

StVincent April Tape 8

[00:09:24] RJ: Today we're going to discuss the Caribs in St. Vincent and the Grenadines and I have a few questions for him. Um, where did Caribs originally come from?

EA: [00:22:27] Well that is a very good question. Thanks very much Mr. RJ. Very good question. Um there are a number of theories that have been put forward but the one that has been most accepted is the one that they started somewhere in the northern coast of South America and traveled northward through the island chain starting right down in the south of Trinidad and spreading finally right up to Cuba in the north.

[00:57:00] RJ: But, from my understanding the Caribs in St. Vincent and the Grenadines was more numerous, and more numbers here than a lot of the other islands. How did that happen?

EA: [01:10:17] Well, when we say the Caribs, we are thinking of one lot of persons, the indigenous persons who inhabited the islands. What I said earlier on was that the people from the northern coast of South America traveled northward through the island chain. Well, those were not really the Caribs as such, but they were the indigenous peoples who preceded the Caribs. The Caribs were perhaps the last of three different lots of people. **[01:45:00]** The Siboneys, followed by the Arawaks, and eventually by the Caribs. But they all immigrated northward through the island chain, the Caribs of course being the last ones to do so. So there were three different waves of these indigenous people traveling northward through the island chain.

[02:08:00] RJ: Um, the black Grenadines **[?]** the black Caribs, what is the ancestry? How did they get to be here on St. Vincent and the Grenadines?

EA: [02:08:18] The concept has always been that the black Caribs came into being because of the mixture between yellow Caribs and persons from Africa. That is the general belief that the two races got mixed together out of which came the black Caribs.

[02:45:06] RJ: So, from history – I read a lot but the struggles between the French, the Caribs and the British and the Caribs - why did the Caribs the black Grenadines **[?]** put up such a resistance, against the British particularly?

EA: [03:01:17] Well that's, that's a pretty far-reaching question. The point is, if we can think of the indigenous people inhabiting most of the islands in Eastern Caribbean and the Caribbean that became home to them and remained

undisturbed for quite some period of time. As you realize, once you set up your own home you'd scarcely want anyone to come and disturb you in your setting. Once it became very comfortable there, they viewed it not only as their home, but as their territory, which they were forced to protect against all comers. They would welcome strangers, but if you felt that you were going to take over their homeland then they would guard it very jealously indeed. And that is why of course the very early friction became not at the very, very outset of the mixture between the the- the- Caribs and then indigenous people but as they went along, it would seem that the two lots of people produced the-the-black Caribs and suddenly you had an influx of people from Europe who not only wanted just to be there and live with the people, but to take over the territory completely. And because of that of course, there would have been some, some friction and the Caribs decided "Well, this is our homeland, and we would defend it against all comers."

[04:47:09] RJ: I understand the French people, they came here before the British and they settled in, and mingled more with the Caribs and they wanted not so much land just as they wanted to plant sugar they wanted vast estates and so the French was different from the British in that way?

EA: [05:06:23] Well if you look at the very first history that we have of the French being there, it would seem that their first attempt was not so much – well I wouldn't say it wasn't to colonize – but they had a different slant to their colonization in that they were trying to spread religion and the Christian religion at that. They were trying to spread the Christian religion among these people. Well, it was partly successful until there was an incident that upset the whole program. And once that had been upset, the French were very, very hostile to the Caribs. And because of that hostility, the relationship between the Caribs and the French broke down almost automatically. And for a long time the French were not very welcome. It didn't mean however, that they just disappeared completely because they still continued to make inroads into what was there existing at that time. They started doing a little farming, they befriended the Caribs. But the Caribs always a little bit suspicious of them because of the incident that drove them apart.

[06:30:08] RJ: With the coming of the British, all that changed.

EA: [06:36:00] Well with the coming of the British, um, you had a complete change and it was almost a constitutional change, a political change. It wasn't only a case of people trying to live on the island, it was a case where the-the- once the British uh, after the Treaty of-of-of Paris 1763. After that, they-they saw St. Vincent as their territory. Now anybody who saw St. Vincent at that time as their own property had to come up against those who also felt that St. Vincent was their homeland which they were quite prepared to defend to the very death. The English then, of course, had different ideas. They thought of colonizing the country and of course, the

colonizing it wasn't just a form of government but it was sort of changing the face of the landscape, planting sugar which was going to be the-an economic crop, and that is what the Caribs had to give up their land so that this dream of planting sugar cane on the island uh, would be a reality. And that is what they fought against.

[07:56:16] RJ: The first Carib War, as I understand it, was from 1772 to 1773, what was the outcome of that?

