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T HESIS STATEMENT

GREAT HOUSES ARE AN INTEGRAL PART OF JAMAICA'S RICH CULTURAL HERITAGE AND DESPITE THEIR NEGATIVE BACKGROUND, THEY ARE A MAJOR CONTRIBUTOR TO THE COUNTRY'S ECONOMIC GROWTH

INTRODUCTION

JAMAICA The name may conjure many things to many people but one of the main things this piece of paradise is known for is its tourism product. Traditionally, marketing strategy promoted the island as a destination for “sun, sea and sand”. However, because of the diverse reasons why people now travel, our advertisements have been modified to showcase the country as a destination where visitors will experience eco, cultural and heritage tourism. The latter will be the main focus of this case study.

A major aspect of heritage tourism is the buildings that are viewed as heritage sites. These evolved from our rich, multi-cultural and multi-racial past. One such type of building is the great house. There is a multiplicity of these buildings in Jamaica but only a few boast their original splendour and are in use. Several are privately owned properties but some have been made open to the public and offer tours and an insight into the lives and activities of our ancestors to both locals and tourists alike.

However, to many Jamaicans, great houses are to be avoided at all cost especially if it is the famed Rose Hall Great House. It is said that this house is haunted by the ghost of Annie Palmer, the White Witch of Rose Hall and it is not uncommon to hear many a traveler who happen to pass by the Rose Hall main road give hair raising ‘duppy’ stories about sightings of, and encounters

with the Lady of the House.

Rose Hall and other great houses are, to some extent also associated with oppression by the planter class as it was during the period of slavery that they had their heyday. It is for this reason mainly why some persons view them as malevolent entities may be opposed to their preservation. Despite this somewhat myopic view, great houses are inextricably intertwined with the Jamaican heritage and they stand today as an indelible part of our past.

The purpose of this case study therefore, is to investigate the contributions that Great Houses in Jamaica have been making to heritage tourism and the tourism sector on a wider scale. In investigating these contributions, both past and present, the study further seeks to establish the rationale behind the preservation of Great Houses in Jamaica by exploring the contributions they have been making and highlighting some of their features of interest that are well worth their preservation.

Although the Great Houses may stand as material symbols of the grotesque, oppressive experiences of our forefathers, the study aims to establish that Great Houses today represent our rich, vibrant, and colourful history of perseverance, resilience and ambition and that there is much more than a gruesome past that we aim to preserve.

At the end of the study, recommendations will be made on how the operations and functions of Great Houses can be modified to improve and extend the capabilities of their contribution to heritage tourism and further, the tourism sector of Jamaica. Also, the study will show the benefits of Great Houses; their functions and operations in heritage tourism. Finally, a teacher's guide will follow which will share with readers the benefits of using this document in a classroom setting.

THE HISTORY BEHIND GREAT HOUSES IN JAMAICA

Great Houses were the finest private residences in Jamaica. They were perched on salubrious hills and had long, wide balconies. Broad hewn stone steps led to an elegant portico on the main floor that opened onto a series of reception rooms. Magnificent carved mahogany staircases lead from one floor to another, to the bedroom, guest rooms, music rooms, dining rooms and salons. Throughout, were thick mahogany doors, high ornament arches, windows bedded in deep mahogany sills. The furnishings were just exquisite. Derek Walcott, West Indian Nobel Prize Laureate, quoted in Sherlock and Bennett, says Great Houses were resplendent in their beauty because of their “green lawns, broken by low walls of stone dipped in the rivulet”.

Olive Senior in her book **An Encyclopedia of Jamaican Heritage** writes that

The Great House (Plantation House) was the seat of authority on an estate. It was the home of planters, or attorneys who acted for the owner, who may have been absent. The Great House was normally built on an eminence overlooking the sugar cane fields and works, commanding fine views and positioned to catch the breeze. Over time, most of these houses were built in an architectural style

that came to be called the Jamaican Vernacular, with many features adapted to local conditions.

The size and profitability of the property and the wealth of the owner determined the size of the house. These houses were usually two storey buildings with a base of brick, cut stone and mortar. The top floor was usually made of wood.

Variations of this archetype included one-storey buildings constructed of wood, cut stone or Spanish walling or wattle and daub; or two-storey buildings made of brick, wood or cut stone.

The owner's former place of residence, which in many instances was England, was reflected in the architectural style of the Great House. Consequently, Georgian Period (1720-1760) inspired the designs, from which the Jamaican Georgian (1760-1830) evolved. Important architectural features of the Great Houses included wide wrap-around verandahs, jalousies, and sash windows to accommodate the Caribbean climate. Many Great Houses reflected the opulence of the planters; however, when the profits to be gained from the sugar began to decline they found it difficult to maintain them.

FEATURES OF GREAT HOUSES

The Great House architecture mirrors the English mansions of the era. The planters were originally from England and so their houses on the plantation would mimic these domiciles. There were minor modifications to the great houses however, to facilitate the differences in weather and climate of the tropical region. The outer features of the Great Houses will appear to be very similar among them across the island, but the interior designs would differ, considering the varying tastes of the owners and the differences in wealth.

Most Great Houses would have been the home of the English planters, and in the absence of the planter, the attorneys would be left in charge.

Many Great Houses also have a legend or mythical tale attached to it. Rose Hall Great house, for example, has the well-known tale of the famous Annee Palmer (The White Witch of Rose Hall). These stories and legends are extremely fascinating to Jamaicans and even more so, the visitors to the island. This is one of the attractions of the Rose Hall Great House and others that trigger visitors to the Great Houses on the island and also to other activities available.

ACTIVITIES IN THE GREAT HOUSE

Plantation houses were a melting pot of activities for local and transient whites. The more opulent owners operated an “open house” and were quite liberal with their hospitality. Sometimes, even an entire family would be ensconced within the ambits of the Great house for lengthy periods. It is not unusual for the servants to be house guests too. Even the poorest whites would be welcomed.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE GREAT HOUSE

Few grand houses were erected during the first hundred years of British settlement, the planters being more concerned with developing their plantations. An outstanding house of the earliest period was Stokes Hall (now a ruin but occupied up to the 20th century). Although there is no evidence of when Colbeck Castle was built, it too is believed to date from the 17th century. Like other Great Houses of the period, Stokes Hall was fortified, built with square towers at the four corners and loopholes to provide supporting fire escape in case of attack, presumably by pirates or enemy nation invaders from the sea or maroons.

In Olive Senior's *An Encyclopaedia of Jamaican Heritage*, Charles Leslie in the 1730s informs that ‘the buildings are neat

but not fine... the gentlemen's houses are generally built low, of one storey, consisting of five or six handsome apartments, beautifully lined and floored with mahogany.'

Writing 30 years later, Edward Long said it was not unusual to see a plantation 'adorned with a very expensive set of works, of brick or stone, well executed, and the owner residing in a miserable thatch hovel, hastily put together with wattles and plaster. The ruins at Kenilworth are outstanding examples one 'expensive set of works'. Long commented on the vast improvement in residences over the previous 20 years and indeed, by 1755, some Kingston merchants felt confident enough to take a bet to see who could build the finest town house. The one house remaining now of the four built is the 'Headquarters House' and has excellent examples of some common great house features, such as semi-spiral stair case with turned balusters and moulded hand rails.

The most outstanding great houses were built during the 'Golden Age of Sugar', from the middle 18th century to the early 19th century. Existing examples include Rose Hall (restored), Marlborough in Manchester, Good Hope in Trelawny, and Cardiff Hall in St. Ann. The period also saw the construction of the fine public buildings surrounding the Georgian square in Spanish Town.

As the sugar industry declined in the 19th century, few great or grand houses were erected. Two notable exceptions were reflections of new sources of wealth. Devon House in St Andrew was built in 1880 as the residence of George Stiebel who emigrated to South America and made a fortune from gold mining.

Agualta Vale in St. Mary was built in the early 20th century for the Pringle family, a new aristocracy based on wealth derived from the banana trade. Agualta Vale was constructed in 1914 on the foundation of the original great house built c. 1760 by Sir Thomas Hibbert, the same builder of the 'Headquarters House'.

Of reinforced concrete, the new house was said to be representative of the Victorian era, combining successfully the classical grandeur of the Georgian, features of the Jamaican vernacular and the modern conveniences of the industrial age.

