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UNDERSTANDING OUR PAST IN THE SCHOOL EXPERIENCE (II)

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RESUMEN

Esta segunda y última parte del artículo UNDERSTANDING OUR PAST IN THE SCHOOL EXPERIENCE describe en detalle el currículo y la rutina general de la didáctica que practicaban las Escuelas de Inglés (como se conocían en Costa Rica) en la provincia de Limón. Tiene como fin principal desarrollar un retrato histórico de las escuelas para la gente de origen afro-caribeño en Costa Rica durante la primera mitad de los 1900s. El foco de este artículo está basado en una investigación de historia oral que giró alrededor de cuatro preguntas clave: 1) ¿Cómo eran las escuelas de la gente afro-caribeña durante 1934-48? 2) ¿Cómo empezaron? 3) ¿Cuál era el currículum que se enseñaba en esas escuelas y cómo se enseñaba? 4) ¿Qué sucedió con estas escuelas a través de los años? El sitio seleccionado para el estudio fue Limón, Costa Rica. La metodología cualitativa que se empleó permitió recoger evidencia para contestar las preguntas del estudio. Entre las técnicas para la recolección de datos están las entrevistas abiertas y a profundidad, entrevistas grabadas, trascripción verbatim de estas entrevistas, revisión de literatura relacionada al tema y estudio de varios documentos. Las entrevistas siguieron la metodología de la investigación de historia oral (i.e., con consentimiento y mutuo acuerdo pre-firmados por los participantes y la investigadora). La información recogida reveló que las Escuelas de Inglés eran apoyadas por diferentes denominaciones religiosas, la compañía del ferrocarril, la compañía bananera United Fruit, y la Asociación Universal para el Mejoramiento del Negro. La evidencia encontrada permitió establecer similitudes en el currículo y didáctica de las Escuelas de Inglés y las escuelas de primaria diseñadas para las colonias británicas, especialmente Jamaica.

ABSTRACT

This second and last part of the article UNDERSTANDING OUR PAST IN THE SCHOOL EXPERIENCE describes in detail the curriculum and the general routine of instruction that the English Schools (as they were known in Costa Rica) practiced. The purpose of the study was to develop an historical portrayal of schools for Afro-Caribbean people in Costa Rica during the first half of the 1900s. The focus of the articles is based on an oral history investigation that evolves around four key questions: 1) what were the schools of the Afro-Caribbean people in Costa Rica like during the 1934-48s? 2) How were they started? 3) What curriculum was taught in those schools? How was it taught? The selected site for the study was Limon, Costa Rica. This city has been the place of arrival and dwelling of most of the country's Afro-Caribbean people since 1872. The qualitative methods used provided evidence to answer the research questions. The interviews followed the guidelines of oral history inquiry (i.e., with consent and agreement forms pre-signed). The data collected revealed that the English Schools were supported by different church denominations, the railroad company, the United Fruit Company, and the Universal Negro Improvement Association. The curriculum and instruction used permitted to find similarities between the English Schools and the primary schools designed for the British colonies, particularly Jamaica.

The beginnings

The English schools must have begun in the early 1900s or the very late 1890s. At that time the banana industry began and more opportunities for jobs for Afro-Caribbeans were opened. As stated by A. Henry (June, 1997),

> When you're well prepared in English you can get any job of the company. That's why they brought the teachers so as to prepare you to do the work there, in the offices, in the commissaries, in the farms. They needed timekeepers and bookkeepers… [not just manual laborers]; people like those went to school so that they are well prepared to head for a job in those times.

Sawyers-Royal explained that even before her father started a school in 1912, a school sponsored by the Methodist Church existed in El Cairo. Her father's school began in a settlement known as Beverly, in the Estrella Line (south of Puerto Limon). She began her schooling at the age of five, in 1917, at her father's school.

> I lived in Beverly and Bananito [another settlement close to Beverly]. I started school, honestly, at five years old. My parents came from Jamaica. My father came in 1899; my mother came in 1900, the 27th of November. My father kept church in Germania [in the Old Lines]... They had school in the Old Lines, in Cairo, but not by him [her father]... the Methodists had it. He went with the Church of England always... My father abandoned the Old Lines and went to La Estrella Line in 1912. Here, my father was a teacher and a preacher, for the Church of England.

Similarly, Thomas calculated a date by recalling her mother's age:

> Well, I'm going to tell you something that could help us get some numbers. Mom is 81 years old and mom also went to the English school. Mom was born in 1916... say she attended school at the age of seven; that means that by 1921 there were schools already. Thinking of mom and other elderly persons that attended school in Limon...we are talking of beginnings of 1900

Likewise, A. Henry told this story:

> I went to school around 1928 and I was nine years old at the time. The school was here in the center of Limón. There were 5 to 6 English schools and had English schools in the lines. I know the English schools started here as soon as the company started, sometime around 1890s, late in the 1800s.

Minister Soby, a North American missionary who founded the Baptist church in Cahuita, Talamanca, brought the first teacher to Cahuita, in 1905 (Palmer, 1986). Therefore, the English school in the area of Talamanca also began its tradition in the early 1900s. Hence, the estimates by the participants of this study seem appropriate.

The English schools, their buildings and schedule structures

In the case of English schools associated with churches, school buildings were generally a wooden hall that sometimes served as the site for church activities as well. At other times, the school building was an old wooden house rented or borrowed for the purpose of conducting classes. In other cases, the school was held in a room or the corridor of the teacher's house. In the instance of schools operated in the teacher's house corridor, the English schools were called *Escuelas de corredor* (Corridor schools, i.e., schools operated by individual teachers at their own homes).

Usually, the school hall had large tables with long benches along the sides. Groups of children of the same age and same instructional level sat together. Each group worked on tasks at one or more blackboards while the teacher worked with another group of students. According to participants, often 80 students met at the same time in a large one-room school. Most of the former students reported that the teacher's key to managing the large numbers of students was that teachers were permitted to use corporal punishment. Therefore, afraid of the belt, the children remained quiet and still during class time.