EA: [8:04:18] Well that was a very strange war. Um, the English, by then, had set their sights on taking the whole island and the Caribs had begun to resist. The English got the views of the planters, and the planters were beginning to say "Well, the only way out is to get these people off the island." There was going to be no compromise because they were not going to be friendly to the sovereign king of England, and they were not going to be friendly to the planters, therefore the only way out was to get them off the island. But that was sort of frowned upon by some people in England and quite a number of persons elsewhere. Therefore, they had virtually to do it in stages. Now the English then sent in from the forces from Marshall **[?]** from England and came out and had a little battle here with the Caribs but the Caribs were the ones who virtually introduced this guerilla warfare and the English more or less played into their hands in that, when the war began it was late in the year when it was wet, raining, the trees and the forest were sort of, you know full of bloom, therefore they could come out in the day or in the night **[9:31:12]** and attack the English forces and retreat to the forests during the night and- Instead of the English making a lot of headway, they started losing very heavily. As a matter of fact, one of the stories is that-that they actually lost that war but the command came from England to break off at that point and sort of make some sort of relationship with the Caribs so that they could continue to, well- to foster their own hopes of achieving the island more peacefully.

[10:06:14] RJ: At the end of that war they signed a treaty and give the Caribs a certain portion of their land, like from Barrouallie right up to like Fancy, that place **Grancible [?]** right up to **Rabaka** that part of the land was like reserved for what they call the black Caribs, the difference between the black and the yellow. And the yellow Caribs was in a settlement on the other side of the island.

EA: [10:35:20] Well that's the- not as simple as you made it sound. The division started very, very much earlier. But um, by the time we got to that post 1772-73 war, um there was a division of land and-and the Caribs were not satisfied with the division of the land. As you realize, if you thought that the whole territory was yours and you are sidelined and put to a part of it, naturally you'd respond by almost aggressively holding onto what is yours. So that what triggered the second world war- the second Carib War, sorry. **[11:23:13]** What triggered the second Carib War was in fact, that in spite of what was given to the Caribs, the English continued to

encroach on the land, to destroy the crops of the Caribs, and you know, slowly to take over what-what was not allocated to them in the first place.

[11:43:23] RJ: But in the second Carib War, the yellow Caribs and the black Caribs they didn't fought together against the British? Or it was just the black Caribs that did most of the fighting over the land?

EA: [10:54:26] The story is that a large number of the yellow Caribs did not fight against the British. Now when we say large number of course we are speaking about small numbers, in today's world you think of millions, we're talking about hundreds, perhaps a few thousand. But um, the Carib community then was already divided because the yellow Caribs had found that they were virtually disposed of their lands by the black Caribs. That is how part of the history goes anyways that the yellow Caribs fought against the black Caribs therefore you could see if there was a third party making a bid for the island that the-the-the yellow Caribs would perhaps stay on one side and the black Caribs on the other side. The people however who carried the main part of the struggle they were the-the black Caribs and there were some yellow Caribs who joined the struggle as well. But, they were also helped by the French. So there was a mixture of French, black Caribs and some yellow Caribs.

[13:13:23] RJ: So, the result of the second Carib War right, they say after the second Carib War, the British took some five thousand black Caribs to Balliceaux and the black Caribs who didn't surrender, some went to Greigg's Valley, some went to [XXX], how do you see that?

EA: [13:34:18] Well that is how the-the history is set down. Uh, as you realize, we have depended on the English sources mainly for our information. We are now in the process of trying to get the French interpretation of what happened at that point in time and so we-we-we might at a later date have a different conclusion but that is how it worked out that they had the-the-the black Caribs were forced to surrender. Now as you realize, they had the pressure against them of not only the local militia but also the um, the-the soldiers from the region as well as help from outside the region, so that they were greatly outnumbered. And of course the Caribs although they had support from the French, they didn't have the access to the-the weapons that the people who were invading had therefore, although they resisted as best they could they in the end, were subdued. [14:51:19] Now, the story goes that-that those who surrendered- 5,026 was one of the figures given, um there's a slightly smaller figure given as well um 4,338- of those who surrendered they were brought to Calliaqua and then sent to the island of Baliso. Uh, those persons who have been working on the archaeology of Balliceauxuh have contended rather earnestly that they didn't think that Balliceaux could support 5,026 people but that was the number that was given as those who surrendered and who were shipped out to Baliso.

[15:39:13] RJ: So, what happened to the Carib language and the Carib culture after they left in 1777[x]?

EA: [15:48:00] Well you've jumped the gun a little bit there because um, you're taking it now from the end of the war to the-uh where we are today. That's-that's taking a big chunk out of what happened, because from Balliceaux you realize um we are told that the uh, quite a few of the people fell ill, and many died on Balliceaux. In other words, nearly half of those who were imprisoned on Baliso, in the eight months in which they were on Baliso, died. One of the English doctors who – I better say one of the doctors, I'm not sure he was English or what, one of the doctors who attended people on Barry-Balliceaux said that um the-the-the they died because of overeating. They said that when the soldiers were fighting they didn't have enough to eat and so on, and that when they got onto Balliceaux there was so much food there for them, that they ate too much and they died from overeating. Well, um, it takes a lot of believing to believe something like that. But more than half of them died in eight months period, and died in captivity, they were prisoners of war and that is one of the things, which still haunts people around the world, if a prisoner of war dies when he is a prisoner; you virtually have to explain that especially in these days you have to explain it. But there was no need for explanation then um, the truth is that those who survived were put on ships and taken across to Central America.