THE JAMAICAN VERNACULAR

The era of West Indian prosperity coincided with the Georgian age in England (1720-1850) and the associated architectural style. But though the early buildings were essentially English in character, the traditional forms became modified and a local style developed. In identifying the buildings of 'architectural or historic interest in the British West Indies', Ackworth in 1951 concluded that 'Jamaican

architecture is particularly interesting since from Georgian beginnings it developed a distinct line of its own, so that by 1846 there was to all intents and purposes a Jamaican style, a 'vernacular'.

For the early Great Houses, much of the furniture and some special building materials (including stone, brick and slate) came from Britain, and at a later period pitch pine was imported from North America. Local craftsmen at first copied the imported furniture, modifying them for local conditions and using the superb local woods for tables, chairs, sideboards and beds. The four-poster bed was a favourite, according to Tom Concannon, 'made wide and large for comfortable sleeping under a mosquito net.

Rooms were high and sometimes open to the underside of roof boarding or shingles, thus able to accommodate these vast beds.' A truckle bed under the four posters often accommodated a slave and later a servant, usually a young school girl in attendance of the lady of the house.

Concannon commented that from Georgian-inspired beginnings, architecture in Jamaica, both in the plantation great house and the humbler village building, developed a style of its own from which a recognizable vernacular emerged.

Features such as louver windows, projecting louvered window-cooler and ingenious treatments of pitched singled roofs became

characteristic in town and country. Houses were embellished with simple but decorative fretwork to eaves, bargeboards and balcony railings, which were often adorned with graceful wrought ironwork. With natural disasters and human indifference, much of all of this has inevitably disappeared.

GREAT HOUSES IN ENGLAND and JAMAICA

Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and in the 19th century was renowned for its daffodil and other flowers industry.



*Cotehele House (photo from site
<http://www.cornishlight.co.uk>)*



*Prideaux Place (photo from site
<http://www.cornishlight.co.uk>)*

Cotehele House (NT)Callington One of the least-altered medieval houses in Britain, with a Great Hall and barn, in a secluded wooded estate, with extensive gardens, a watermill and a quay on the banks of the River Tamar. It was the family home of the Edgcumbe for over 500 years. Containing fine tapestries and an imposing Great Hall, the Hall is decorated from mid November in the build up to Christmas. It boasts a valley garden containing many exotic plants, a stone dovecote and medieval stew pond. There are formal garden terraces adjacent to the house. In spring Mrs. Julyan's Garden, planted with varieties of Cornish daffodils is a delight.

Fancy a walk through woodland? Nearby are Cotehele Mill, now restored, and Cotehele Quay alongside the River Tamar. The Quay is home to the Shamrock, a Tamar sailing barge. The Tamar Valley is an

Prideaux Place has been home of the Prideaux-Brune family for approximately 400 years. The present house dates from Elizabethan times. It boasts extensive grounds and a walled garden, all overlooking the Camel Estuary above Padstow. The house is renowned for its collections- porcelain, paintings and fine antique furniture.

Great Houses in England have a much different function from Great Houses in Jamaica. Unlike in England they are not called Great Houses, but most of them just have the name and the words, 'house', 'manor', or castle added to them. Why do we in Jamaica call them Great Houses? Many of these are termed historical sites or buildings and mainly function as museums or libraries.

Over the years reference has been made to many of the islands buildings as being Georgian style architecture. However, are they true Georgian architecture or are they Jamaican Georgian and if it is Jamaican, how do we differentiate?

The Georgian style came about in England between 1714 and 1811 when the four kings named George reigned successively.

The true Georgian House was very formal and symmetrical. Usually two storeys high, the front entrance was exactly centered on the front elevation and the windows were balanced on either side. The windows on the first floor were placed directly above those on the ground floor.

On the interior, it was typical for a Georgian building to have a large hall through the centre of the building with the stairs to the second floor directly in front of the main entrance.

Many of the Georgia buildings in Jamaica, however, display features that are unique to Jamaica or the Caribbean. Examples of such features are verandahs, fretwork and detailed bargeboards. This is a creolised form of the Georgian style Architecture which has become somewhat of a Jamaican Vernacular Architecture.

WHY SHOULD WE PRESERVE GREAT HOUSES?

Despite their somewhat negative background and horror stories associated with Great Houses, today they offer a lot to the tourism sector of Jamaica. One of the benefits of Great Houses is that they attract visitors daily and they also create employment for all levels of persons in society. Great Houses not only allow for the viewing of extraordinary designs, narration of myths and legends, they also have diversified their activities and operations and have incorporated many other aspects of our culture. Musical showcases, foods, crafts and historical narration are just some of the many activities being offered by Great Houses in addition to the fascinating tours of the houses themselves and the surrounding breath taking scenery.

As some Great Houses are currently privately owned, the government of Jamaica does not have to be fully responsible for them; however they all serve the same role of attracting visitors and contributing considerably to tourism; especially heritage tourism. Attraction of visitors to the island brings in revenue through foreign exchange and also gives the island international recognition.

In interviewing personnel at the Great Houses their main concern in the preservation of Great Houses is the stability

of the employment. Many of them can only find jobs available at Great House or in its operations. Their second concern was that it offered heritage and cultural education and preservation, which would otherwise be lost. This type of tourism adds to the diversification of the tourism sector.

There is the view that the preservation of historic buildings and economic development are incompatible because of the cost involved in restoration, and the fact that converting and maintaining historic buildings require more care and attention to detail than ordinary ones. Added to this, in nearly all instances historic buildings have to be fitted to meet present standards and needs, such as air conditioning, disabled access and car parking. Some cities, however, have been successful in using their built heritage to create historic areas which combine economic success with the highest architectural and environmental standards, for example, St. Williamsburg in Virginia (U. S. A.). Jamaican heritage sites such as Great Houses can achieve this too.

Although historic structures may not be suitable for every type of use, they are especially attractive for certain types of activities such as tourism, housing, shopping and entertainment from which several benefits may be obtained. Historic buildings can contribute significantly through tourism to earnings of foreign exchange. Well-maintained historic sites encourage visitors, bring money into the area and increase property values. Government can also

receive considerable sums in taxation resulting from spending by people visiting and enjoying the architectural heritage of a city. In Britain for example, there are indications that one of the main reasons for visitors to the country is because of its architectural heritage. This scenario also augurs well for local employment for wherever there is an expansion in the tourism industry, there is also job creation.

The challenge lies in offering attractive packages to those individuals who may be interested in the restoration of historic buildings. Low interest loans organized by financial institutions could be made available to those seeking to restore older structures.

Grants from public sector sources could also be organized as well as fundraising activities by heritage foundations to assist designated property owners to preserve their properties. Technical assistance from persons who understand the special problems of historic areas should also be readily available. It may also prove beneficial if the leading heritage agency in the country offers preservation awards to organizations which restore important historic structures for reuse. For example, the National Trust for Historic Preservation in the United States offered a National Preservation Honour Award to the F & M Bank in Winchester, Virginia in 1999. The bank was chosen because it saved important historic structures and in so doing helped to spur a dramatic revitalisation of downtown Winchester. Although the rehabilitation of

the structures in this area may have been more expensive than demolition, it brought encouraging results. The restoration of the historic buildings brought more than twenty-seven (27) new businesses to downtown Winchester and the revenue in the area was increased.

It would seem therefore, that the regeneration and revitalisation of historic sites would bring definite benefits to the community as in such a case there is increased economic activity and job opportunities and the conversion of underused or vacant properties result in the protection and usefulness of a city's built heritage.

Architectural styles are always changing and as a result there will be recreations and diversions from the true architectural styles. However, with each change, there will be features which make the style unique to a period, a people or a country.

ARGUMENTS AGAINST GREAT HOUSE PRESERVATION

➤ **THE ARCHITECTURE IS NOT A PART OF NATIONAL HERITAGE AND CULTURE**

Georgian Architecture

According to Wikipedia, Georgian architecture is the name given in English-speaking countries to the architectural styles current between 1720 and 1840, named after the four British monarchs named George. It succeeded the English Baroque of Sir Christopher Wren, Sir John Vanbrugh and Nicholas Hawksmoor. Among the first architects to promote the change in direction from baroque were Colen Campbell and the engravings in Vitruvius Britannicus, Lord Burlington and his protégé William Kent, Thomas Archer and the Venetian Giacomo Leoni, who passed his career in England.