One can observe this situation in Sawyers' description of the English school that she attended (the old Saint Mark's School):

> There are images that are hard to forget. I visualize that school without difficulty. See, it was a big hall without walls. There were no individual chairs. There were large tables and long benches, like those in church, with back support... oblong tables. Six people could sit at one side of the table. That means that at each table 16 children could sit, counting two at each end of the table. Each table group represented a level grade; each group had a blackboard to look at. The teacher sat on a small platform [the stage platform for church and school performances] from where she could control everything…You had on the blackboard what you had to do. While one group was working from the blackboard, she [the teacher] checked homework. When she finished, she called a group to read. In the meantime, the other group completed the assignment on the board, or reviewed, taking advantage of the time to review… because they [the teachers] would punish you [the child] if you fail with your homework. In those days you could not misbehave. That for me was the key. We [the students] behaved well because it was "do or die," because the teacher had power…

In the same manner, Henry pictured his school (the UNIA School) as a "big hall, with screens to divide groups." Also, Scott, a former student of the UNIA School in Saborío, remembered that the English schools of the settlements along the railroad were old wooden houses with benches and a blackboard. Students spent at least six hours per day in these buildings in which they received

education in their native language, English.

Schedule

From the arrival of the first Afro-Caribbean families in the early 1900s to the late 1930s, these foreign children were not required to attend the public schools in Costa Rica; they attended the English schools during the morning and afternoon from Monday to Friday. However, Friday was devoted to Bible studies and other extra curricular activities. School was year round.

Recess was a matter of convenience for the teacher. Sometimes, the teacher did not have the space or the assistance to manage all the children during recess periods. Nevertheless, teachers who did not have recess in school had their own ways to afford students some break from school work. Thomas, for example, remembered that her father, Teacher Thomas, asked the children who finished their work to put their face on their arms and to lean on the table. In this way, children could relax but they would not distract themselves or their classmates.

Student population

The number of students in the English schools depended on the population of the community, the number of English schools available, the space availability, and the popularity of the teachers. In Puerto Limón during the 1930s and 1940s, for instance, almost all churches had their own English schools: the Anglicans, the Methodists, the Baptists, the Adventists, and the Catholics. Individual teachers and other organizations, such as the UNIA, also had their own schools.

A. Henry said "[there were] more than 150 students in the school I went to… [all] at the same time." Sawyers-Royal said that when she attended school in Limón, the Anglican Church school had up to 150 or 200 children because they had good teachers and plenty of space. On the other hand, Sawyers-Royal said that Teacher Hilton was a good teacher also, but because he had a home school he could not keep too many students, 30 at the most. Teacher Thomas was a well-known teacher, but could not have more than 30 students because he did not have enough room for more. Taylor related that in the Catholic English School, 30, 40 and sometimes 50 students sat in class, grouped in different levels. Symes talked about 30 to 35 students in the Salvation Army school. Walter and Manning, both former students of corridor schools, said that their schools usually had 10 to 15 students.

Requisites and finance

According to most participants, the English schools set no socioeconomic requirement for students to enroll. Certainly, race, gender, or age was not mandated. The English schools were open to any child who wished to attend. Independently of their socioeconomic status, parents only needed to register their children and pay a weekly fee. Some former students began school at an early age. Sawyers-Royal started school at the age of five; her daughter, Joycelyn Sawyers, however, began her schooling at the age of three. Taylor also started her education in the English school at the age of three. On the other hand, A. Henry started his primary school at age nine. He said that "you could go to any

school, no matter what church you went to. As long as you were learning, up to you what age to start." Indeed, church membership was not an issue in the English schools. Mattis, who started his education at age five, said:

> I went to various English schools. I went to one in Limón where the Hotel Puerto is located now. I went there for a couple of years. Later, in Siquirres I attended the English school of the Methodist Church. And my last primary [school] formation was in the Adventist School of Siquirres.

"Anybody could attend the English schools," Sawyers-Royal assured. Children did not have to be Black or to speak English to be students in the English schools, either. Sawyers-Royal described the situation of the schools in the Lines:

> In those days, the Lines were not populated with white people. It was Black people... One or two white people(attended the English school) but they didn't think of that (being Black) because there was no Spanish school... You had to live in Limón [to attend the Spanish school]. And there, they had the boys and the girls' schools (Spanish or public schools).

Therefore, the only requirement to attend the English schools was a small weekly fee or payment in accordance with the school level of the child. In Teacher Thomas' school, according to Thomas, parents paid a 25¢ (Costa Rican currency, the colon) fee, for the beginners, 50¢ for the following level, 75¢ for the next level and so on (in the 1930s one US dollar was equivalent to 5.50 colons [Casey, 1979, p. 117]. Other participants talked about similar fees in the schools they attended. Not all families could afford the school fees; some parents had problems and usually sent notes to the teacher asking for an extended payment period. Considering the minimum daily wage of the banana company workers, of 6.00 colons (Casey, 1979, p. 114), most parents could afford English schooling for their children. Yet, not all parents worked for the UFCO.

Most participants pointed out the financial and/or resource support provided by the UFCO and churches to some of these schools. However, others depended on the community for school fees and gifts. For instance, Sawyers-Royal said that her father, in the Estrella Line, received a grant from the UFCO; thus, he did not charge his students a fee. Other schools worked under the auspices of a church denomination, but the auspices referred to the occupancy or the rent of the parish hall of the particular church; no financial support was involved. In fact, teachers in the church related English schools were not paid by the church; their salary came from the fees of their students. Furthermore, some former students stated that schools were sources of income for churches because they offered a service to parishioners. Thomas explained this situation:

> The English school was set under the auspices of the church, but it was not financed by the church, instead, it [the school] worked because it used the parish hall. The collaboration was like saying patronage... because say, if the school was at the Saint Mark's Church, they [members of the church] preferred that school...But that does not mean necessarily that the church paid all the school expenses. On the contrary, instead, the teacher rented the parish hall and gave contribution to the church... It was the reverse. And from the fee that students paid, the teacher paid for the school expenses and others.