[17:35:23] What happened to the others? Now it wasn't everybody who was living on Balliceaux at the time who left Baliso, some were too ill and some they were certain they couldn't make the journey therefore they were left to die on Balliceaux or I don't know how those came to an end but, anyway. Some were left on Baliso; everybody who was on Balliceaux did not leave with that group that went to Central America. Now what happened to those who were on the mainland? Those who had resisted were told that um some had run back into- mainly the black Caribs we're talking about – they resisted and they retreated to Marriacqua Valley [?] up into Greiggs and up there and that is perhaps where you'd mainly find some of-of the true descendants of the all blacks Caribs- if I put it that way. Now what happened to the others? [18:39:01] There were some, as I said early on, who did not take part in the struggle – the yellow Caribs. Unfortunately for them, at the end of the resistance it would appear that the English felt that they could not be trusted anyway and so, they pushed them very up, very far up north to the extreme north of the island and sort of took them out of harm's way perhaps [laughing] they would not give any more problems and also some were sent back to the main, that's the northern coast of South America. So, we uh have a movement of people, those that remain, those that went into the hills into hiding, those who were pushed up to the northern part of the island right below the-the Soufriere volcano because I'm sure that it was hoped that by putting them up there, they would eventually be exterminated anyway. The volcano had to just erupt once more; twice more and that

would be the end of them. And some of the others were then sent to the northern coast of South America, the main.

[19:50:10] RJ: And what about Mundrung [?]. I understand that some of them went to Greiggs [?] and some of them went to Mundrung [?] above the [XXX] river and the [XXX] river up in that region

EA: [20:30:15] Well as you realize, what hap-happened um, those who were put up there were-were put in an enclave, um, more or less. Well, they were given a piece of land. They were not supposed to sell it, they were not encouraged, um any strangers around them. They were allowed to plant crops, anything they wanted to plant except sugar cane. But um, there were um, two little settlements that they had originally. The names uh, um I'm a little bit adrift on the names right now, but um, eventually they moved from the northeastern part of the island, around the top of the island and onto Vuvulay [?] on the other side, um on the western side. But they were given two- there were two settlements in the first instance, I can't remember their names right now but...that was where they first started and then they spread of course all around in the northern tip because that was the area that was virtually reserved for them.

[21:19:27] RJ: So but, today the traces of the Carib in the culture, the Carib culture and language. When I go around the country, and you ask people about the history and so on, I find that hardly anybody of Carib ancestry today really know the history. How is that?

EA: [21:40:02] Well it is the easiest thing to explain. If you are a people who have been taken prisoners, if half of those who are fighting died, the other half was sent to Central America and only a few of the yellow Caribs remain and a few of the black Caribs have escaped into the forests, it is obvious that after a little while the language would slowly disappear and whatever little there was of the culture would also disappear because now you have the um, the whole of the island virtually being taken over by the English and subsequently those persons who joined them after the Caribs were sent into exile. So that you'd scarcely expect that uh they would flourish as a people. If there was ever going to be a hope that any part of that would flourish as a people, it would be those who were exiled because that would, more or less, bond them together so that they could communicate with each other. But here you had, on the island, um, still a few French people; not very many the French had virtually disappeared by then and the English taking over. [23:23:18] Well we know, by wha-what we-we-we have seen the history later on, the English did not allow - even when the Africans arrived here - anything from Africa to be sort of perpetuated here. The costumes, and the cultures, the language were all wiped just from the slate. Therefore, the few Caribs who remained here were certainly- they had virtually no voice. And, having no voice of course, certainly as they died out

they-they whatever they knew of their own existence virtually disappeared with them.

[23:57:17] RJ: I know this. Watching video, videos from Belize and so, with the cassava, the way they make it. I see the similarities with how they make the cassava and do the cassava bread. I understand that when the Caribs left they took some plants or something over here with them

EA: [24:16:01] Well when they were put off the island they were given some seeds, and they were given some plants and they were given one or two little bits and pieces. But when they took them to Roatan um the-the-the situation in Roatan was described as being such that it was a place where even the iguanas would find it difficult to exist. So that, it was going to be a very difficult time for them. They could carry memories of the country where they lived but they had to start a life anew. As a matter of fact, the Spanish occupied that-that Roatan island and the British took it back from the Spanish and just put the Caribs on there and said "Get on with it. You have a new life" and see how you go from there. It was up to the black Caribs then after to-to um, try their best to-to exist on the conditions that they found there at that time.