The styles that resulted fall within several categories. In the mainstream of Georgian style were both Palladian architecture—and its whimsical alternatives, Gothic and Chinoiserie, which were the English-speaking world's equivalent of European Rococo. From the mid-1760s a range of Neoclassical modes were fashionable, associated with the British architects Robert Adam, James Gibbs, Sir William Chambers, James Wyatt, Henry Holland and Sir John Soane. Greek revival was added to the design repertory, after about 1800

Distinguishing Characteristics

Georgian architecture is characterized by its proportion and balance; simple mathematical ratios were used to determine the height of a window in relation to its width or the shape of a room as a double cube.

"Regular" was a term of approval, implying symmetry and adherence to classical rules: the lack of symmetry, where Georgian additions were added to earlier structures, was deeply felt as a flaw. Regularity of house fronts along a street was a desirable feature of Georgian town planning. Georgian designs usually lay within the Classical orders of architecture and employed a decorative vocabulary derived from ancient Rome or Greece.

Georgian style was equally suited to brick and stone, usually defined by reddish brick walls that contrasted with white used for window trimming and cornices. The entrances were often emphasized by a portico.

General Characteristics

Georgian houses mainly feature - roof to ground-level:

- A hipped roof
- Chimney on both sides
- A stone parapet surrounding the roof
- A portico in the middle of the roof with a ring window in the middle

- 6 paned sash windows in the upper floors for servant's quarters
- Larger windows with 9/12 panes

Colonial Georgian Architecture

Georgian Architecture was widely disseminated in the English colonies of the time. In the American colonies, colonial Georgian blended with the neo-Palladian style to become known more broadly as 'Federal' building styles. In the American colonies, Georgian buildings were also built of wood with clapboards; even columns were built of timber, framed up and turned on an oversized lathe.

The College of William and Mary in Williamsburg, Virginia, is an excellent example of Georgian architecture. Unlike the Baroque style that it replaced, a style which was generated almost solely in the context of palaces and churches, this style had wide currency in the upper and middle classes. Within the residential context, the best remaining example is the pristine Hammond-Harwood House (1774) in Annapolis, Maryland. This house was designed by colonial architect William Buckland and modeled on the Villa Pisani at Montagnana, Italy as depicted in Andrea Palladio's Four Books Of Architecture. The establishment of Georgian architecture was to a large degree aided by the fact that unlike earlier styles, which were disseminated among craftsmen through the direct experience of the apprenticeship system, Georgian architecture was also disseminated to builders through the new

medium of inexpensive suites of engravings. From the mid-18th century, Georgian styles were assimilated into an architectural vernacular that became part and parcel of the training of every carpenter, mason and plasterer, from Edinburgh to Maryland.

➤ **THE BUILDINGS REPRESENT AND LEAVES ETCHED ON OUR MEMORIES THE GRUESOME ORDEAL OF OUR FORE FATHERS**

Demand for slaves to cultivate sugarcane and other crops caused what came to be known as the triangle trade. Ships leaving Europe first stopped in Africa where they traded weapons, ammunition, metal, liquor, and cloth for captives taken in wars or raids. The ships then traveled to America, where slaves were exchanged for sugar, rum, salt, and other island products. The ships returned home loaded with products popular with the European people, and ready to begin their journey again.

An estimated 8 to 15 million Africans reached the Americas from the 16th through the 19th century. Only the youngest and healthiest people were taken for what was called the middle passage of the triangle trade, partly because they would be worth more in America, and partly because they were the most likely to reach their destination alive. Conditions aboard the ship were dreadful. Slaves were jammed into the hull; chained to one another in order to stop revolts; as many as one in five passengers did not survive the journey. When one of the

enslaved people was stricken with dysentery or smallpox, they were cast overboard.

Those who survived the middle passage faced more abuses on the plantations. Many of the plantation owners had returned to Europe, leaving their holdings in America to be managed by overseers who were often unstable or unsavory. Families were split up, and the Africans were not allowed to learn to read or write. African men, women, and children were forced to work with little to eat or drink.

➤ **FUNDS TO MAINTAIN SUCH DELICATE STRUCTURES MAY NOT BE AVAILABLE**

Funds to undertake the venture of maintaining Great Houses may be garnered from three main sources; the financial institutions, the government and the private sector.

The high interest rates of lending institutions may cause the maintenance of these structures through the use of borrowed funds to be considerably difficult. Borrowing from these institutions at high interest rates may be even more detrimental if the Great Houses do not retrieve the funds through revenue.

The government may not see the allocation of these funds to the maintenance of Great Houses as beneficial. It may have greater priorities on its agenda and Great Houses

and their preservation may not fall into the top categories.

The private sector is a very influential sector of the country, especially financially. The members of this sector may not be of the mind that investing in this venture is a lucrative move.

With the three main sources of possible funds having disadvantages of such high probability, it is safe to conclude the search for funds to maintain delicate structures may be futile.

QUESTIONNAIRE

In order to determine the rationale behind proving that Great Houses are worth being preserved, the researcher found it fit to seek the views of the citizens of Jamaica. In hearing their views as major stakeholders, it will offer further light to answering the question, 'Are Great Houses worth being preserved?' This questionnaire is part of a survey to determine Jamaicans' knowledge and views on Great Houses in the country. After administering the questionnaire to a wide cross-section of individuals, the researcher will offer recommendations about how to extend the capabilities of Great Houses and say how their functions can be diversified to be of benefit to many, and ultimately, the country's economy. A total of one hundred and fifty (150) questionnaires were distributed in the resort town of Montego Bay, Mandeville, Santa Cruz, Christiana and Kingston; all in Jamaica. The respondents varied in age, education and socio-economic status.

- 1) State briefly a definition of a Great House as you perceive it.
- 2) How much do you know about Great Houses?
 nothing very little
 average a lot
- 3) Have you ever visited a Great House?
 yes no
- 4) If your answer to three, above, is yes, how many times have you been to Great House?

- 1-5 6-10 11-15
 16-20 more than 20
- 5) How many different Great Houses have you visited?
 1-5 6-10
(state the ones you've visited)
 - 6) How was your experience on those visits?
 poor average exceptional
 - 7) What kind of activities did you engage in on your visit?
 tour entertainment
 dining overnight stay
 - 8) What was your purpose for visiting?
 recreation education
 - 9) How was the service of the staff?
 poor average exceptional
 - 10) What was most fascinating aspect of the Great House?
 architecture history/legend
 past residents other _____
 - 11) Do you think Great Houses should be preserved? Indicate why.
 yes no
 - 12) Do you think Great Houses have a rich cultural background?
 yes no
 - 13) Should greater investments be made into Great Houses?
 yes no

SURVEY RESULTS

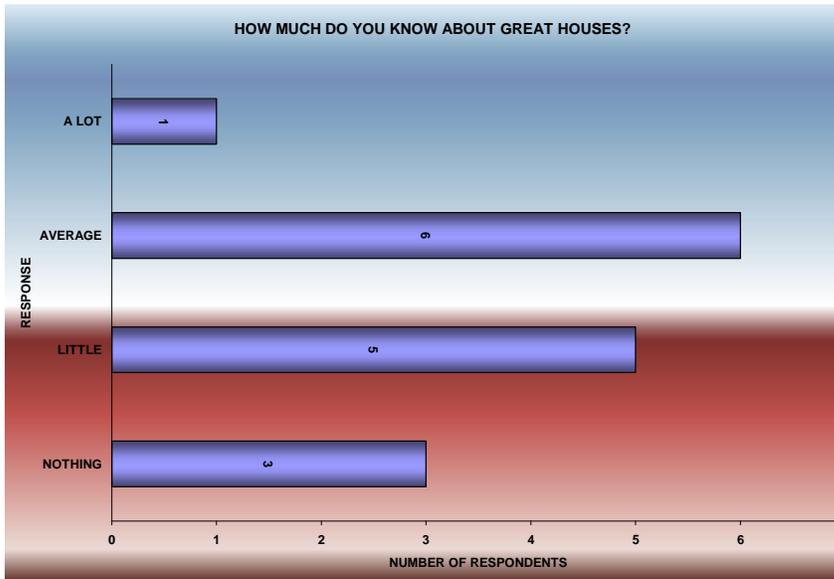


Figure 1 showing the extent of Jamaicans' knowledge of Great Houses

FIGURE 1

The population did not include workers at Great Houses. This was done to facilitate more objectivity and to sufficiently represent the views of the ordinary people of the country. As presented on the bar graph, the majority of the respondents know average or little about Great Houses, and this may be due to the fact that these persons have only visited Great Houses for recreational purposes. The one person who claimed to know a lot about Great Houses may have a considerable interest in them or may have studied them in some manner.