Anglin emphasized that, in Limón, the English schools were a source of income for the church because if the teachers were good, more people would come to the church and contributed to it. Other participants wondered how the schools could survive on such a small fee for almost six decades. Mattis,

for example, recalled that teachers in his school days had a mystical desire for teaching. In other words, they taught not to earn money but so that children in the community could learn how to read and write:

> The income and expenses (of the English schools) were so small that I do not understand how the schools survived. The expenses were not big. The hall belonged to the church, so were the benches. The teacher sometimes lived at the back of the hall. He cooked for himself, sometimes. The teacher did not have a salary. The church did not pay him anything because the church lived on charity. The work of the teacher was charity more than anything else, and he lived basically on the charity of the families: *pejibayes* (a tropical fruit from a palm tree), fruit, and chickens, like in the public schools of the country side. It was mysticism (that moved teachers to work), because it consisted in providing education to people who did not know how to read and write. Because many of these schools (English school) were in communities where there was not a Spanish school.

Curriculum and instruction

The curriculum of the English schools in Limón was an extended branch of the curriculum established for the British colonies, specifically Jamaica, in the late nineteenth century. According to King (1989), schools in the colonies were expected to promote the Anglicization and assimilation of the Black population to assist their transformation into instruments of production. Also, the formation of feelings of fondness for the British royal family and of loyalty to the British Empire were two important objectives. Furthermore, King explained that the governors of the colonies were responsible for diffusing a grammatical knowledge of the English language as the most important agent of civilization for the Black people in the colonies. "The Blacks had to be made into English language speakers if English institutions and English culture were to survive and thrive in the colonies" (p. 5).

Because the missionaries were also interested in promoting "social order, industry and happiness" in the colonies, and desired to mold "the character and habits" of the younger generations of Blacks, they cooperated with the British government to teach the children the principles and duties of Christianity and citizenship (King, 1987, p. 5). Therefore, the English language came to rule the curriculum of Jamaican elementary schools in the nineteenth century, along with basic elements of arithmetic and studies of the Holy Scriptures. The influence of the Jamaican school system was evident in the English schools in Costa Rica. In fact, all of the participants of this study agreed that the curriculum was textbook bound and lessons were taught following step by step the subject matter of the textbooks that the teachers received from the Jamaican schools. However, some teachers enriched the curriculum with other subjects that they commanded well, such as music, carpentry, knitting, embroidery, etc. Friday was devoted entirely to Bible studies and to reflection on moral fables contained in the reading textbooks.

What was taught

As stated, the main objectives of the English schools were to teach reading, writing, and arithmetic, moral and Christian principles. The curriculum was based on the contents of the textbooks. Furthermore, former students in these schools talked of a uniform curriculum

because any student could attend any English school if they possessed the required textbooks. The reading selections of the textbooks contained a variety of topics: history, geography, literature, science. A. Henry briefly described the curriculum: "The teacher had books to teach. If it were mathematics, he had his math book, when it was Bible, he had a Bible lesson. There was time for everything because they [the teachers] had books for all those things." In the same manner, Mattis, explained:

> There was not a refined curriculum, but it was based on the readings of the textbooks; [the readings] measured the learning with different levels of difficulty according to the advancement of the pupil.

Mattis recalled that the basic curriculum included British history and geography; some information on the Caribbean Islands was noted as well.

> It was British history, their governmental system, their political organization, and that the Queen..., you see, that the Prime Minister. Also, it was about the celebrations that they had in the Caribbean Islands. The last thing they taught was Costa Rican history and geography. In geography you needed to know "What's a lake? What's a river? What's a mountain? What's...?

The learning process was based on memorization. Students were required to memorize not only the multiplication tables, but meanings of words, spelling, poems, and psalms. A. Henry remembered his learning:

> Memorization [was the way to learn]. You had to memorize specially spelling. We had a lot of dictation, you memorized rapid addition, certain recitations that they give you. End of the week you have to recite something without looking at your papers. You recite for the parents in certain occasions in family meetings.

Mrs. Barton explained that in her school days, students always had something to memorize as homework:

> We had homework everyday. You had arithmetic, sometimes they give you something to study to memorize, maybe something about hygiene, or about (anything)... In those days you had to memorize things to repeat in school.

Most participants remembered having a specific day for Bible studies. For most of them that day was Friday; for others, like Gayle, it was Thursday. Gayle recalled:

> Every Thursday morning we had Bible studies, not religion. It is not related to one denomination. Learn how to read the Bible. Every day we have everything, except Thursday when we have Bible studies. You had singing, also, but when it comes to singing I'm not there [meaning she disliked singing].

Sawyers explained that Bible studies in her school were on Friday. She especially liked Bible studies because teachers taught proverbs in the context of fables or short stories that she has never forgotten. Sawyers defined proverbs as the philosophy of life, very important to guide people. She said that every family in Limón had their favorite proverbs. Some of her family's favorite proverbs were:

> You have to be a good girl.
>
> You die before you run away.
>
> I'd rather carry flowers at your grave before I see you in jail.
>
> Abide by the law.

Hence, every Friday, Sawyers emphasized: "We sang all the names of the books of the Bible; therefore, even

the small children learned them well from listening to this singing every Friday. The same thing happened with the (multiplication) tables (students sang the multiplication tables)." Also, students cleaned and dusted the school room every Friday. Moral principles were taught along with Bible studies. Thomas explained that the books had some readings that ended with a brief moral observation. She remembers that her father made this class very active because students discussed their opinions on the stories and he, the teacher, extended the moral principle to every day life.

