

Visit at home. Interv. Annie Powell and Wilbert Powell.
16.7.48.
T.O.

Present household:

Powell Annie head 55
" Wilbert son 30
Rochester Orrett great grand nephew 13.

They live in George Powell's (F.R. 51) yard but have a separate one-room house and cook separately under the big shed.

Annie Powell is the daughter of George Powell and his wife Frederica (nee Dyer). For her family etc. see F.R. 51.

Annie had three children by three different men: Wilbert Powell by Daisy Sutherland and Adelle Senior, by James Senior.

Daisy Sutherland married Bradley Dyer and lives in Bull-Savannah. Adelle Senior married Wilbert Rochester and also lives in Bull Savannah.

The boy Orrett Rochester who is "adopted" by Annie and lives at present with her is the grand-son of Annie's late sister Rebecca. Rebecca had a son with a Rochester from St. Thomas. This son Eucal Rochester had a child by Lilian Holness who died. Eucal died also and his child Orrett is adopted by the great aunt. Orrett is "a rude boy" and Annie complained about his behaviour.

Annie's subsistence is drawn from her father's land and her son's work. George Powell has about 100 acres of land. This is partly rented out partly cultivated (but not yet legally owned) by his sons and grand sons.

Wilbert Powell was the son of "uncle Nigger" as the "Blind man" Galetus Simpson who was present there answered promptly. After this zealous answer I had to drop the matter of Wilbert's parentage.

Wilbert's voyages to America, and his opinions on government of Jamaica.

I think to show his superiority on other respects (he is much darker than the rest of the family with whom he lives and present in the yard) Wilbert started to speak about his experiences in America. He has been twice as farm labour and visited on these occasions many places. He has seen New York, Boston, Washington, Philadelphia etc. In Boston he visited his aunt Nicola who has a hotel there "A nice lady - a good place they have". But he doesn't like so much Boston and Washington they are "Ancient cities, old-fashioned cities." He prefers the modern cities like New-York and Philadelphia.

While he was in America he asked about everything he has seen and wanted it to be explained to him. The Government is much better in America than in Jamaica be

cause it takes better care of the people. When a boy in America reaches 18 yeras he is taken into the army, and if he is not firt for the army he is given some other kind of work. Also the education is provided for everybody and such a type of education which ~~perxitsvknmvtov~~ gov enables the young people to proceed with their studies till they learn a profession, trade etc. "Look at this Bull-Savannah school - so many children - and how many will be able to be a teacher or a nurse. For this extra lessons - have to pay separately." And this is not the end of it.: "Think how many parents couldn't sent at all. Education don't go farther than machette." Yes there are many children whose parents can't afford to send them to schbol, to provide books etc. Those children education won't go farther than "machette".

The standard of living here is very low as compared with America says Mr. Wilbert. Even take the company. For picking tomatoes they// Jamaicans could make in America \$15, 18 and even 20 a day. And here you get \$1. The same with masons. The company employs them paying 5/- - 6/- per day.

The government in Jamaica is no good. Doesn't provide work for the people. Wilbert doesn't agree with the Jehovah Witness doctrine that a country can do without a government. Even Jesus Christ he was a God yet he circum-sized. Why? Because this was the rule of the country. Jesus also told to pay the taxes to Ceasar. There must be a rule in a country. But the Jamaica rule is bad.

Bull-Savannah/s/ in the past.

Wilbert isn't an old man and yet he remembers when from this place here one could only see that old Powell's house in ~~thexx~~ Green Olive and Mr. Laban's fathers old place. In Shaddock Hill aunty Cella house and old Joint house, and in Ribbit Mass T's house. And look now, so many houses one can't count them easily. In Ballards Valley it was the same. He was told horses and stock could run there and coming till Shaddock Hill and nobody was troubled. H

When he was at school every Friday Teacher told him an another boy to go in the evening and meet the parson on the Ridge Hill - near the place when the Seven Day Adventist Church is to-day. They would meet the parson and the next day walk with him till the Little Pedro Village, carrying his grip.

