The African Caribbean Institute of Jamaica (ACIJ) was established in 1972 as a division of the Institute of Jamaica. Its main purpose is to deepen public awareness of African cultural retainings in Jamaica. In 1990, the Jamaica Memory Bank (JMB) was integrated into the ACIJ, forming the ACIJ/JMB. The JMB documents Jamaica’s social history via audio-visual recordings of the memories of senior citizens throughout the country. Currently, the ACIJ/JMB has a wealth of resources relating to Afro-Jamaican cultural heritage and a vast area of Jamaica’s social history.

THE MORANT BAY REBELLION - PART 1

EVENTS LEADING TO THE MORANT BAY REBELLION OF 1865

The emancipation of the enslaved population on August 1, 1838 was followed by years of hardship for them, along with financial struggles for the plantation owners due mainly to poor estate management. Also, the decline in the price of sugar made production unprofitable, therefore some planters sold their estates and many who worked on the sugar plantations lost their jobs.

In 1864, Edward Eyre was made Governor of Jamaica. He was unsympathetic towards the poor who were constantly arrested for petty offences. Planters and ex-slave owners were also cruel to the poor.

HOW NATIONAL HEROES GEORGE WILLIAM GORDON AND PAUL BOGLE PLAYED THEIR ROLES IN THE REBELLION

George William Gordon was a Justice of the Peace in St. Thomas who showed interest in and sympathy for the poor. He was educated and a very rich businessman. He realised that the underprivileged population needed justice in the courts and doctors to care for them. He reported the matter to
Governor Eyre who did not attend to the plight of the poor but, instead, removed Gordon as Justice of the Peace. However, Gordon still maintained his goal to help the poor, ran in an election, and won a seat in the House of Assembly.

Paul Bogle, a farmer and deacon in the Native Baptist Church, was also concerned about the hardships experienced by the poor. He, along with sympathisers of the Native Baptist movement, supported Gordon in his campaign to win his seat in the Assembly.

As leader of a group in Stony Gut, St. Thomas, Bogle wanted to air the grievances of the poor to Governor Eyre, but was refused an airing. He decided to take matters in hand and began to train persons for combat. He led a riot on October 11, 1865 that resulted in the Custos of the parish being killed and the Morant Bay Courthouse being burnt to the ground.

Governor Eyre sent government troops to hunt down the poorly armed rebels and the Maroons captured Bogle and brought him back to Morant Bay for trial. The troops met with no organised resistance but, regardless, they killed Blacks indiscriminately, most of whom had not been involved in the riot or rebellion. In the end, 439 Black Jamaicans were killed directly by soldiers, and 354 more (including Bogle and Gordon) were arrested and later executed, some without proper trials.

George William Gordon and Paul Bogle gave their lives for the betterment of the poor in Jamaica. In 1977, they were awarded the title of National Hero.

**ACTIVITY**

**Crossword Puzzle - Comprehension Test**

Read the passage above and the questions below, then write your answers in the puzzle.
Across

1. What type of building was set on fire during the riot?

Down

1. The Justice of the Peace who cared for the poor was George William _______.
2. The Governor of Jamaica at the time of the Morant Bay rebellion was Edward _______.
3. What position did Paul Bogle hold in the Native Baptist Church?
4. What group captured Bogle after the rebellion?
5. In 1977, George William Gordon and Paul Bogle became National__________.

Across

1. courthouse

Down

1. Gordon
2. Eyre
3. deacon
4. Maroons
5. Heroes

THE WORDS OF THE RT. EXCELLENT MARCUS GARVEY

“If you have no confidence in self you are twice defeated in the race of life. With confidence you have won even before you have started.”