Evaluation and promotion

The learning process in the English schools was based on memorization. Teachers required students to memorize multiplication tables, meanings of words, spelling, poems, and psalms. Pupils could advance to another level according to their memory capabilities. Children who were able to read fluently and who memorized their word meanings and spellings were advanced to the following lesson. The students who completed their book lessons well were promoted to the following book which corresponded to a higher level. The teacher evaluated constantly by asking students to recite the multiplication tables, psalms, poems, or by dictating excerpts of the particular reading of the day, or by conducting some kind of spelling bee. Most students took no written exams as are given in schools today. Nevertheless, teachers checked class and home work on a daily basis and this evaluation was the criteria for promotion.

Teaching procedures

The daily routine of the English schools started with a prayer or the recitation of psalms, especially Psalm 23, by all the students of the school. After the prayer, the whole school recited the multiplication tables. Students sat in groups according to their level. While the teacher checked the homework of the older students, the other students reviewed their lessons until the teacher called their names. Once the older students had their homework checked, they assisted the younger students with their homework.

Each group worked independently and after homework checking, the students started their new lesson. Once the groups read the lesson, the teacher called them for oral reading. Each member of the group read one paragraph aloud to the teacher. Then, students prepared for spelling, and a similar procedure was practiced. A specific process was followed for oral reading and spelling. Mrs. Barton described this procedure in detail:

> If you didn't learn it (the reading), you go to the foot of the class. For instance, suppose there were 6 or 7 of us in our room, not in the beginners, you had these (numbered) paragraphs. If six of you are in the class (students stood in line), you read one, the next two, the next one three, you go down the line. And the same thing with the spelling. Who didn't know passed to the foot of the line. In that way, children don't want to go to the foot of the line, so (they) always tried to memorize it well. There was always competition. So you always tried to be the best.

Teachers made time for everything, according to the former students. However, reading and spelling were part of the daily routine. Composition, dictation and transcriptions were often

practiced. Gayle describes her daily routine as follows:

> You have to read most of the days. Then you have spelling. Often you had dictation, transcriptions, and sometimes you have to make compositions. The book had some texts that you have to transcribe or copy. Sometimes. But most of the time you have dictation. In those days they used slates and a special pencil to write with, and a sponge to erase. When you had dictation, you were back to back with your classmates so that you could not see your classmate's work. You started at nine in the morning, and you would come out at 11, sometimes you return 1:30 to around 3:30, so you had a mixture of everything. A little geography, a little natural science, arithmetic. They teach you to write letters; everything,... grammar, the basic parts of speech...

In those days, former students remembered, students must do their class and home work well If students failed to bring homework, erred while checking their work, or misbehaved, the teacher punished them.

Punishment

Indeed, one of the practices of the English schools at the beginning of this century was corporal punishment. (Punishment was eliminated when the English schools were Americanized, around the 1960s). Teachers usually kept a belt at school. They used the belt when students did not behave properly or did not do their assignments. Some teachers called this belt "Dr. Do Good." Teachers scared their students with "Dr. Do Good." Thomas said that her father used to tell his students that "Dr. Do Good" took a bath every night to be nice and flexible the next morning. Indeed, Teacher Thomas put his belt in water so that it would not crack. Participants argue whether "Dr. Do Good" was effective at the time of the English schools. Some believed that "education with blood permeates".

Sawyers reflected that students had to behave well because it was a matter of "do or die." Teachers had such strength and power that they punished with the approval of parents. The power of the teachers was such that children knew that after school, if they had been punished, their parents would punish them again. The school was, to many of the participants, a continuation of home; and the home continued the school. "Whatever the teacher said was sacred", said Thomas. Symes and Cunningham remembered that students in their school received the same number of strikes as the number of mistakes they made. White remembered that at her school in Cahuita students kneeled down, had no recess, or were struck on their hands depending on the type of fault.

Despite the fact that former students now disagree with the practice of corporal punishment, most of them believed that punishment had positive effects. Taylor argued: "We (students) did not resent that (punishment) nor did our parents. I believe that that (punishment)contributed to our formation.)" Punishment and the trust in teachers were very important in those days. As a matter of fact, H. Henry said that Major Lynch was so trusted that parents deposited their confidence in him to help their children become better persons. She explained:

> He could correct many students who, as we say popularly, were death (meaning very mischievous and disrespectful). Their mothers brought those kids to him and told him "See what you can do for this boy." And the mothers were unmindful after that (they trusted Major Lynch that much). But he could correct that boy with a belt and everything else. Later, those same boys came out of school as well formed men. Many of us are

persons of good work... because of the motivation that he gave us.

Classroom management at school was controlled by the threat of "Dr. Do Good." Nevertheless, some teachers, such as Major Lynch, not only punished students when they did not follow the desired behavior, but also rewarded them when they accomplished the expected conduct. H. Henry said that

> There were also prizes for those who did outstanding work, because when you had to do spelling you had to be in line… The one [student] who remained the first in the line was because he did not miss a single word spelling. This awarded you a small prize, like a story book or something that stimulated you to continue your good work.

Despite the negative influence of "Dr. Do Good," many positive things were achieved in school, from responsibility with assignments and conduct, to the achievement of organized social events where all students and their families participated. These social events included graduation ceremonies (although not all English schools had graduation celebrations), concerts, and rallies. These latter activities will be discussed as extra curricular activities.

Graduation ceremony and diploma

Although some participants remembered having no graduation ceremony or receiving a diploma, others remembered their graduation ceremony as a solemn event. For instance, Anglin, Mrs. Barton, A. Henry, Mattis, Messam, and Symes, did not remember a graduation ceremony. They reported that students reached sixth grade and went on to work or continue with higher studies, such as typing. In the words of Mattis: "...when you finished, you finished. There was no graduation ceremony and no diploma, either." For Anglin, diplomas were not very important in his days; as a matter of fact, he said "[It was] more important what you know than certificates." Despite the fact that students did not receive a diploma, if students were good, they did receive a recommendation letter for a job from the teacher, Symes remembered. Graduation was mainly celebrated at the schools associated with church. Former students who attended the corridor schools said that there was no graduation celebration at their schools.