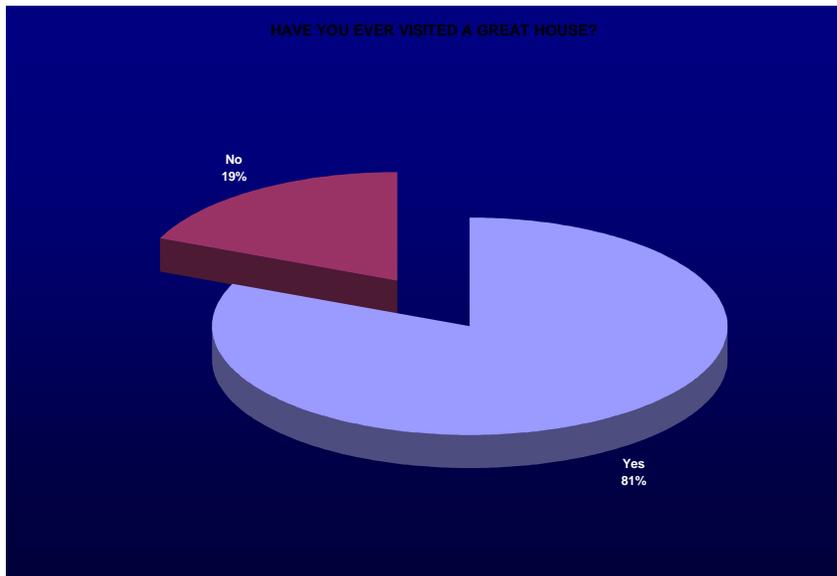


Figure 2 showing the number of respondents who have visited a Great House

FIGURE 2

Eighty-one percent (81%) of respondents said they have, at least once, visited a Great House. When asked to state the one that they have visited, majority of them said the Rose Hall Great House in St. James. Probing, allowed the researcher to elicit that the legend of the famous White Witch of Rose Hall is what attracts the majority of respondents to Rose Hall Great House. The nineteen percent (19%) that said they've never visited a Great House may be in that category because Great Houses are not promoted enough in the country.

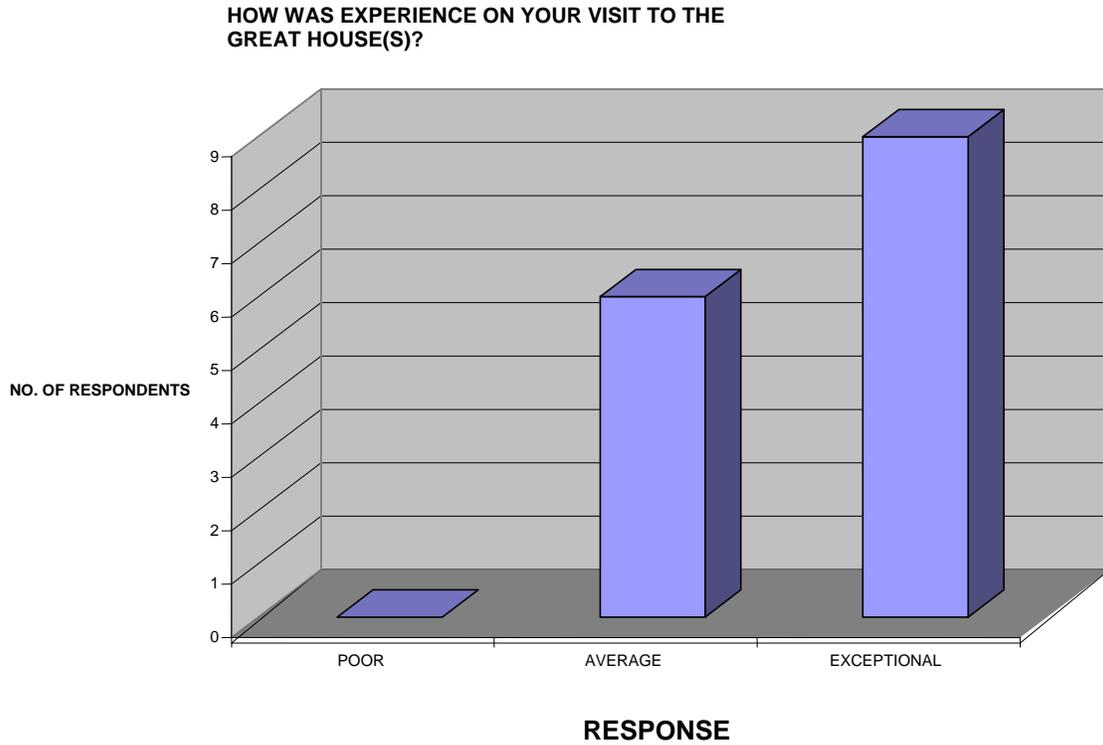


Figure 4 showing the ratings of the respondents' visits to the Great House

FIGURE 4

None of the respondents had a poor experience on their visit to a Great House. They were either average or exceptional. The average ones were documented and can be evaluated to determine the shortcomings if there are any of great detriment. It is evident from the results of figure 4 that even the Jamaican's enjoy the activities of Great Houses. Imagine the visitors!!

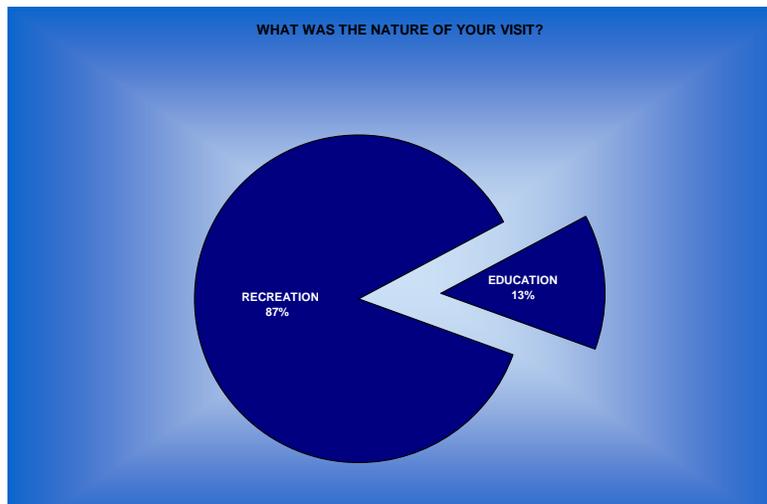


Figure 5 showing the reasons citizens visit Great Houses

As is evident in the results of figure 5, most visits to great Houses are recreational. There should be more educational visits especially for the primary level students so as to increase knowledge as this can also aid in the easier learning of material in the subject of heritage and history.

LIST OF GREAT HOUSES AS HERITAGE SITES IN JAMAICA

- Belmont Great House
- Bellevue Great House
- Admiral Mountain Great House
- Cherry Garden Great House
- Mona Great House
- Bloomfield Great House
- Marlborough Great House
- Stokes Hall Great House
- Good Hope Great House
- Greenwood Great House
- Rose Hall Great House
- Marshall's Pen Great House
- Highgate House
- Seville Great House
- Bellefield Great House
- Devon House
- Mount Plenty Great House
- Roaring River Great House
- Thetford Great House
- Tryall Great House
- Halse Hall Great House
- Quebec Great House
- Brimmer Hall Great House
- Bromley Great house
- Green Park Great House
- Prospect Great House
- Ramble Great House
- Cardiff Hall Great House
- York Castle Great House
- Seaman's Valley

The three Great Houses featured in the study were chosen based on the fact that, Rose Hall Great House is one of the most popular and it features the most fascinating and famous legend of the White Witch of Rose Hall. Bellefield Great House is extraordinary in the sense that its activities and services offered are diverse and abundant. This is not a feature of many Great Houses. Devon House is a considerably prominent building in the parish of Kingston, in Jamaica and in the entire country. Devon House stands as a proud symbol of Jamaica's past and its history is compelling.

The following section will feature a more detailed examination of three Great Houses in Jamaica: Rose Hall Great House and Bellefield Great House in St. James and Devon House in Kingston.



Devon House- Kingston, Jamaica



Rose Hall Great House- St. James



Bellefield Great House- St. James

THE ROSE HALL GREAT HOUSE Montego Bay, Jamaica

Through the Ages ...