There was no Post Office in Junction, only one in Alligator Pnd and the other in Top H, ll. When a telegram would come all the people would gather and wonder: "A telegram was sent from Top H, ll." And if a policeman came he was followed by a crowd it was such an unusual and interesting happening that time. Bull-Savannah was out of the way

It is only since the tomato industry was developed here that the place changed, but it is not so long ago. But this is "small scale". Even the factory can't handle all the tomatoes which are supplied. People here (in B. Savannah) think in "small scale" they don't understand that what is important is that there should be many more factories in Jamaica. People need work and where are they going to get it, if there are no factories to employ them?

While we were talking with Wilbert the rest of the people seemed bored with the topic. They started a discussion ~~xxx~~ concerning how many "generation" there are in families. Caletus was arguing hotly with his sister Whil-el whether a certain infant is Aunty Cella great grand or great-great-grand pickeny. Caletus wanted to run into the fifth generation, while Whil-el thought it was only 4 generations being alive now.

His new house

Wilbert Simpson took me to the new house which he is building on George Powell's land a few dozens yards behind the house he lives now in with his mother.

The foundations, wooden construction and the thatched roof are ready. He has to wait with the walls as he can't get masons here. They all work in the factory. Wilbert would pay them more, but they prefer to work in the factory "for the name". (prestige). He will have masons from Prospect. These masons in B. Savannah they pick a little at one house and they run to another - so many houses are being built now and the masons and carpenters don't do their work properly.

Wilbert was very interested in his house from the technical point of view and explained to me the advantages of respective materials etc. He made a thatched roof now but he will replace it later one with a zinc roof. A thatch is all right when you are young and can climb the roof to mend it. The thatch on George Powell's house had to be replaced recently. Of course he had grandsons to do it for him, but Wilbert doesn't expect to have so many grandsons. The thatch for his house was bought near Black River, it is much better than the one used here, because worms don't eat it so much. If the thatch is cut in May, the worms will eat the thicker parts very quickly - it will just fall in dust.

The floor will be made of board. Wilbert wouldn't like to sleep in a room where the floor is of cement. He thinks a wooden floor is more "sanitary". ~~xxxx~~

The walls will be made the Spanish Wall fashion. Not cut-stones like in Ellis Macmorris house. To have the cut stones it is much more expensive and it is not more durable. It looks nicer, that's all.

He has seen in America how houses are built. They first have to dig very deep foundations and make a cellar there. A cellar is a very useful thing in that country. They keep coal etc.

I asked him whether he will marry and settle when the house is finished. Wilbert said he had "somebody" in Prospect. In fact he is going there on Sunday. He also wants to see the masons there, who will come to work on his house. He doesn't know yet when he will marry. He was much more keen on the subject of the house itself. The house he told me - is 20½ feet long and 11½ feet wide. He used 200 feet of wood for the structure, needs 50 feet for frames and 200 to 300 for floors etc. He will pay for the mason 6/- per day and meals. The mason will work for 2½ days with an apprentice to make the walls.

When we were parting he told me that some people don't understand the work we are doing here as they regard every thing in "small scale". Wilbert met with similar work being done in America and he understands it is "large scale". (I understood that what he wanted to convey was, that the questions we ask are really not of a personal character though they pertain to personal relations business etc. but they aim at gaining an objective knowledge.)

Wilbert Simpson struck me as one of the most intelligent men I met here. His world outlook is very broad and certainly "large scale". It is rather characteristic that in spite of the fact that all his family belong to the Jehovah Witness he doesn't associate himself with this doctrine because his ideas about government etc. are basically different.

18.7.48.

T.O.

I asked Dudley Simpson who was the father of Wilbert Powell. Dudley refers to Wilbert Powell as "the black one" "black but clever, quite intelligent." The story of this ugly duckling is as follows: "I understand Missis Annie had him somewhere in Clarendon. It happened that two women were having baby at the same time and Annie swap in some trans and they exchange baby. They exchange Annie's baby for that other woman." I asked why they did such a thing? "That woman deliver a blacker baby than the father. So just to please the father them exchange for Annie's baby." This story was "published" by Annie herself - this is the way she accounts for the dark skin of her son.