However, Sawyers remembered that a graduation ceremony was one of the most important events in the life of a Black person. She recalled that there were three sacred moments in Black tradition: a wedding, a funeral, and a school graduation. These events were celebrated with luxury and elegance. Graduation implied hope, achievement, and success. Not everybody would be in a graduation ceremony and this event must be celebrated with "bombos (large drums) y platillos (cymbals)."

Sawyers recalled that the ceremonies of her English school were grandiose even elegant. People dressed with hats and gloves for the occasion. In her school today, the Saint Mark's School, graduation ceremonies are still elegant and very formal. The evening before graduation, a great party and dance is organized in honor of the graduates. She explained that initially when the Saint Mark's School reopened in 1972, parents resisted that kind of celebration because it was very expensive; but, little by little, parents have come to understand that their children deserve to celebrate their

graduation because this moment is one of the most important in their lives, however. The resistance may have come from non-Black parents who were not accustomed to Afro-Caribbean traditions.

On the other hand, H. Henry commented that in the Salvation Army English School, students received report cards, a graduation certificate, and had a graduation ceremony. However, everything was simple and humble. The report cards and the graduation certificate were made by the teachers. Parents attended the graduation ceremony, though no party was offered at school.

Extra curricular activities

Former students, especially those who attended schools related to churches, remembered that their English schools organized certain events to raise funds, usually for church services. These activities were fun for the students and formed part of the recreational events for the family. The students prepared a play or a recitation, or a musical to entertain an audience. In those days, according to some of the former students, no theaters or cinemas existed in Limón; therefore, people in the community eagerly bought tickets to attend the performances. These performances were usually of two kinds, concerts and rallies.

Concerts were a sort of talent show in which students performed to the best of their skills. If a student could recite, for example, the longest and most difficult poem, she/he received a money award from the people in the audience. In this kind of activity, both the institution and the student benefited. For this reason, parents collaborated heartily to prepare a their children the best possible. Sawyers explained:

> ...for the concert you prepared and prepared and you sold a ticket. Maybe in ten colons. The night of the concert, everybody went to the concert to see you. And many people played the piano and it always started with a "Welcome... Good night ladies and gentlemen... What a lovely way to spend an evening." (Greeting by the host of the event) I can never forget that… I remember that (concerts) very well because life for us was so, so...(poor), Deyanira, you do not have any idea... when my Dad died, well... this (situation) was worse... poor my mom... then, she (her mother) rehearsed us very, very, very well, because if you did it (your performance) well, people gave you money. Then, many times that money would buy breakfast for the next day. In those days, concerts were frequent.

Concert performances took place on the stage platform of the school hall. The tables were removed and the benches organized such that attendants could sit comfortably. The piano was always on the stage, and a curtain was lifted or dropped for each new scene or performance. Teachers and parents prepared the children. Teachers sent the recitation home and parents helped the children memorize it well. Teachers however, always gave the final touch for the presentation. When a play was organized, teachers were in charge of everything; and the children rehearsed at school. Sawyers-Royal remembered that concerts were "a kind of satisfaction for the parents to see their children participating… When Joyce was five years old, she sang nicely (in one of the school concerts), and somebody walked up and gave her five colons. That was a lot of money at the time."

Rallies called a different kind of artistic performance; they were like academic contests. Students completed research on a specific topic, and were ready to defend their topic with the best

argument in order to win. Or they prepared some kind of original performance to convey the importance of certain elements or individuals (e.g., teacher and doctor, salt and water, or some Bible story character, such as Ruth). The rallies received names related with the topics treated, and the students had to be creative to win the applause of the people. Tickets were sold to collect funds. These funds were mostly for the church but some of the money went to the school. Students could also receive money from the audience if their performance was outstanding. Sawyers explained:

> Once they organized a rally for the twelve months of the year. Each person represented one month of the year. But when you presented your month, the people who supported you applauded and cheered you... You had to dramatize things of the month; you had to write poems of that month; you had to make rhymes. You had to support and document your month. So, you had to produce poems in English, or a cheer, or a song of that month in English. The more creative and documented (the performance), the more money people gave you. Therefore, the people (students) who commanded English better earned the most money. But the objective of all was to collect funds, right?… Each person had her/his individual presentation. After each performance, they collected money. So, depending on your presentation you gained (money)… But (for that) you had to be well documented.

Sawyers-Royal related that generally big concerts or rallies concluded the year's studies, usually for "the school children close-up." She remembered that music was played on an organ for drama (plays). Sawyers-Royal sang parts of a play she particularly remembered. She summarized the plot of one play:

> I remember one drama about an old lady who had an arm-chair and she left it to her grandson (when she died), and everybody was laughing at him because he didn't get anything. I remember one part that said: (sang the part in which the boy (John) complained about inheriting an old damn chair). But after that the story went on to say that when he took the chair home and searched the chair, there were £ 500 hidden in the chair (sang again about the old chair and John's treasure).

Similarly, Mattis relived special activities to collect money for the church and the English school.

> Because they (English schools) were an extension of Sunday schools, they (school and church) organized recreation activities, such as the famous one called "Harvest." It was a day when the church received donations because it (the donation) represented the productivity of my efforts during the year. It could be some cacao that was brought to be sold the following Monday, and there were great activities. Then, they had the famous "Moon Light Hope." This was a full moon night and people gathered on the back yard of the church and they sold things to eat; and they danced. These were the activities of recreation of the family which were organized around school and church. They were family activities.

Although concerts and rallies were not necessarily on religious topics, celebrations of religious festivities brought the school children and the church together as well. These activities were not always for fund-raising, for instance, to celebrate Easter, the teacher organized a small Easter play. Sawyers argued that such special activities were an integral part of the curriculum of the English schools operated by churches the activities described were joyful experiences for the students that helped both. Neither the corridor schools nor the schools of the UNIA had these types of activities. As Sawyers explained:

> I would say that this [the activities] was part of the curriculum because you learned at the same time that you enjoyed yourself. It was an experience (for the students). This (the organization of the activities) was born in the school. The activities were born in the school. The funds were for either the church or the school. The school and the church sometimes worked together; other times, the school or the church carried

out the activities apart. Because they were parochial schools, the church board did the accounting of the activities... but the money was to be spent on the school (or the church if it was the case). I do not remember that the corridor schools had this kind of activities.