[25:23:09] RJ: I understand the Garifuna people from Central America have a high regard for this land, St. Vincent and the Grenadines. Um, so do you think they should try to introduce some history and culture to bring the people, to bring back the language and the culture [indistinguishable] because it's so rich.

EA: [25:43:06] Well, it is interesting that you should say that. Um, over the years, the people who all live on St. Vincent knew very little of those who were exiled. It is only within rather recent times that um, those who were exiled were virtually made the effort to reconnect with the-the-the people on mainland St. Vincent. That anybody has been able to revive anything of the fact that they were once one people. Those people who are over there, they always knew that they came from here but the English then had completely removed from the memory of the people over here who the people were that they exiled. So that it was simpler for them to keep what they had then for those who remained on the island here to preserve what they had.

[26:58:00] RJ: People like you and Dr. Frasier and Dr. Octobbie [?] been doing a lot of work, writing books, like you now write a lot of books and so, what do you really doing most of all, besides trying to help to bring those books in schools and teaching children...

EA: [27:18:15] Well it is an on-going movement. I was realizing when we were children growing up; we knew virtually nothing of those who went into exile. The word Garifuna is virtually, completely new to us. And if you went around St. Vincent

and asked how many people know anything about black Caribs and so on, a few years ago everybody would have said that we know nothing about them. Today of course, there's a little bit more knowledge that these- uh, these people are the same persons who were exiled from St. Vincent and still have an existence and have multiplied into perhaps thousands upon thousands spreading up and down the area of Central America and into the- into North America. So that, there is more knowledge now and once the impetus is set, we can see perhaps that in the future that more will develop and those over there would know more of us and certainly those of us over here would know a little bit more about them. Well, if you put the two together, somewhere along the line, um, they'd reconnect and we should make some progress in the same area that you are referring to.

[28:40:00] RJ: By putting the history books in school, that is now coming out today from the primary up to secondary

EA: [28:49:15] Well, I don't know who we should blame for it, or praise for it, but at one time we did a little bit of the history of St. Vincent as written by Ebenezer Duncan in the primary schools but – and in the junior secondary schools but for some reason I think that was uh, the teaching of history per say, I wouldn't say it was abandoned but it wasn't given the um, the pride of place that it should have been given and um, now I think we are going back over that little area again to try to see if we could correct that so that the children that are going to that-

[GAP]

[31:01:22] AE: ... about the book, that French book that was written? Can you tell me a little bit more about that- about how history was written? How you came to know the history that you know? How – how you- does that make sense?

EA: [31:17:27] Well, I became a little bit interested in history when a student at the Methodist primary school in Kingstown. The author of the book- Ebenezer Duncan wrote that book "A Brief History of St. Vincent" and each year he had an-an examination that was open to uh- all the-the students from the primary schools. And you'd set this examination paper and you'd write this exam, and he would write-correct the papers and at the end of that, he'd declare who got the most marks. Well, I often say that on the day that I sat for that exam, it would appear that the other students didn't come to that exam, but somehow or another I got the top marks and uh, you know he came to the school, the author and he sort of um, he praised me for doing such a good job and actually gave me a prize for rating first on the island in history. So, I kept up my little interest in history and it followed me into the-the primary school and into the secondary school and since then I've continued my interest in history. [32:41:15] I think that, at that time, a few persons really became interested in the history based on the fact that a local person had written a history book on St. Vincent and that it was actually introduced into the schools as a text

book. In other words, we couldn't escape learning a little bit about the history of the islands that in later years disappeared somewhat.

[33:10:18] AE: What was that book based on, what was the uh, where did that information come from? Maybe you could talk a little bit about the French and the English writing history from their point of view.

EA: [33:22:27] Well, to answer the question in the first part, that book carried um, a lot of the information on the Carib War. It was mainly on the Carib War and the outcome of the Carib War. But there was a second section of the-the book "Studies in Citizenship" which dealt, more or less, in Civics. But the book was mainly the struggles between the Caribs and the British. Unfortunately, the source from which Mr. Duncan drew his information um, was of course very British, and it presented more the British point of view rather than just a general point of view. The Caribs were not seen perhaps in the very best light in that interpretation because, of course, the Caribs were seen to be the enemies of course they were the persons that were there on the island. They were seen to be the enemies. Well, you can imagine what the situation was so that the account would have been a little bit slanted in that direction. Of course, the main book that came out after that was um, an account of the, I think the Carib Wars by Charles Shepherd. And again, Charles Shepherd was employed by the British to write the account of the Carib War. Well if you're employed by somebody to write an account about a war, you would write it virtually from their point of view and not necessarily from the point of view of the- the persons who were on the opposite side. [35:22:01] who happened to be the Caribs. And so, a lot of the sources that we have in the writing of the early history of St. Vincent all tended to present the British point of view.