The name has a deep echo to anyone who speaks it. For Rose Hall is a plantation, a great house, a legend and a mystery. Rose Hall is Jamaican and it's past a vital part of Jamaica's history. It is famous for Annee Palmer who bewitched and beheaded slaves, loved and lured men to their doom, drenched a plantation in blood with imperious and haughty disdain, lived alone in the beautiful Great House and died in the beautiful Great House at the hands of abused and angry slaves. "A splendid asylum for a mad woman," it was called by one who knew her.

If there are ghosts nowhere else in the world, there are certainly ghosts in Jamaica. Here they are called *duppies*. Some are family ghosts, others are known to a town of two, but there is one ghost known to everyone on the island. This is the ghost of Annee Palmer, the "White Witch," who was the last, worst and most famous mistress of Rose Hall.



Annee Palmer's grave at the Rose Hall Great House (photo taken by researchers O. Thompson and A. Nelson)

Until recently, the Rose Hall Great House stood on the plantation near Montego Bay as a skeletal vestige of the last century. The wind was rumoured to carry the sounds of restless spirits... and when the blazing Caribbean sun set on the Great House ruins, enflaming in the rotting timber and sullen stone remains, the House looked, indeed, more creature than stone.

Rose Hall Today ...

It seemed as though the fate of Rose Hall would be complete disintegration and its history left to be preserved by writers. But not so! Rose Hall found an admirer and a patron in John Rollins, a businessman from the United States and former Lieutenant Governor of Delaware. He loved the rich and beautiful land and he felt an awe and sadness at the once magnificent Great House now in ruins.

Mr. Rollins purchased the Rose Hall plantation. He had several goals. First was the restoration of the Great House and the

revitalization of the land. He wanted people to come to Rose Hall, to visit, to live and enjoy the beautiful Caribbean lushness in a plantation way of life especially planned for them. He wanted to build, but at the same time protect the natural beauty. He also wanted to preserve the agrarian tradition and therefore set aside 1100 acres for sugarcane, experimental agriculture and cattle rearing.

John Rollins had a simple outlook for Rose Hall: "To restore its beauty so that it is a splendid in the future as it was in the past, and to make this beauty available to people from all over the world."

The Legend ...

There is much to learn from the history of Rose Hall. It reflects the architecture and *mores* of the period.

Had Rose Hall never had an Anne Palmer, it would still have taken a prominent place in the history of Jamaica.

Rose Hall's story begins with the purchase of a plantation near Montego Bay in the parish of St James, by Henry Fanning, in 1746. He secured 290 acres of rolling sugar cane land, bounded by the sea. Six months later, he married a parson's daughter named Rose Kelly. She was a lovely, warm, cheerful and hospitable woman. Unfortunately Fanning died six months after his marriage. In 1750, the widowed Rosa married a planter named George Ash.

Although many records attribute the building of the famous Great House to Ash, the home he had built for his bride was actually a forerun of the historic Great House.

Ash died in 1752, leaving poor Rosa very wealthy and a widow once more. She married her third husband the following year, the Hon. Norwood Witter. He was most eligible and gallant when he courted Rosa, but turned out to be a mean husband. He took liberally to her purse for the thirteen years of their marriage and died in 1766. The lovely lady had no lack of suitors and married for the fourth time in 1767.

The Hon. John Palmer, Custos of St James became Rosa's husband. Mr. T. A. L. Concannon, well known architect and authority on Jamaican Great Houses, has established that Rose Hall Great House was built between 1770 and 1780, at about the same time Colbeck Castle in St. Catherine and many other plantation residences erected during this period of prosperity in Jamaica.

H. G. deLisser describes the impression of the Great House on rides approaching it:

"Its façade towered above them as they halted on the slope to gaze upward at it; it stood out dark against the pitchy background of the night, with all its blatant assertion of opulence and power. It had been built to set forth the riches and pride of its first possessor—money had been lavished upon it, not

merely for comfort, but by way of emphasis. Even to a headstrong and proud plantocracy, it was intended as a sort of challenge for one so its members who wished to be considered as the first among its peers”

Rose Hall Great House Tour Song

*On the island of Jamaica
A long, long time ago
On Rose Hall Plantation
Where the ocean breezes blow
Lived a girl named Annee Palmer
The Mistress of the slaves
Slaves all live in fear
To see the frown on Annee’s face

Where are your husbands, Annee
One, two and three
Are they sleeping beneath the palm trees
Near the Caribbean Sea
At night I hear you riding
And I can hear your lovers call
And I can still feel your presence around the
Great House at Rose Hall*

The Architectural Style

as described by T. A. Concannon

The main house was a rectangular stone and timber framed structure rising three stories above ground on the north and two stories on the south. It measured some 95 feet by 40 feet by 12 feet. The lower ground floor contained six rooms, probably used in part as staff and store rooms and perhaps

as rest rooms for passing travelers, with doors to the gardens on the east and west and an internal staircase to the main ground floor.

External and internal walls of the lower ground floor contained vertical slits, designed perhaps both for ventilation and as defense loopholes in time of attack; they are an interesting feature of the main house. The ground or principle floor, the reception part of the mansion, had three rooms of great size, including a salon 40 feet by 15 feet to the south, and a drawing room about 32 feet by 20 feet entered from these rooms on the east. There were two smaller rooms on the west, one perhaps the dining room for family occasions.



The superb mahogany staircase to the upper level (photo taken by researchers O. Thompson and A. Nelson)

Massive double doors in mahogany set axially on the northern façade led from the main salon to an open terrace running along the entire north elevation. The terrace was connected by a double flight of stone steps

with the driveway on the north, leading to the lower cane fields and the coast. The grounds were extensive with trees of many kinds and a flower garden to the east and south.

Two covered arcades south of the main house swung to connect with single storied pavilions or wings that included, on the east, a music room and private quarters, and on the west a kitchen and stores, with servants' rooms at ground and lower ground floors.

At the end of each terrace of the main house short flights of stone steps led gardens at the lower level on east and west. Although most of the interior had been removed or had deteriorated due to neglect, contemporary accounts and old photographs show that this fine mansion was finished in a classical manner; there was a timber paneling to door and windows, a dado and cornice in the more important apartments, and rich joinery to semi-circular headed double doorways onto the terrace and into the stairway hall

It is likely that some of the stonework came from England, shipped out as ballast; individual blocks for the north stairway were numbered in England for ease in building, and mason's marks can still be detected on stones of the main entrance. This fine central feature was perhaps designed as a unit from a pattern book by one of the then fashionable Georgian architects in a center such as Bath, and either sent by sea in cut blocks or cut to shape on site.

It was not uncommon to find on the indentured estate staff expert masons and carpenters able to do first class work; enough remains to testify excellent brick stone craftsmanship, and it is known that joinery was of an equal high standard.

Located in the parish of St James, near to Montego Bay, this was regarded as the most magnificent planter's residence ever built in Jamaica. The house fell into ruin in the early 20th century and in the 1960s it was faithfully restored with authentic period furnishings under the supervision of Tom Concannon, who did much work in historic restoration in Jamaica.



Hand carved structures, shorts beds facilitating the belief of the inhabitants to sleep upright in order to allow proper digestion (photo taken by researchers O. Thompson and A. Nelson)

The Great House was built between 1770 and 1780 by the Hon John Palmer, custos of St James, whose wife was Rosa Palmer, to all accounts a loveable and gracious lady. Her beautiful marble tomb can be seen at the St James Parish Church, Montego Bay.

For a long time it was believed that she was the legendary

White Witch of Rose Hall and the words on her tombstone were therefore considered ironic. Only recently have Rosa Palmer's name and reputation been cleared and 'Annee Palmer' designated the wicked witch.

While Rosa and John Palmer were alive, the magnificent Rose Hall was the setting for the most elaborate balls and assemblies on that side of the island. After the death of the couple, Rose hall was neglected for some years until it was inherited by John Palmer's grandnephew, John Rose Palmer. In 1820, John Rose palmer married; his marriage certificate to Annee Palmer is in the Jamaica Archives. Since the record of his burial has also been found in the St James Parish Register, his 'disappearance' at the hands of his wife, as legends say is unlikely.

According to the legend, the woman who became the mistress of Rose Hall was Annee May Patterson who was born of an English mother and an Irish father and grew up in Haiti, where, it is said she was schooled in vodun. Though Annee Palmer has been identified as the 'White Witch', it is possible that in her name, like Rosa Palmer's, will be cleared, since no one so far has managed to unravel fact from fiction.