When I interviewed the other day Wilbert Powell in his yard full of "family and relations" ~~him~~ it was quite obvious that the problem of his provenance and colour is a touchy point. The young man must have grown with this "complex" which may be accounts for his higher intelligence? Wilbert cultivates a good portion of his grandfather's land. George Powell has a lot of land but much of it is not cultivable. "George Powell take up land from Spring Pasture to the ^{un}ate. It is so much hill and stone that Government doesn't look it. For cultivation purpose it is no good."

25.7.48.

T.O.

Interview with Wilbert Powell.

Wilbert Powell came to pay me a visit Sunday noon and stayed quite a long time. He is much more self conscious than the average person I met here. He has a knack to say platitudes and owing to this his opinions are "classical" in a way.

His life.

"My life is funny and many storms". He said he was born in Christiana where his mother was working at the time. He came with his mother to Bull Savannah when he was a baby and doesn't remember the place of his birth. He grew up in his grandfather's yard. "George Powell he raise me". He prides himself of being a brilliant ~~student~~ pupil but "I didn't have much advancement". Old George Powell use to have a lot of cows in Spring Grounds and Wilbert had to go every Monday and Wednesday to take care of these cows. This interefered with his school. He also told a lot about his friendship with Miss Ruby Blythe the sister of the teacher. "We grew together as sister and mother". Miss Ruby used to teach him about the proper behaviour. "A decent boy leaves a girl at 9 p.m." When he went to America later on on contract Miss Ruby used to write to him. He values very much his friendship - of a platonic character - with Miss Ruby. Apparently he was a favourite with the teacher who used to entrust him with all sorts of little responsibilities. In the yard of his grandfather another grandson grew in the same time. This was Caletus Simpson the blind boy. Wilbert tells how other boys used to snatch meat from Caletus' plate and Caletus used to keep the plate against his breast and developed such an acute sense of hearing that any time a child would stretch his hand to take the meat Caletus was quicker and prevented it. "His ears serve him instead of eyes".

When Wilbert was a young man some people came to Bull Savannah - some kind of surveyors - and they proposed to him to work with them in a place near Frankenfield. Also Vincent Powell was offered a job with them. At the beginning Miss Annie the mother of Wilbert didn't want to agree, but the man visited the home brought presents and the mother finally agreed. Wilbert's job was to be to care on shares for the cows of that man. One day Wilbert set with Vincent to go to that place. They walked 40 miles to Frankenfield but the man wasn't known there. Finally they met a short man who told them the place is $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles farther. They were very tired but finally found the place. They almost wanted to turn back. Vincent stayed in Frankenfield where he was working in a shop. Wilbert was with the "gentleman" he cared for the cows and for a horse. However he didn't stay long there. Somebody has taken his knife and Wilbert didn't like it and started to be "rude" to the man who took his knife. His employer

asked him whether he wanted to leave and Wilbert said he will leave. He didn't like the place all together. He stayed there only for 6 weeks. after he left the place he went to Vincent to Frankenfield and the next day he ~~was~~ started on his journey to Christiana on foot. At that time Joseph and James Powell his cousins were in Christiana and he wanted to join them. "They were very glad to see me". He stayed with them for a time and looked for a job. He started to make inquiries for his father's family and was told where they were. He went to see them. Wilbert is misty about this family. Apparently the father wasn't there but some female relative said she acknowledge he was the man's son "according to the likeness." They told him there was land for them, but Wilbert didn't like to stay there. As reason he gives, that the soil is of clay there and he isn't used to that type of soil.

His mother learned that he wasn't working any more and he got a letter from her asking him to return home at once. He went back home and cried when he reached it.

After a certain time - it was during the war - men were recruited to go to the U.S.A on contract and he applied, passed the examination. He was very pleased when he learned that he will go to America. He showed the papers to all his friends. However when the day of departure came, "the last night I spent in the home" he felt sorry for leaving the home and couldn't sleep all the night. He prayed to God that he shouldn't be with other boys from Bull Savannah. I asked him why. He said it was because in case he got bad news if he were among the strangers there wouldn't be anybody to remain him of the fact. I think he fabricated this mood postfactum as he did get bad news later on. Or more likely it was ~~his~~ colour reason - he is so much more dark.