Now, I've often said that when the-the indigenous people were here they tried to write their own history, but the way they wrote it, they wrote it on stone, and in caves and that sort of thing up until today we were unable to decipher everything that they had written. The next time around, they asked the persons who were there with them on the island to write it for them. And the English wrote their point of view. Now the time has come for those of us who are perhaps born in the West Indies and who perhaps understand a little bit more of what perhaps exists today in relation to what was there before. We are almost redefining the terms; we are almost re-writing history and certainly giving a different interpretation to what was there, and what was written before.

[36:33:08] I mentioned earlier on that we-we-we have had the opportunity to get some of the French records and they are now being translated for us so that we can get a better idea, and a more balanced idea because the French played also a very important part in the development of these territories therefore you can't take a one-sided point of view that it was only the English who had any um, sort of contact with the people on the island.

[37:00:20] AE: Well, didn't the father- Fr. Raton write a book about the Caribs? Can you tell me anything about that book? What the name of it was or-

EA: [37:11:05] Um, I think it's just simply called "The Caribs" and uh, what happened is that it would appear that there was a priest living among the Caribs and he thought that the um, the-the-the Caribs were perhaps not being as fairly treated as they should be and um, he made a document and sent it away to uh, to France hoping that some action would've been taken to improve the lot of the Caribs. Whatever happened to that document, we are uncertain but the document was not um, the-the-the what was suggested was not put in-into any meaningful terms and the document itself was stored and hidden away for a long time and more recently uh, became available, and was sent back again from France to the West Indies where priests, uh Father Briton I think his name is, he did a translation and made the information available. Now that was a very, a very good document in that it opened up the understanding of the people of who the Caribs were. For instance, the Caribs were also seen only through the eyes of the British. But with the coming of that, it uh widened the view; there was a much broader horizon. We could think now of the Caribs as normal human beings trying to live their own life in their own particular way- and the-the way in which they knew how to live it. But before that, what what we got was that the-the English trying to force the Caribs down into their mold which was not um, very acceptable.

[39:09:09] AE: Ok, um... This is great. Just keep the camera rolling, don't turn it off we're just going to talk a little bit about- figure out what else would be important for- trying to see what else... I think you covered the history really well one of the things that I'm curious about personally is- I've heard that the Caribs were the originators of guerilla warfare. So I'm just curious if you know any specific stories that you know, um... that supports that theory, you know?

EA: [39:50:29] Not of a specific story, but as I mentioned earlier on, the-the method of the warfare was what gave it the name of guerilla warfare. In other words, the army would be- the British army would be marching along- there are no Caribs at all in sight- and as they go past thick bush on either side of the route that they are using, suddenly an army of Caribs would emerge from the bushes. You couldn't see them there before, they were camouflaged. And this new camouflage uniform that we think, that it's supposed to depict the hills and the trees and the so on and the browns and the greens mixed together. Well, this is what apparently was used. They were there peeping out from behind the bushes without being seen, and then they would just suddenly attack. And having attacked and done whatever damage they could, they were to retreat back into the bushes. And if you came there a few minutes after whether they were there or not, you would not see them. They would just be there but not being seen. And that is, after that technique proved to be so valuable I understand that it was used by the British army in the east, in some of the

warfare that they had out in the Far East and the early years. So it was transferred, that technique was transferred and is now quite common.

[41:29:21] AE: I think that when I was up on the um, one side, the windward side, we passed something called the Bloody bridge? DO you know what the story is about the Bloody Bridge?

EA: [41:41:21] There have been several stories about that but I am not 100% sure, and I wouldn't like to add my own story to it.

[41:50:12] AE: Ok, all right um... then the other area of interest that I am curious about is the yellow versus the black Caribs. They were two different cultures that were here on the island um, why-why-why did they all mix together, you know, why let me just discuss it with you before I ask a specific question. Why did they all mix together? Um, why did they, or the descendents today both of Carib and yellow ancestries, are they claiming one ancestry today? These are kinds of the things that I'm thinking about. I don't know how to put that into a question that you could answer, but maybe you could add some of your thoughts to it.

EA: [42:42:21] Yes. Um... again as I mentioned earlier on, we um, we had a situation where as far as we know the first lot of people would have come uh, up to the islands as early as about 7000 BC. Those would have been the people labeled as the Siboneys. Then, roundabout the turn of the the the into BC, AD you had the Arawaks coming through. Now the Arawaks preceded the Caribs, actually living for a long time on these islands. The reason for leaving South America- we have several reasons deduced now but – um, they were hear and by about 1000 AD, you have the fuller parents of the Caribs on the islands. Now, the story is that Christopher Columbus came to this part of the world, and we are pretty certain that according to the records, he did not actually land on St. Vincent but he came through this area um, 1490s. So that you have for nearly 500 years, the Caribs holding this island as if it was their own. Now if you're being in possession for something for that period of time, you're not going to let just any persons come in and take it over, just like that. And that is what-what made all the difference