The White Witch of Rose Hall

Annee Palmer is the subject of Jamaica's most famous legend. It tells of Annee Palmer, the mistress of Rose Hall plantation who is said to have dabbled in witchcraft, murdered four husbands and had countless lovers. She was finally murdered by the slaves whom she had terrorized. Killed in her bedroom at the Rose Hall Great House, she was buried in the garden where her grave can still be seen.

Across from the present great house, four palm trees together on the beach are said to symbolize Annee's four husbands. The legends say she wore a ring inscribed: 'If I survive, I shall have five.'



A painting of the White Witch of Rose Hall (photo taken by researchers O. Thompson and A. Nelson)

Psychic researchers from time to time have visited Rose Hall to establish contact with the White Witch. In the 1950s, Mrs. Eileen Garrett, described as 'the famous sensitive', came to Jamaica with the intention of laying Annee's ghost. She was accompanied by

her secretary and other witnesses and a transcription of the proceedings was made and published in the *West Indian Review*. She went into a trance immediately on arrival and claims to have accomplished her mission. However her success may be judged by the fact that Annee is also supposed to have appeared to a psychic named Bambos, at a séance held Friday, 13 October 1978.



Annee Palmer's fainting couch in her blood-red silked room at the Great House (photo taken by researchers O. Thompson and A. Nelson)

Annee has been the subject of more than one novel, the first and most famous of them being H. G. DeLisser's *The White Witch of Rose Hall*. More recently, she gave her name to the White Witch Golf Course attached to the Ritz-Carlton Rose Hall hotel that opened in 2000.

The Rose Hall Great House Today

The Rose Hall Great House now serves as one of Jamaica's premier tourist attractions. Annee Palmer, the white witch of Rose Hall has been dead for 100 years, but her legend still evokes memories of her monstrous reign as the mistress of The Great House. U.S. entrepreneurs John and Michele Rollins of Wilmington, Delaware, U.S.A., through a multi-million dollar refurbishment brought the Great House back to its original architectural splendor complete with antique furnishings and décor, as well as enchanting gardens, walkways and vistas.

Your tour will also include a visit to Annee's Pub in the dungeon of the Great House, one of the most charming taverns in the Caribbean. The Rose Hall Great House, including its Gift Shop, is truly a visitor's delight.



The Great House before its restoration (photo taken by researchers O. Thompson and A. Nelson from records at the Great House)



Rose Hall Great House today ((photo taken by researchers O. Thompson and A. Nelson)

Sir Francis Kerr-Jarrett was one of the family owners of the house and was the custos of St James for thirty (30) years. Jarrett Park in St James is said to be so named after him.



Sir Francis Kerr-Jarrett (photo taken by researchers O. Thompson and A. Nelson from records at the Great House)

BELLEFIELD GREAT HOUSE Montego Bay, Jamaica

The Bellefield Great House dates back three hundred (300) years and has been owned by the same family for eleven (11) generations. This family is the Kerr-Jarrett's. Like many Great Houses, it was first a sugar plantation with one thousand (1000) field slaves. The Great House is located on the privately owned Barnett Estate.

The furniture in the house especially the beds are mahogany, hand-carved by slaves. The beds are said to be over two hundred (200) years old.



The Bellefield Great House (photo taken by researchers O. Thompson and A. Nelson)



*Mahogany beds hand-carved by slaves
(photo taken by researchers O.
Thompson and A. Nelson)*



Rum bottles and English Oakwood barrel

To preserve the history of the Great House, clothes from the slavery days and other household items have been safeguarded to be put on display. Dolls have also been made. These dolls would represent how the slaves and the whites would have looked and what they used to wear.



*Camooode - whites' toilet; emptied by
slaves*



*White child in drawing room (above); White
mistress (below)*



*Slave girl; placed on back porch
showing she was never allowed
inside*



Crinolines- worn by whites

The Bellefield Greathouse Today

The Bellefield Great House not only caters to visitors and tourists for tours and cultural experiences, but offers its services to the Jamaican people when they cater for weddings and others functions, right there on the grounds of the Great House. The tour also features slavery day drama where workers dress up as slaves and the operation of a mini sugar mill called the 'chattanova sugar mill' is played out. Visitors are allowed to sample freshly pressed cane juice. The mill is normally operated by 'Willie' the donkey when the drama scene of slavery days is not in session. A mini boiling house is also present at the Great House for boiling the cane juice. Water is boiled in one side and cane juice in the other.



Boiling copper pots (photo taken by researchers O. Thompson and A. Nelson)

DEVON HOUSE, Kingston, Jamaica



The entrance to Devon House (photo taken by researchers O. Thompson and A. Nelson)

Devon House is the realization of the dream of George Stiebel. The son of a housekeeper and a Jewish merchant, his colour would have automatically excluded him from the upper echelons of society. Despite his humble beginnings, Stiebel showed perseverance in his young adult life, and before long he made a name for himself as a contractor and restored the Popular Ferry Inn in St. Catherine.

After amassing wealth from investments in gold mines in Venezuela, Stiebel purchased 99 properties as it was unlawful to own 100 properties in Jamaica). In October 1879, he purchased 53 acres of land in St. Andrew and built Devon House in 1881 on the foundation of the church rectory.

His marriage to Theresa Baker produced two children, Theresa and Sigismund James Stiebel. Stiebel rose to prominence and was made Hon. George Stiebel and Custos of St. Andrew until his death in 1896. His only

surviving child, Theresa, married Richard Jackson and the Stiebel family occupied Devon House until 1923.

The ownership of the house changed hands soon after, and was occupied by the Melhado family for five years. The Lindos were the last family to occupy the house from 1928-1965.

In 1965, under the National Trust Act, the Jamaican Government stopped developers from demolishing the house and began the process of restoring its 19th century mansion and grounds.

Devon House Today

Devon House is furnished with a collection of Jamaican, Caribbean, English and French antiques and Jamaica reproductions that evoke a Jamaican Great House from the years 1860-1870.



The original English chandelier that Stiebel purchased for the room and the ceiling; done in wedge wood style. (photo taken by researchers O. Thompson and A. Nelson)



Detail of painted panel in the Palm Hall (photo taken by researchers O. Thompson and A. Nelson)

The architectural style of Devon House has been described as Jamaican-Georgian displaying very formal and symmetrical lines. The design shows a mixture of Creole and Georgian styles adapted to the tropical climate. An elegant, single staircase sweeps up to the beautiful wooden façade with its many jalousied panels. Exquisitely carved fanlights can be seen above the doorways.

The property which was named a National Monument by the Jamaica National Heritage Trust (JNHT), in September 1990, is poised to become the leading heritage tourism attraction in Kingston.



Internet café extending the scope of the service offered to patrons at Devon House.

Shopping

Shopping at Devon House promises to be an unforgettable experience with the likes of Wassi Art, Elaine Elegance, Ts and Treasures, Rum Roast and Royals, Café Whatson, Starfish Oils, Cooyah Designs, Jamaica Juice, Things Jamaican, Brick Oven, Devon House I Scream, Grog Shoppe and Norma's On Terrace.



The master bedroom contains exhibits which were used by the Stibel family (photos taken by researchers O. Thompson and A. Nelson)



Chris Thomas and friends at the restaurant in the Devon House courtyard (photo taken by researchers O. Thompson and A. Nelson)

The Courtyard shops, once the Stiebels' servants' quarters now boasts several shops that sell a wide range of quality Jamaican products such as ceramics, art and craft, clothing, health juices, pastries and ice-cream. A fine gourmet restaurant now occupies the terrace while Jamaican fare can be held in what used to be the Stibel coach house. The courtyard also boasts an



The Stibel kitchen, now a pastry shop in the courtyard at Devon House (photo taken by researchers O. Thompson and A. Nelson)

URRENT OPERATIONS OF GREAT HOUSES IN JAMAICA

TOURS AND ENTERTAINMENT

Guests are entertained with the donkey-drawn cart or river raft ride across a wide area of natural and captivating scenery. Cultural shows put on by musicians, singers and dancers featuring folk and mento music, highlighting the Jamaican culture and heritage in the performing arts.