His girls

These he considers as the "storms in his life." He has now a girl in Top Hill. He has had two before. "I always choose my girls from other districts." I asked him the reason. He gave not a very plausible reason that a girl from outside "I don't have to tell her about myself and she don't tell me about herself". "hills" apparently if the girl is from the same village he would have to tell her about himself. Perhaps though I didn't understand his way of reasoning. He explained to me with a fine sense of the business side of it that it costs more to have a girl outside. "You use more shoes and the clothes them get used quicker and it takes more time to visit." However he ~~is~~ is not mean with the girls. "Any money you have in your pocket, you don't bring any back." If the girl asks him to stand a bottle of rum he wouldn't like to be out of pocket. His first girl was from Tryall. He had a child for him - his first child and she died in child birth and the child died too. It wasn't her first child. She has had another one when she used to work in Mandeville but at that time he didn't know her.

"That girl cost me £20, doctors and all." He didn't marry the girl. Consequently he couldn't claim back any presents he gave her. "Being no relation, all I give her the family take it." And he bought her some pieces of furniture etc.

He had his next girl before he left for America. But this girl was no good, she wasn't faithful to him. About this fact his mother informed him in a letter. This caused him to "fret" a lot. When he came back he always told people not to write bad news to the boys in America. "No news good news". Happily enough he didn't stay with the boys from Bull-Savannah. It seems it was a relief to him in his sorrows.

How Jamaicais run.

His American boss asked him how Jamaica is run. Wilbert said "You meet a girl you have a child or two and then if you love the girl you build the house and marry. When a person is dead you keep a set up for the night and in the morning you bury. After a year or two you make the tomb and have a dance and this is the last of a person." The American wondered a lot. He said in America it wasn't the custom to have children with the girl before marriage. "You visit the parents and make a proposition". Also no set up is kept.

America

For some reason I could only guess Wilbert wanted to impress that the negroes are treated in America just the same way as they white. "You go to a shop and can buy a suit just the same as the white man. You put \$1 and the suit is yours and you pay every week when you get pay." He got a suit just paying down \$1. ~~AVRUGRNVKXKX~~ A coloured man (he didn't use the word negro) can have a car just the same as the white man. Can buy it on installements. Also he thinks it is better in America because the government doesn't interfere with business. This factory in Bull Savannah when it grows big the government will take it over. In America the government is only interested in collecting taxes - that's all. The farmers they can deliver their produce to the government. Wilbert is of opinion that the main difference in running the country is communication. There are buses on the high way which take you to the nearest town and from there you have train and air connection.

Visiting relatives in America.

Wilbert was working in Connecticut but he made a few trips just to see his relatives. He went to New York to see Mr. and Mrs. Andrews. They live

849 St. Nicholas Ave. In America Wilbert is known under the name of "King". "When you go there you tell them about King they will know." He also went to see his aunt in Boston Mrs. Nicola Samuda. Her address is 31, Broddox Park Boston. There are 60 apartments in the house which belongs to her. He stayed there for three days. But the aunt was mean to him "Didn't give me even one dollar" and he had expenses to travel to Boston. However she promised him that when she gets over to America her nearer relatives she will do something for him too. She will try to get him to America. "she will give me a chance."

Life in America

Wilbert would like to go to America to earn money. On the other hand he told me later on he would n't leave the home before his grandfather is dead. He wouldn't leave the grand father. (which is quite likely and not for sentimental reasons). He wouldn't like to live in America for long or in his old age. "You have to work every day and everything is on time." The bus comes every our to their camp. If you miss the 8 o'clock one you have to wait one hour. And it comes exactly at 8 not one minute later. Life is too quick too much work. In the streets of New York there is a crowd of people. They whisper because the are so close to each other.

He felt however quite at home in America. The boys would pay his fares to to the town to get him shopping for them. Because in the stores xxx there are so many things, you just spend all your money and forg get what you wanted to buy really. Wilbert used to make a list of the things he wanted to buy and keep to it. He shopped a lot for the others, socks, suits etc In America all the shops belong to the Jews. In a plac he stayed some young boys said they wanted to kill the Jews. Wilbert retorted that other people had just the same opportunity to build America as the Jews and ever body would starve if it weren't for the Jewish shops. The Italians they are waiters in the restaurants. In America every man has a better opportunity to make li- fe. However though I tried to bring the subject Wilber doesn't see in America anything else than better perso- nal economic possibilities.

