

Bahamian American Partnership

Bahamian History Project

With the 30th Anniversary of Bahamian Independence fast approaching, it is the intent of the Minister of Tourism, Hon. Obie H. Wilchcombe to comprehensively document Bahamian Heroes and their accomplishments.

"It's time to stop and reassess where we are as Bahamians and where we're headed. It's time to honor our true heroes" he stated. "The Caribbean community deprives itself of it's own history and our country has not put on a pedestal our heroes," he added.

These are the individuals who took a stand for The Bahamas and other countries and as a result, changed the World forever. Given its size, The Bahamas has had an incredible impact on the world at large, and most Bahamians have yet to fully acknowledge and assimilate this impact into day-to-day Bahamian life and culture.

Now is the time. It is time to research, to document, to record, and to disseminate this inspired history for future generations of Bahamians. The heroes of The Bahamas need to be fully acknowledged, and this information must be made available to each and every Bahamian, for generations to come. Bahamians must never forget their heritage, their accomplishments, their heroes and what it truly means to be Bahamian. "It's time for celebrating the people and the true meaning of success" Minister Wilchcombe explained, "and it's not material."

With this in mind, and as part of the Bahamian American Partnership initiative, the Minister of Tourism invited Mr. Howard Dodson, Executive Director of New York's Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, and his associate, to pay a courtesy call on the Ministry of Tourism. The purpose of this visit was to discuss and commence the formal documentation of select areas of Bahamian History.

This Bahamian American Partnership collaboration will initially focus on documenting the Founding Fathers of Bahamian Independence, such as Arthur D. Hanna, in their own words, detailing the complete evolution of events leading to Majority Rule and ultimately to Independence for The Bahamas.

Mr. Dodson and his associate will also document individuals who have played pivotal roles in the formation of an Independent Bahamas, and contributed significantly to the events which brought about its success such as Lady Pindling and Sir Clifford Darling.

Mr. Dodson is a Bahamian American Partner and has participated in the Bahamian Fire Prevention and Safety Programme. Accommodations for Mr. Dodson and his associate were arranged at Sandypoint Beaches Resort.

Fire Prevention and Safety Programme

As a result of the devastating Bay Street fire, The Ministry of Tourism is also collaborating with The College of The Bahamas, Jones Communications and Uriah

McPhee Primary School in producing a Public Service film documenting a new Bahamian Fire Prevention and Safety Programme.

Using the success of the Uriah McPhee Primary School programme as a model, Minister Wilchcombe hopes to expand the programme to every primary school in The Bahamas.

In speaking on the Bay Street fire, Minister of Tourism, the Hon. Obie H. Wilchcombe indicated "it wasn't just straw that was destroyed. It's deeper, it's deeper. It speaks to Spirit. It's dying and we have to awaken it." It is this Spirit that he hopes to capture for current and future generations by initiating the Bahamian History Project, which will also seek to document Bahamian fire-fighting heroes.

Background

On September of last year, the Great Fire of Bay Street was ignited by an unconscionably deliberate act, destroying the landmark Straw Market, the Ministry of Tourism building and numerous thriving businesses. One short week later, on the following Tuesday, September 11th, the World Trade Center in New York City was attacked and completely destroyed, taking with it thousands of innocent lives and the innocence of millions.

These two incidents inspired countless acts of love, compassion and humanitarian gestures. One such act was the formation of the Bahamian American Partnership. The intent of this partnership is to bring together the very best of both The Bahamas and the United States, and initiate collaborative projects that will strengthen the bond between the two countries.

Photos

Fire Patrol 2 Photo

Left to right: Fire Patrol Chief Carroll, Frank Minaya, Captain Kevin Keegan, and Howard Dodson, Schomburg Center Executive Director.

Ministry of Tourism Photo

Howard Dodson, Executive Director of New York's Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture presents the Hon. Obie H. Wilchcombe, Minister of Tourism with an original World Trade Center sculpture created by artist Ovidiu Colbar. An original black and white oil painting of Prime Minister Perry Christie is displayed between both gentlemen.

Founding Father Photo

Howard Dodson, Executive Director of New York's Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture shakes hands with Bahamian Founding Father, Mr. Arthur D. Hanna.