- ✓ TOUR GUIDES DRESSED IN BANDANA SUITS ADDING A CULTURAL AMBIENCE TO THE TOURS
- ✓ SIMULATION OF SLAVERY DAY OPERATIONS SUCH AS THE SUGAR MILL AND BOILING HOUSE
- ✓ SAMPLING OF FRESHLY PRESSED CANE JUICE
- ✓ EXPLORATION OF ANCIENT STRUCTURES, CENTURIES OLD
- ✓ BREATH TAKING VIEWS OF MANY ACRES OF THE ESTATES
- ✓ SHOWCASE OF CULTURAL SONG AND DANCE
- ✓ MERCHANDISE OF UNIQUE SOUVENIRS AND LOCAL CRAFT AND CLOTHING
- ✓ HAIRDRESSING IN LOCAL STYLES WITH HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL BACKGROUND

- ✓ CATERING FOR FUNCTIONS SUCH AS WEDDINGS
- ✓ HOLIDAY RESIDENTIAL ARRANGEMENTS

EMPLOYMENT PROVISION

- ✓ TOUR GUIDES
- ✓ GROUNDS PERSONNEL AND GARDENERS
- ✓ CRAFT WORKERS
- ✓ CHEFS
- ✓ HAIRDRESSERS
- ✓ MAINTENANCE WORKERS
- ✓ STORE ATTENDANTS
- ✓ SINGERS
- ✓ HOUSEKEEPERS
- ✓ SEAMSTRESSES
- ✓ DANCERS
- ✓ MUSICIANS
- ✓ WAITERS/WAITRESSES

Tour guides are Great House employees accompanying the guests on the exploration of the great House and its activities while at the same time briefing them on the history of the particular Great House. The history will incorporate some Jamaican culture or heritage or link to some practice in our culture. This then allows visitors to be informed of certain practices and their origin.

The dancing and singing offer a serene and humorous form of entertainment and recreation for the guests to the Great House. This music, foreign to them, is explained about the origin and relevance to Jamaica's

culture and heritage and the guests always seem to enjoy. Music such as the Jamaican folk and mento dances such as the quadrille and guerre are showcased in these instances.



The food is another fascinating element to the visitors. Although not used much across the island, Great Houses, and other entities, seek to prevent these foods from becoming extinct as they are symbols of our rich culture and heritage.



Visitors always want souvenirs when they are returning to their home lands. Great Houses feature gift and craft shops that offer a wide variety of souvenirs and craft items representing the fine culture of the island

Great houses also feature mimics of the slavery days using dolls and the mini sugar mills and boiling houses, like at the Bellefield Great House in St James. These offer great insight into the operations of those days and also used as entertainment for the visitors.



WHO BENEFITS?

One may want to argue that the investors in Great Houses are the chief beneficiaries. However, the results of this study militate against this. Evidently, we all benefit. We benefit through job creation, foreign exchange, increased visitor arrival, and the tremendous satisfaction we derive as a people knowing that our history is being given posterity through the oracy of the tour guides and the recordings of writers such as those quoted in this research.

all preserve the rich culture in corporation with the activities and facilities of the Great Houses. The mere but important, moral and ethical lifetime experience of knowing our history is also of great benefit to us as we strive to preserve of history through Great Houses.

COMMUNITY

- job opportunities for vocational graduates
- employment of youth; holiday jobs, etc

INVESTORS

- garnering of maximum profits

TOURISTS/VISITORS

- diverse recreational activities all in one place
- well spent sojourns

ECONOMY

- positive international recognition
- revenue in the form of foreign exchange
- increase in the tourism activity of the island

Jamaican citizens can also enjoy the activities just as much as the visitors, as we

RECOMMENDATIONS

The ultimate objectives for the increase in investments into Jamaican Great Houses are to facilitate and garner greater revenue for the country, provide local employment and to have international recognition. How do we accomplish these objectives? According to figure one from the findings of the survey, one fifth of the respondents knew nothing of Great Houses. This should not be. For a feature so unique to our island, all residents should have a considerable knowledge of it. Promotion of Great Houses in the country is also extremely important, as according to figure 2 of the findings of the survey, nineteen percent (19%) have never been to a Great House.

- 1) Proper investments must be made; in that the Great Houses must be individually evaluated in the form of a SWOT analysis, for example, to determine its particular strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. In doing this we can then make the investments based on these and be sure that we will garner the maximum revenue and achieve all the objectives.
- 2) Low interest loans organized by financial institutions could be made available to those seeking to restore older structures. Grants from public sector sources could also be

organized as well as fundraising activities by heritage foundations to assist designated property owners to preserve their properties. Technical assistance from persons who understand the special problems of historic areas should also be readily available.

- 3) The leading heritage agencies in the country can offer preservation awards to organizations which restore and improve important historic structures for reuse.
- 4) Produce both national and international advertisements to market the Great Houses including all the features and operations. Although greater emphasis should be placed on advertisements internationally to attract visitors, the national advertising and promotions should not be neglected as the citizens must also enjoy these unique experiences of Great Houses.
- 5) Develop awareness programs for ordinary Jamaicans to foster appreciation of Great Houses and stimulate their desire to preserve them. As presented in the survey, one fifth of respondents knew nothing of Great Houses, so awareness programs are quite appropriate.

- 6) Include stories and history of the more prominent Great Houses in primary and secondary schools' curriculum to increase students' awareness and appreciation of Great Houses. The primary schools can organize school excursions to Great Houses, while secondary schools can be encouraged to become more involved and active in programs and competitions as these, as these methods will all increase knowledge of Great Houses

HOW TO EXTEND THE CAPABILITIES OF GREAT HOUSES

➤ **INTERNATIONAL ADVERTISEMENT**

We believe that the organizations responsible for selling Jamaica's tourism to the world are Jamaica Vacations (JAMVAC), Jamaica Tourist Board (JTB) and Jamaica Reservations Service (JRS). Greater emphasis should be placed on international marketing by these bodies. However, before these bodies can increase their marketing initiatives, they must have the products to advertise. In light of this, it will be necessary for the government and other private investors to willingly come onboard

to invest greater in Great Houses and further look out for their preservation. The Tourism Product Development Co. Ltd. (TPDCo.) also has an essential role to play in this strategy, as their portfolio is inclusive of the developments and improvement of heritage and community based tourism.

➤ **INCORPORATION IN CARIBBEAN TOURS**

Cruise ship tours and other large contingents of tourists arrive in the island regularly, especially during major holidays. On reaching the island, the tourists should have a wide variety of activities planned for them, and these activities can be ones that are unique to Jamaica. Our heritage and historical sites and buildings are unique features of our island which fascinate our visitors.

➤ **INCORPORATE THE FIVE THEMES OF THE TOURISM MASTER PLAN IN THE OPERATIONS OF GREAT HOUSES**

The objectives of the Materplan for Sustainable Rourism Development are outlined below.

The main thing the Master Plan seeks to do is to move tourism on to a path of long-term sustainability.

We need to develop tourism in such a way that it meets the needs of today's residents and visitors while protecting and improving the opportunities of future generations to meet their needs.

How will this be possible? Here are the five key objectives:

1. Growth based on a Sustainable Market Position
2. Enhancement of the Visitor Experience
3. Community- Based Development
4. The Building of an Inclusive Industry
5. Environmental Sustainability

Growth based on a sustainable market position.

To keep the industry growing, we will need to: hold our competitive space in the market. This will mean offering our visitors what no other country has -our own unique Jamaican heritage:

- natural surroundings
- culture
- history
- historic buildings & sites.

ONCLUSION

Increasing tourism activity and visitors to the island means offering to the visitors what no other country has to offer- our Jamaican heritage, history, culture and historic sites. This means taking advantage of our unique assets and some of these are Great Houses. The fascinating and extraordinary architecture is not the only attribute to Great Houses but the activities that accompany the tour and scenery. The money that may be expended on the maintenance and improvement of these structures and operations may be regarded as long term investments of which the pay back period will be short, considering the expected increase in the number of visitors.

Great Houses should be preserved and great emphasis must be placed on investing in them to maintain and improve their operations; and diversify their activities in order to become an attraction to visitors and tourists and also a considerable source of revenue to the economy. Let us not neglect our precious heritage and history, but take advantage of its richness and sell it to the world.