He was struck by various mechanical advices like pressing the button for the lift, ringing from the hall to an apartment upstairs.

Once there was a show in the town near the camp. Girls were dancing "naked as the day they were born". The boss asked the following day whether Wil- bert went to the show. Wilbert expressed his disgust at such a show: "ou that have decent family shoudn't have such a show". And the amount of money which was spent for it by the boys. Wilbert says he doesn't dri- or go to the dances (But he had quite a lot of rum whkkavxtayingxx during his visit) when there was this dance in Bull Sav. at Isaac Lewis he didn't go butXKX

his girl friend went and he was very cross with her. Wilbert says he doesn't patronize places when one pays 6 d or 1/- for the set of music. He goes where one pays 5/- and if he doesn't like it he leaves but he doesn't make any fuss about it - he knows how to behave.

Thatch Walk

Here in Bull Savannah people who live "this side of the road" don't mix with the people from Thatch Walk - says Wilbert. "No one from here would eat a mango at Thatch Walk." They don't mix, don't marry with the people from Thatch Walk. Anybody who wouldn't know him may think that he is from Thatch Walk because he is dark. But he belongs to "this side" he is dark but his family Powells they belong to this side of the road. "We don't mix the road divide." Nor with the younger generation it is a little different - there is more "communication" but still it is a different quarter.

The grand father.

Wilbert said he managed the whole of his grandfather land. "I have the papers and pay the taxes and provide for the old man to prevent him to sell." Wilbert says that old George Powell would give him and even gave the papers for the whole of his land. But Wilbert wouldn't take all of it, he will give a portion to the sons so as not to create any misunderstanding in the family. I checked it and learned from "well informed sources" that: although George Powell has about 90 acres of land most of it is "of any use at all, rocky, even the gov't don't trouble it." It also "a portion of it is cultivated by David Powell and a portion by Vincent". They don't pay anything to George for it just something "to give satisfaction". Wilbert - although he wanted to appear to make to appear in my eyes as a big cultivator is doesn't cultivate really much. ~~Heavens~~ Were he a big cultivator he wouldn't work in the factory for 4/6 a day. During the season he has to hire people to work in ~~his~~ his tomato garden as he has to be in the factory every day. However it is most likely that old George Powell will give him in his will a good piece of his land since the young man is the nearest to the old one now. Wilbert sleeps in the room with George Powell. He said that ~~before~~ while he was in America the grandfather used to suffer a lot from asthma. Since Wilbert sleeps with him he opens for the night the window ~~and~~ and this eases the asthma. (Probably something Wilbert learned in America I wonder whether he does it really. I noticed that all the windows and shutters are closed in all houses for the night.)

Good wishes.

The visit started to be too long. I had to call to my rescue my good friend Dudley Simpson who always manages such visitors in a polite but firm way. Wilbert said he won't start before 5 p.m. to Top Hill so he had still plenty of time and could stay longer (he came before noon) but Dudley explained that the Missis had some work to do and ~~he~~ they must give "the Missis a chance". Wilbert started his parting speech. He said he regretted he met me so late but hoped I will remember that I met a fellow Wilbert. He had a little land so if in the future when I grow old I would like to settle he will always give me a spot to build a house. And as we all are mortal he wished that our graves were in Bull Savannah so he could go and say here are the graves of a Polish gentleman and a Polish lady.

He also warned me not to part from my husband when we go to America. Perhaps I will meet somebody who will tell me that he will make a better lady but I shouldn't part from my husband. He repeated this warning to Obrebski who came on the verandah to tell him good bye. We assured him we will never do such a thing.

Additions re Thatch Walk.

Speaking of Thatch Walk he also said that the only connection with this part of the village and the ~~Kugbong~~ rest was that the people from Thatch Walk would come and work for those living in Green Olive etc. Also those people from "this side of the road" would go to Thatch Walk to a set up but they would take their own rum, they wouldn't drink their rum.