[44:16:26] Now, allegedly these would have been the yellow Caribs, or descendents of the yellow Caribs, or the descendents of the mixture of the Arawaks and the yellow Caribs. Now what we find next happening, is that we believe that some of the people from Africa had already crossed the Atlantic and come to the northern coast of South America and Central America as early as about 1100 AD. We are not sure how many; we are not sure the-how they-their coming seriously influenced the people who were living here. But we know it's in the records that when Columbus came to this area, he already knew that there were people that were crossing from Africa to this part of the world and who were trading with the people who were in this part of the world in gold. And so, we believe that there was

some influence of people of African descent among the Caribs as early as that. But as we go further into the history you have more people of Ca- African origin getting into contact with those people who are on the islands, St. Vincent being one of them, and out of that – as I said earlier- we believe we had the Garifuna people emerging. I'm not sure that I've answered all that you wanted there, but if you wanted to just ask a little bit more- anything of particular interest there?

[46:04:04] AE: Well, today are the descendents both yellow and black Caribs? And do they differentiate themselves on either side?

EA: [46:12:26] Well, um, let me take that question because it's an interesting question. Um, I did say that you had the people who were exiled. You had those who remained, who were in the bush – ran away into the forest- and a few who were exiled again. That's an exile in itself to the northern part of the island. In other words, the few people of Carib extract – whether of yellow or black- would have been pushed virtually into an exile of their own. But they too, as you realize, were- were mixed because they were the mixtures as well as those who were black and by then of course, shortly after the exile to- to uh, Central America, you had the influx of slaves from Africa. Now, it has always been accepted that the Garifuna were never slaves. They had to come when uh, the passage was different, then they came with the early traders or on different occasions. But they were not the first lot of slaves who came. Now the French are the people who-who were credited as having brought the first slaves onto St. Vincent. So that some of the slaves also fought with the black Caribs and some did not. So that you had a mixture of persons on the island there. Now a small island – 13 by 11 square miles – you, 133 square miles, you had to learn to live with each other somewhere along the line. You couldn't forever, sort of, keep out of each other's path and it was just normal that whatever was the previous mixture that-that mixture would continue and would continue as long as nobody made any deliberate attempt to stop it.

[48:22:19] Now we've had other incidents here where we had a number of persons who came from Barbados after the sugar um, industry fell out so um, they moved to the [XXX] hill and so on. For a long time they remained as an entity on its own, but now that has virtually disappeared. And that is what will happen to minority groups – if they're small enough. If they're large enough they will survive but if they are small enough they will disappear. And that is what happened and the people that moved to um, to the, up to the new San- the old Sandy Bay as it was called and so on, were only a hundred and something families or something like that- a very small number. So that, you didn't expect them to go on for another thousand years unless they mixed with other people. If they remained, as they was put there they would disappear completely and that there's any trace of them now, it's due to the fact that they mixed in with other persons who came into that area.

[49:34:07] AE: So the Carib community now thinks of themselves as one- one- one people. Is that what you're saying?

EA: [49:42:01] Well, I am not sure um, what the individual views of the persons in the Carib communities would be like but, I think that most persons see the Carib groups as people who are Vincentians. That is how I think that it is, I may be far from correct but that is how I think- how I've perceived it over the past. I don't hear anyone who's asking for a job saying, "Well, I am a Carib so give me a job." You know, they ask for a job as a Vincentian and not um, with heavy overtones that they are from the Carib community. And people from the Carib community have occupied various positions of you know, in our communities. So I don't think that um, a heavy amount of discrimination exists on persons who are of Carib descent in St. Vincent as of today. I don't think so. There will be of course the individual accounts but I don't think that in the Main people of Carib descent are marginalized completely.

[51:20:08] AE: How many more minutes do we have? 11 minutes? Ok. Uh, is there- I think you really covered a lot of stuff. Does anyone else have any other questions, or do you have something else that you'd like to add?

EA: [51:36:14] No, I don't think so... Oh yes, I'd like to add this, because coming out of William Young's account, of the Caribs on the island of St. Vincent, he put forward the point that the women, the Carib women were only used as beasts of burden. If ever you saw a Carib family the- the man would be in front strutting like a peacock with his little knife in his side and his wife would be behind with the big basket of stuff on her head towing it along and so on. Because it was the women who did the farming and it was the women who took the farm produce to market. So whereas the husband was the hunter, he'd be there but he is not doing anything but hunting, when hunting is necessary or going to war, when it was necessary to go to war. In the case of the Carib women then, they were just beasts of burden and they would put the food for the husband on the table and they and the children would retire to the corner of the room and sit there until the husband had fed himself, and whatever he left on the table was what they got to eat. That was the kind of picture that they gave of- of the Carib woman. Now, in later records especially coming out from the French we realize that that was not always the case.