Teachers had the most input in these activities. They chose the topics and, together with parents, trained the students to do their best. In addition, teachers displayed their musical skills or transferred their declamation aptitudes upon the students to add beauty and enthusiasm to the events.

Teacher preparation

Some former students argued that the teachers were well prepared and even certified. Others said that teachers were those people who had a basic education and decided to teach what they knew. For instance, A. Henry said:

Teachers who came from Jamaica or from Barbados came prepared as teachers. The most salient thing I remember is that they were brilliant teachers, very strict, and really give you the things that you should really know. Very strict teachers.

Thomas explained that her dad, Teacher Thomas, was a well educated person who studied in Jamaica and in Panama. In Jamaica, he obtained his language skills in English, and in Panama, he acquired clerical skills. Despite his education, Thomas did not mention if her dad earned a teacher certificate in Jamaica. However, she emphasized her father's teaching qualities and desire to learn.

Since he arrived (in Limón) he opened his small school. But first, he started tutoring at home, and he also visited their (students) houses. Later, he bought a typewriter and began teaching typing and short hand. And everything was in English. He did not know Spanish. He learned it later, in Panama and here. But it was not a fluid Spanish, but you could understand it; and most important, he wrote in Spanish very well. He became a bilingual adult. But a bilingual with no school. He learned it (Spanish) by himself.

In the same way, H. Henry described Major Lynch's teaching qualities and experience; he had taught in Panama for many years.

Academically speaking he was very well prepared because he studied in the best schools of Jamaica… When he came here, he already had a long trajectory in the Salvation Army. He already had his rank as Major. He came from Panama where he had his last appointment. We reached the apex of the Salvation Army (in Limón) with him. From 1939 to 1956, approximately, he was renowned because almost all of us who were in his English school are now professionals, women as well as men.

On the other hand, Mattis argued that:

The thing varied. Sometimes within a community there were some people who were advanced in their knowledge of the language (they could teach). In some cases, teachers came, some famous that came from the Caribbean. I think in those days nobody could forget Major Lynch, a famous teacher, not only as a teacher but as a musician. Everybody remembers the amount of musicians that he produced… Limón can never forget Teacher Thomas, either. I was not a student of either teacher, but Teacher Thomas was perhaps one of the first to open a typing school in Limón. In El Cairo, the Old Lines, no one can forget the famous Teacher Grant.

Messam remembered that the teachers of her school days were educated but not very well prepared as teachers. They did not have teacher certification, but were able to read and write:

Teachers in those days were prepared persons, but not very [well] prepared: they did not have a diploma [teacher certification]. They knew how to read and write, but were not certified. They were capable of doing the job, but were not certified.

The most salient aspect of the teachers of those days, participants

recalled, was that parents and students respected teachers very much and that teachers enjoyed not only their respect but their authority over the school matters and socialization of the pupils. Taylor recalled that she learned how to behave at the table, and how to use the eating utensils properly in the English school. Many of the participants remembered the emphasis of the English school on punctuality and responsibility with assignments. Once again, the practice of corporal punishment meant a great deal in the socialization of children in the English schools.

Viewpoints on the English schools

Several similarities between the English schools and the elementary schools designed for the British colonies and the children of the poor in the nineteenth century in Great Britain can be seen. Importantly, both systems of schools emphasized reading, writing, and solving basic arithmetic problems, as well as the acquisition of desirable qualities for responsible, loyal citizens of the Crown. (Gosden, 1969; King, 1989)

The general structure and organization of the English schools in Costa Rica were similar, also, to the elementary schools for the poor in England during the nineteenth century. The British schools were structured on the monitorial system or Lancastrian: system because this system was found to be an inexpensive means to instruct the masses. Some of the characteristics of the monitorial system existed in the English schools in Costa Rica. For example, they were one-room schools, and were teacher-centered with the advanced, well-behaved students assisting the teacher. For instance, H. Henry remembered that in the Salvation Army school, the outstanding advanced female students took care of the little children in pre-school. She said: "Generally, the outstanding female students of the advanced grades assisted the children of pre-school". Furthermore, part of the daily routines in the English schools examined the advanced students first while the beginners engaged in a quiet activity (e.g., listened, reviewed, or did work from the blackboard). After this evaluation, the advanced students helped the beginners. Afterwards, the teachers examined the beginners and the cycle began again.

Another characteristic of the Lancastrian system practiced in the English schools in Costa Rica was the practice of competition by way of rewards and punishment. For example, in the Lancastrian system:

> Every boy is placed next to one who can do as well or better than himself: his business is to excel [beyond] him, in which case, he takes precedence of [over] him. In reading, every reading division have [has] the numbers, 1, 2, 3, &c. to 12, suspended from their buttons. If the boy who wears number 12, excels the boy who wears number 11, he takes his place and number; in exchange for which the other goes down to the place and number of 12. (Gosden, 1969, p. 6)

Similar procedures were described by Mrs. Barton in the English schools. She related:

> If you didn't learn it [the reading], you go to the foot of the class. For instance, suppose there were 6 or 7 of us in our room, … you had these [numbered] paragraphs. If six of you are in the class [students stood in line], you read one, the next two, the next one three, you go down the line. And the same thing with the spelling. Who didn't know passed to the foot of the line. In that way, children don't want to go to the foot of the line, so [they] always tried to memorize it well. There was always competition. So you always tried to be the best.