GLOSSARY

- duppy- a ghost, evil spirit
- mento- a folk music which is responsible for the offspring of calypso and reggae
- maroons- members and offsprings of the largest community of runaway slaves in Jamaica
- marronage- the act of running away to the mountains
- quadrille- ballroom set dance which originated in the courts of Europe and was danced in Jamaica by the gentry during slavery
- gentry- people of the class right below the nobility
- tourism- travel for predominantly recreational or leisure purposes or the provision of services to support leisure travel
- plantation- usually a large farm or estate especially in a tropical or semi tropical country
- witch- practitioner of witchcraft
witchcraft- the use of certain kinds of supernatural or magical powers

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Teacher's Lesson Plan

THE USE OF THE CASE STUDY IN A CLASSROOM

RATIONALE

The case study done by Orville Thompson and Andrene Nelson of Munro College in St. Elizabeth, Jamaica, examines critically the role of Great Houses in this country. It also seeks to answer the query of whether anyone benefits from their preservation. The research revealed that these buildings were once the hub of activity during the slavery period in the New World. It was even recorded that many atrocities were carried out in some Great Houses and it may be for this reason why some persons are opposed to the idea of their preservation. However, the attractive layout of the buildings, the superb craftsmanship that is displayed in the architecture, the hospitality they offered and the lavish entertainment that also occurred in these houses cannot be over-emphasized nor over-looked. Therefore, the content of this case study is an excellent route to obliterating the negative views as it has been established that the benefits of the preservation of Great Houses far exceed any negative.

The Jamaica National Heritage Trust, established in 1958, sees the restoration and preservation of these buildings as a

viable enterprise. The Jamaica Tourist Board markets these buildings as attractions where visitors and locals alike can delve into the history of our people. As teachers, we have a moral obligation to chart a course for our students and to disseminate information that can help them to make informed choices. It is therefore with this view that I now outline how beneficial this work can be to those who seek to know more about Jamaica's rich, cultural heritage.

GREAT HOUSES IN JAMAICA: A SYNOPSIS

Jamaica is home to a plethora of magnificent buildings known as Great Houses. Interestingly, these houses are not a part of our natural structures. The manor-like edifices were borrowed from England during the 17th century. The opulent furnishings and Georgian architecture were replicas of what existed in that country, as during the period 1655 to 1962, Jamaica was a colony of England and this extended period of British rule led to an adoption of things British. Because these eminent planters wanted/had to spend so much time in our tropical paradise without losing much of the splendor to which they are accustomed at home, they imported as much of their homeland as they could. The Great House is one of the legacies

of this period. Many of these houses are virtually unknown to the average Jamaican and stand in ruins but outstanding ones such as Rose Hall Great House in Montego Bay and the Devon House in Kingston are vivid in the minds of all Jamaicans.

Today, Rose Hall Great House is renowned for the diminutive lady, Annee Palmer, who allegedly killed her four husbands and was eventually killed by her own slaves. Stories of horror are still told of her escapades and cruelty and even though it has been centuries since her demise, persons are still fearful of getting in close proximity to her property as it is said she still rides her white horse across the lush acres of Rose Hall. The veracity of these stories is, however, yet to be established. Many stories have been written about her, however, and one such writer, H.G. DeLisser in his book "The White Witch of Rose Hall" captures Miss Palmer's life and death and makes for enjoyable reading. A word of warning: It is not for the faint hearted!

The name "**Devon House**" brings a smile to the faces of those who relish the milky treats of "Devon House I-Scream". Built by George Stiebel, a coloured Jamaican, **The Devon House**

stands as testimony that not all Great Houses are linked to oppression. Mr. Steibel was not a rich English planter. Rather, he acquired his wealth through gold mining. Tour guides at the property tell that some persons of power then refused to travel on Hope Road where the house stands because of who the owner was. One such person was Lady Musgrave. Resultantly, Lady Musgrave Road came into being as this provided an alternate route to downtown Kingston. Today, the property boasts restaurants, craft shop, internet café and other attractions. Its impeccably manicured lawn and huge, sprawling trees provide the ideal meeting place for lovers, and offer families an ideal spot for picnics.

It is the paradox of these two houses and others like them that drive the belief that we stand to benefit far more than we stand to lose therefore every effort must be made to showcase our alluring heritage through their restoration and preservation.

CLASS ROOM USE

GENERAL OBJECTIVE:

Upon the completion of this lesson, students should show an appreciation for and an understanding of the reasons behind the preservation of Great Houses in Jamaica.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES:

Students will be able to:

- List at least three Great Houses that can be found in Jamaica
- Discuss their origin
- Explain how they contribute to Jamaica's history and heritage tourism
- Assess the extent to which they provide revenue and jobs and generate tourism activity
- Share their views on Great Houses and say whether or not they think they should be preserved.
- Watch a clip of a documentary on the Rose Hall Great House and write a paragraph on Annee Palmer
- Carry out independent research and present their findings in different ways

- Show a willingness to participate in class activities
- State 4 ways how the operations of Great Hotel can be improved to generate increased tourist activity

RESOURCES:

An Encyclopedia of Jamaican Heritage

– *Olive Senior*

Jamaica: A Junior History

– *Beryl M. Allen*

Teacher's notes (above)

Websites:

www.inht.org

www.jtbonline.org

CONTENT SUMMARY

- Bellefield Great House (*See Case Study for details*)
- Mona Great House
- Greenwood Great House
- Rose Hall Great House (*See Case Study for details*)
- Seville Great House
- Devon House (*See Case Study for details*)
- Tryall Great House
- Quebec Great House
- Bromley Great House

THEIR ORIGIN AND USES

- They came about during the 17th century
- They are modeled after English style manor houses
- They came about because their owners (Planters and their attorneys) wanted to live in similar opulence to that of their homeland
- Great Houses were synonymous with gracious living and fine dining
- Both local and visiting whites were recipients of the owner's hospitality
- Today they are used as restaurants, venues for functions such as weddings and receptions, craft shops, internet café
- Many are protected by the Jamaica national Heritage Trust
- They play a significant role in Jamaica's Tourism as attraction sites for visitors

TEACHER'S TASK	STUDENTS' TASK	SKILLS TO BE DEVELOPED
<p>INTRODUCTION</p> <p>To introduce the lesson, teacher will show a clip of the documentary on Rose Hall Great House to the class and ask students to list details of the excerpt. They should focus especially on Annee Palmer.</p>	<p>Watch the documentary List details.</p>	<p>Critical listening Writing</p>
<p>DEVELOPMENT</p> <p>Teacher will show pictures of Great Houses and their furnishings to class. She will also show pictures depicting activities which are now carried out in Great Houses. Students will be asked to describe the furnishings and list the activities.</p>	<p>Observe pictures. Describe furnishings List activities.</p>	<p>Observation Note taking</p>
<p>Initiate a discussion on the activities in Great Houses during slavery and the reason for their erection.</p>	<p>Participate in discussion</p>	<p>Speaking Analysing</p>
<p>Provide students with literature from texts such as Olive Senior's "An Encyclopedia of Jamaica's Heritage" for them to do independent reading to gather more detailed information on the topic</p>	<p>Read independently Process and gather information</p>	<p>Critical reading Analysis Evaluation</p>
<p>Guide students to websites of the Jamaica National Heritage Trust and Jamaica Tourist Board for them to see the work the organizations are doing to preserve heritage sites and discuss the benefits these have for the country.</p>	<p>Browse the Internet to locate websites List the benefits of Great House preservation</p>	<p>Gathering and processing information Analysis Synthesis</p>

TEACHER'S TASK	STUDENTS' TASK	SKILLS TO BE DEVELOPED
<p>Place students in groups of mixed abilities for them to</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. read and determine if the preservation of Great Houses is a worthwhile activity 2. browse websites for relevant information 	<p>Work in groups Read given material Browse websites</p>	<p>Group work Critical reading Gathering and processing of information</p>
<p>CULMINATING ACTIVITY</p> <p>Have students present their findings through the medium of a panel discussion. Students are to assume the roles of government officials, members of the private sector, employees in the tourism industry and community members.</p>	<p>Participate in panel discussion Assume the roles of key players involved in the preservation of Great Houses. Share their views</p>	<p>Sharing Role Playing Arguing rationally Critical thinking</p>
<p>ENRICHMENT EXERCISE</p> <p>Students could be asked to carry out extensive research on Great Houses in Jamaica and present their findings in the following ways:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Dramatization of Annie Palmer at Rose Hall. Tell the story from her point of view. 2. A diorama of Great Houses in Jamaica with pictures of their original states, their derelict states and their restoration. 3. A documentary of the benefits of the preservation of Great Houses. Interviews could be done with Jamaica Tourist Board officials, Jamaica National Heritage Trust officials, bus drivers, tour operators etc. 	<p>Independent research Dramatize findings Create diorama Make documentary</p>	