[53:13:07] As early as that period, there were Carib women who were going to Martinique the convent at Martinique, for education. So you can see why we'd need to get that balanced account of um, not only the English side of the view, but the- the French side of the view. Um, there's another thing of importance, as regards the agriculture. The English never knew the pattern of agriculture, which was adopted by the Caribs. In the thirst for acquiring land, they thought that no man should have just a lot of land and cultivate a little tiny piece of it, and be allowed to keep the rest of the land. That is why they made almost a law of taking away from the Caribs, lands which they didn't have under cultivation. What they didn't know,

that several of the Caribs had large areas cultivated within the forest area. They never knew that, because they never crossed the boundaries into the forest areas. So that, whereas they were thinking of the Carib agriculture as being extremely primitive [AIRHORN]

Non-Interview Banter

[54:59:05] Oh yes, they didn't know that they um, had land under cultivation within the forest area and that um, they thought that the only lands that they saw under cultivation, were the only area under cultivation, and so they thought the Caribs had no right to owning all that amount of land, and not cultivating it.

Um, one other thing, we have thought about the Caribs on St. Vincent as existing as one entity. It's a mistake to think of the Caribs of St. Vincent uh, as if they acted in isolation from all other groups in the other islands and so on. That was not the case. There was a lot of communication between the Caribs of St. Vincent and Caribs elsewhere, and between the French and the Caribs. In other words, there was a lot of traffic going on between St. Vincent and St. Lucia, and Grenada and Martinique and Guadalupe, and they did so with some, some canoes which were very, very quick through the water and some of them could carry as many as 80 men we are told um, when they were ferrying soldiers and so on. And we remember that it was under marooned on **Grand Sable** beach that when the Caribs had surrendered, that the English came down and burned something like 200 canoes on the beach and that is what brought the war effort to an end, because that was the communication link. They had no television; they had no radio and so on. But the Caribs were very swift in their canoes ferrying people backward and forward, ammunition backward and forward, food backward and forward and so on. And they moved from the Orinoco right up to Cuba and so later on when that um, French Revolution was taking its hold through the islands, that was perhaps one of the-the methods that was used to transfer information and so on up and down through the islands.

[57:08:05] And um, we should never think that St. Vincent was cut off from the rest of the world. It certainly was not cut off from the rest of the West Indian islands and um, perhaps cut off from the world but not from the other islands around

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[00:07:16] AE: Do you know about the traveling um, the traveling of the wars or of the... I'm trying to think if there's any other. I don't even know the questions to ask to bring that information out of you. Do you have any idea of how uh, what kind of crops that the uh, Caribs grew? And were they, like now there's a lot of arrowroot and cassava and [XXX] and things like that. Do you know? Is that the kind of thing, is that the same kind of thing they grew before the wars and after the wars? And did their life change, their agricultural life change dramatically- before and after the exile?

EA: [00:59:12] Well the answer is that the Caribs were the ones who um, now let's go a little further back. The Siboneys were not farmers particularly. They were cave dwellers and picked the fruits and that sort of thing. The Arawaks had a measure of um, agriculture which they developed and the Caribs perhaps took it a little bit further. Now, we know that both cassava and arrowroot were grown by the-the-the Caribs. Grown rather successfully. But as I said earlier too, don't forget that the French were doing a little peasant farming as well. But the-the French did some other crops. They did some coffee, and they did some tobacco as well. So that although sugar had not come on the- on the horizon by then, you had a number of other crops which were-were being used both for food and also - in the case of the French- a little bit of it was exported. Now with the-the-the food the cassava was very much used. And in that film that you did you'd see that you- they still pay a lot of attention to the cassava. And that was the main thing that was done here. And the reason why it was done, when it was prepared you could take it to war and it wouldn't spoil, you could carry it for long journey and it wouldn't spoil and it was very easy to be converted into a-a- form that you can enjoy just by adding a little water, by adding a little sugar and some coconut to it, by you know, making it into a porridge, making it into a uh, main course meal and, everything and it went very well with the coconut- the coconut milk. It was mixed with coconut milk and so on. [03:19:09] And because the insects never attacked it, it was very, very useful. You could store it almost indefinitely and um, it was almost the main thing. Whenever you were going to war, you didn't know how long you were going to spend, you'd carry your cassava with you. But the way it was prepared was pretty similar in Belize today as it is here in St. Vincent.

[03:44:05] Now as for arrowroot vegetables, some of them came a little bit later on, but they were already skilled in the use of um, growing root vegetable up until you know, going right back into the distant past. As we realize, the rivers team would fish, the seas team would fish, therefore the protein side of it was always available. And of course there was a little bit of hunting in the forest for whatever uh, animals would be there at that time. I think one of the things that would have been there would have been the iguanas at that early period. But um, the foodstuff has remained pretty well the same thing throughout. With the coming of the English

uh, a number of other things would have been added in but, the basics were always, were always... I don't think we grew any rice then ... we didn't grow any rice.

