the Bahamas Archives, the owner of Farquharson's Journal. They support the nomination.

The nominator has also consulted with the Secretary General of the Bahamas UNESCO Commission, Mr. Haldane Chase who endorsed the nomination.

### 8. **Assessment of Risk**

8.1 Deterioration of the papers document may naturally occur over time as is natural. But efforts have been made to protect the document as much as possible.

The preservation of copies of Farquharson's Journal is secured as printed copies exist and are being reprinted. Also, the original document has been microfilmed.

### 9. **Assessment of Preservation**

9.1 Farquharson's Journal has been repaired preserving its integrity and is stored in an air-conditioned, humidity, light, and insect free environment. There is also physical security. The Department of Archives is protected by bars, a burglar alarm system and surveillance cameras. The Journal is closed to the public. The printed copies of the Journal ensure safe access and protection of the original. The Bahamas Archives is headed by a fully trained Archivist who supervises a trained and knowledgeable staff of professionals.

### Part C Lodgement

This nomination is lodged by:

(Please print names) D. Gail Saunders..... *D. GAIL SAUNDERS*  
(Signature) *D. Gail Saunders*..... Date *19 November, 2008*

### End notes

1. Barry Higman, *Jamaica Surveyed. Plantation Maps and Plans of the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries*, Institute of Jamaica Publications Ltd., January 1988, 168-172.
2. Michael Craton and Gail Saunders, *Islanders in The Stream. A History of the Bahamian People*, Vol. I, Georgia University Press, Athens, 1992, 335.
3. Michael Craton and D. Gail Saunders, 'On Slavery's Margins: the Farquharson Estate San Salvador, Bahamas 1831-1832, *Slavery and Abolition. Journal of Comparative Studies*, Vol. 12, No. 2, Sept. 1991, 53.
4. Farquharson's Journal 1831-1832, Wednesday, 26 December, 1832.
5. John D. Burton, 'American Loyalists, Slaves and Creation of an Afro-Bahamian World: Sandy Point Plantation and The Prince Storr Murder Case', *Journal of the Bahamas Historical Society*, Vol. 26, October, 2004, 17-18.
6. Michael Craton and Gail Saunders, *Islanders in The Stream*, Vol. I, 202.
7. Michael Craton and Gail Saunders, *Islanders in The Stream*, Vol. I, 221-224.
8. Verene Shepherd (ed.), *Slavery Without Sugar. Diversity in Caribbean Economy and Society Since the 17<sup>th</sup> Century*, University Press of Florida, Gainesville, Florida, 2002, 2.