Competition was related to being able to memorize some concept or

number; and imitation was an exercise to aid memorization (i.e., by hearing something repeated as many times as the number of students). Indeed, the instruction in the Lancastrian system was based on drill and memorization (Gosden, 1969) and these procedures of learning dominated the English schools in Costa Rica. All of the former students remembered having to memorize meanings, spellings, the multiplication tables, psalms, songs, and other matters.

In many cases, if memory failed, the teachers punished the student. Although Gosden (1969) does not mention if corporal punishment was practiced in the Lancastrian system, he described the type of corporal punishment used in the British elementary schools. The offenses for which students were punished in British schools included: "talking or laughing in school, gross inattention or disobedience, coming late frequently, playing truant, telling lies, bad language." (Gosden, 1969, p. 19)

Likewise, in the English schools in Costa Rica, students were punished for these transgressions and, also, for failing to accomplish school work. Canes, sticks, ferules or rulers, straps or taws (i.e., straps with three, five or seven tails), and birch rods were the instruments of punishment in the schools in England (Gosden, 1969, p. 19). According to Messam, Major Lynch used a cane and most of the other teachers of the English schools in Costa Rica used a belt or a strap. Thomas illustrated this event by talking about "Dr. Do Good" which referred to the belt used in her father's school.

The descriptions relate to the general organization of the schools in both the British elementary schools and in the English schools in Costa Rica. As noted earlier, the Lancastrian system was considered to be inexpensive (Gosden, 1969; Chadwick, 1997). For this reason, it was adapted to the British elementary schools for the poor and was extended to the elementary schools of the colonies as well as Costa Rica.

The aims and the curriculum of elementary education in British elementary schools and in the colonies, specifically in Jamaica were also similar. Public education in England was directed to the children of poor people; therefore, the expectations were limited since they would become the workforce of the country (e.g., Gosden, 1969; Jensen & Knight, 1981; Chadwick, 1997). The limits of elementary education in England and, thus, in the colonies, were clearly stated by the Duke of Newcastle in his recommendation supporting a national system of schools in 1861:

> With a view to the real interests of the peasant boy… we must make up our minds to see the last of him, as far as the day school is concerned, at 10 or 11. Once he can 'read a common narrative', 'knows enough of ciphering to make out or test the correctness of a common shop bill', and has sufficient recollection of Holy Scriptures and catechism 'to know what are the duties required of him towards his Maker and his fellow man', he will have had sufficient elementary education. (Chadwick, 1997, p. 9)

Furthermore, in this extract from the Duke's report, he outlined the aims of public elementary education in England, and in so doing, the Duke's words seemed to outline the curriculum of the English schools in Costa Rica, which came directly from the British colonies in the West Indies, particularly Jamaica. This curriculum, emphasized the 3Rs, Bible studies, and morality.

The emphasis on morality was the result of the influence of church groups who sought to evangelize the children of

the poor in England in the eighteenth century. Church groups established schools in poor neighborhoods to teach rudimentary principles to working children on Sundays when they were not working. As a result, the Sunday School movement spread. Sunday schools were the first to promote the idea of public education in the second half of the eighteenth century (Chadwick, 1997; Gosden, 1969; Jensen & Knight, 1981). The colonial leaders thought that moral education should be "centered around teaching youth to serve man, his country, and in so doing he could serve God" (Jensen & Knight, 1981, p. 77). Former students of Costa Rican English schools repeatedly mentioned the schools' emphasis on moral codes. The morals were mostly contained in fables, short stories, and poems presented in the reading books. The readings transmitted messages of obedience to authority and elders, respect to others, love of work, humbleness, and patience of being poor among many others.

The school curriculum of the English schools in Costa Rica reflected the curriculum of the Jamaican schools. It contained subjects that promoted manual training, along with literacy and moral qualities. The school subjects in Jamaica were grouped in three categories: chief subjects, obligatory subjects, and secondary subjects. The emphasis was on the 3Rs: reading and recitation; writing, composition, and grammar; arithmetic. The obligatory subject was elementary science, with special reference to agriculture. The secondary subjects included scripture and morals; drawing and manual occupations; geography (with incidental history); singing (King, 1989, p. 229). Former students of the English schools did not mention this formal classification of subjects, but their descriptions generally matched the Jamaican situation.

Reading, without doubt, was the most important subject for the Jamaican schools and, as well, for the English schools in Costa Rica. After completing the eight years of elementary school in both systems, students were expected to read from a standard 6 reader "selections from Shakespeare, Tennyson, Longfellow and other standard authors, or from a current newspaper, the *Journal of Agriculture*, or the second *Tropical Reader*" (King, 1989, p. 237). Students should also be able to paraphrase simple poetical passages, to write business letters, to parse and analyze complex sentences. In arithmetic, students were expected to do exercises involving fractions, percentages, interest, and compound proportion. (King, 1989)

In science, pupils were expected to know the principal laws of health, the composition of air, the structure of the human body and the functions of its main organs, the common objects of sowing (e.g., seeds, fertilizers) and the best conditions for growing the food plants (e.g., grains, fruits, nuts, roots) required by Jamaican crops, the care of tools, and the preparation of fruit and other products for the market. Needless to say, elementary science with special reference to agriculture was intended to benefit agricultural production and marketing in Jamaica (King, 1989). Former students in the English schools never mentioned agriculture as part of their schooling, perhaps because the intentions of the school providers were aimed mainly at literacy and at the pursuit of clerical jobs (e.g., at the railroad company and the UFC), or to open some kind of home industry

through teaching manual work such as carpentry for boys and needlework for girls. Nonetheless, the *Royal Readers* N°5 contains a section on plants and their uses (pp. 263-284).

Children in Jamaica were taught the main events of the Old Testament, the lives of the apostles, and the life and teaching of Christ. Morals were taught in connection with the children's school life and through the daily life of the teacher. The list of moral qualities included obedience to persons in authority, love of country, patriotism, the duties of the citizen, fidelity to official trust, industry, temperance, honesty, and gentleness. These qualities were desirable of successful agriculturists and loyalists to the Crown. (King, 1989) Bible Studies, as referred by the English schools' former students, were indeed part of theirs in Costa Rica; however, they seemed to regard morals as more important than Bible Studies at school. Perhaps, participants considered the teaching of the Holy Scriptures as the duty of the church provided during Sunday school. These former students appeared to remember fables and stories with moral content as an important part of the curriculum of the Costa Rican English schools.

Teachers in Jamaica were prepared to teach the colonial curriculum, together with values and behaviors desired of British subjects to the Crown. Jamaica had set up teacher preparation colleges since 1870. The formation of teachers was very strict because "it was obviously hoped that habits of regularity of work and industriousness would be developed through the detailed time table requirements that controlled the daily life of students" (Turner,1987, p. 63). This idea reminds of "[t]he social theory that guided the development of social efficiency educators" (Kliebard, 1987, p. 90) applied by Edward A. Ross's[2] followers, and the factory efficiency model of John Franklin Bobbitt, who applied Frederick W. Taylor's principles of scientific management to education at the beginning of the twentieth century. The framework of this model, was based on education according to need, in other words, "education according to predicted social and vocational role" (Kliebard, 1987, p. 99). Student-teachers in Jamaica were instructed to teach the main subjects and, in addition, they were advised "to encourage habits of punctuality, of good manners, of tidiness, and to impress on the children the importance of cheerful obedience to duty, of respect for others and of honor" (Turner, 1987, p. 67).

The teaching of habits, values, and morals is part of the socialization process that the British schools intended to instill in the children of the poor and of the colonies. Rich (1992) explained that socialization and education were two different processes, though both processes may be included in schools. Socialization instilled roles which helped preserve social institutions. Education was designed to provide requisite knowledge and reflective abilities for the rich who controlled those institutions. Clearly, the curriculum of the English schools was more geared to preserve the social institutions and develop love for labor. Indeed, the emphasis of schooling was on teaching children to read, write, and have some knowledge of arithmetic, plus develop the necessary skills for performing useful jobs for industrial interests, rather than develop reflective abilities and decision-making skills. In

order to explain this socialization aspect of the English schools in Costa Rica, a look at the goals of the British-Jamaican elementary education in the nineteenth century is necessary. King (1989) summarized these goals as follows:

> … the elementary school's function was to prepare the black masses for their role in society –to show the children of the working class "how they may help to develop useful industrial pursuits and to foster the agricultural interests of the Island. (p. 224)

King's statement also applies to the English schools in Costa Rica almost entirely. The main interest of the Afro-Caribbean immigrants in Costa Rica, however, was directed to the pursuit of clerical and lower management jobs in both the railroad and the banana industries, rather than agriculture itself. First generation immigrants learned agricultural practices because in Jamaica they performed agricultural duties, but in Costa Rica, the opportunities for better jobs were foreseen from the beginning.

Therefore, the children of Afro-Caribbean immigrants at the English schools obtained an education which prepared them for the job market of the moment, the railroad and the banana industries. As a matter of fact, these former students remembered that the "good students" who completed the eight years of primary school received a letter of recommendation for one of these positions.

Considering the agricultural training of the first Afro-Caribbean immigrants to Costa Rica, and adding their command of the English language, and literacy, Minor Keith's decision to import labor from the Caribbean islands may be understood easily. Afro-Caribbean labor was desirably trained to perform the duties that the railroad and the United Fruit Company needed. In addition, "West Indians were docile workers who did not engage in strikes or work stoppages" (Bourgois, 1989, p. 52). This statement was evident, in as much as Jamaican employees worked for several months without pay in order to finish constructing the railroad when economic crisis stroke the project. Keith was supported by the Black workers because he was able to pass for British (Meléndez & Duncan, 1972, p. 77).

The behavior of these immigrants who faced work and hardship may well have derived from their schooling in Jamaica where the main objective was to socialize the children of the working class, to instill qualities considered desirable of successful agriculturists. These qualities included obedience to persons in authority, love of country, patriotism, fidelity to official trust, industry, temperance, honesty, and gentleness (King, 1989).

Another aspect of the socialization of the English schools in Costa Rica is the relationship that church, home and school developed. These three institutions are often the chief agents of the socialization process (Rich, 1992). Former students of the English schools remembered how much they were bound to these institutions. For example, Sawyers pointed out

> See… in the Black family there was a tripod. The tripod was: church, family and school. And the three preached the same thing. And while they practiced the same thing, we were different.

The tripod preached values and behavior norms. Respect, obedience, honesty were among the values preached at home, church, and school. Sawyers

added that while the tripod worked in coordination, Blacks were never a social problem in Costa Rica. She ended her remark by observing: "Now we are (a social problem) because Black people are away from those teachings. . . . Before, Blacks were not jail meat". To think of the socialization process of the English schools as an unfortunate aspect is an error. On the contrary, thanks to this learning, along with literacy, Afro-Caribbean descendants became comfortable adjusting to the public schools, and excelled in secondary and higher education.

Notes

1. First Andrew Bell and then Joseph Lancaster developed the so-called monitorial system or Lancastrian system, whereby a teacher used his pupils to teach one another. The use of children to teach other children was not new, but Bell and especially Lancaster took the approach and developed it into a systematic plan of education. From 200 to 1,000 children were gathered in one room and seated in rows, usually of 10 pupils each. An adult teacher taught the monitors, and then each monitor taught his row of pupils the lesson in reading, writing, and arithmetic. The school activity was directed with military precision and the emphasis was on drill and memorization. (Gosden, 1969; Jensen & Knight, 1981; Chadwick, 1997)

2. Edward A. Ross was an American sociologist whose ideas strongly influenced the work of educational sociologists as David Snedden, Ross Finney, Charles Ellwood and Charles C. Peters. In Ross's view the school was a better institution than the home to instill "the habit of obedience to an external law" (in Kliebard, 1987, p. 93), and the certification of teachers was a matter of state control. (Kliebard, 1987)

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