[04:50:08] AE: Ok. Um, thank you. I think that's about all that I can think of to you know, talk about. I could go on and on forever for sure. [HORN]
[Cut]

EA: [05:11:28] ... hurricanes and earthquakes and that sort of thing as you realize. We are a volcanic island and perhaps the island itself is the result of a series of volcanoes and earthquakes. So that whenever the Caribs were here, because we know that the Grenadines were formed before St. Vincent um, geologically and um, that they were volcanoes in the Grenadines and uh, what we are seeing in the Grenadines now the hills and mountains of the um, have been eroded right down almost to sea level, whereas here in St. Vincent where we still have um, an active volcano uh, the mountains are still very high. We don't have very much coral around St. Vincent, but if you're looking for coral then you can find it down in the Grenadines because the volcanic activity apparently retards the growth of the corals. But that's another story. But the Caribs all, going back to the Siboneys, they all would have had to face um, storms and volcanoes, hurricanes, earthquakes and so on. What we know however, is that whenever there has been uh, a volcanic eruption you have the soil level changing and that is what is very, very helpful to us now in archaeological diggings we can virtually uh, begin to place timing on certain things that you find. But, all of the artifacts now are stored in the earth in different layers based on the number of times the volcanoes erupted and put a new lot of soil over what was left.

[07:09:24] Now what was important about that in the early years would have been that every time you add something like that, if it was a significantly heavy ash fall, the population would migrate from the area where it was too heavy or where they were totally disturbed to another area so that you had- um, out, a long time going around the island different groups, or different areas of um, located where people lived and so on. So, that in itself is-is is quite important.

[07:45:20] AE: Have you found certain artifacts that stand out, that you've found that you want to talk about?

EA: [07:52:21] Well, um St. Vincent has a large number of petroglyphs, we didn't mention much about that in our discussions. Uh, what is the current view is that um, a lot of these petroglyphs may have been associated with some form of religious worship. Now, what is particularly interested here in St. Vincent is that in one area, just in the Yambo [?] area, we have about four or five petroglyphs almost looped together. Um, along the Ohud [?] coast we have a few petroglyphs strewn out there. But what is of importance here is that we have found just about no petroglyph to the area to which the Caribs were sort of exiled. That is very interesting in itself and

some of us believe of course, that we haven't found them yet. They will be found sometime in the future. Perhaps by now, we-we haven't found them as yet. That is certain, we have no records there.

[09:17:14] Now, I think earlier on you spoke about the-the tunnels. You wanted to know something about the tunnels?

[09:23:14] AE: Yeah, the tunnels and also you know, the stones that-that...

EA: [09:30:15] Now the [XXX] tunnels, I remember the tunnels because we were speaking about the-the artifacts and the-the petroglyphs and that sort of thing. Now the tunnels are found in the northern region, right up where the Caribs were, or where the Caribs still are for that matter. And we know the first one that was cut, that [XXX] tunnel, as far as we know that was the first one that was cut. But we can't be sure about that because it is alleged that the-the tunnels were used for warfare – some of them- and people moved from one part of the village to another part of the village through the tunnels. But the one that was cut in the first instance the Byrea tunnel that was cut to facilitate the movement from the Carib land where they were beginning to grow the sugar down to Kingstown where we- the boats would be waiting to load the sugar to be exported back to Europe. Now, the other one that was cut on the Grand Sable estate, the black point tunnel, which is even more interesting because along that eastern coastline there, it's exposed to the full blast of the trades and trade winds. You find that- that shipping there was almost impossible. And so, for an estate that was almost down on the seafront, they grew quite a bit of sugar and it was very difficult getting the sugar along the regular land route back down to Kingstown, so they started doing a little trafficking of the sugar from the northern part down along the eastern coast, in all that rough weather, um, on smaller boats and then the smaller boats would join up with the bigger boats down there in Kingstown [11:37:06] discharge their cargo on the bigger boats and the bigger boats would go out. So that when they cut that tunnel, the black point tunnel, it was to facilitate the movement of the sugar from the Grand Sable side through the rock to the more sheltered side on the other side of the rock and the uh, that's the [XXX] side of the rock. Where they- where it was a little jetty and the boats could more easily load their-their **ponchins** [?] of sugar and whatnot onto the canoes to take them out –what was called **drugers** [?] and then the **drugers** [?] would bring them down to Kingstown and so on. So the tunnels, those two tunnels were definitely used to facilitate the first one, not only the-the passage of the traffic- the road was extended right up to the Carib country but also it resulted into the movement of sugar. Even more so on the other one which is the Black Point which was definitely cut through the rock to facilitate movement of the um, the-the-the sugar.

[12:49:01] AE: And these were cut after the British had taken over then these were not-

EA: [12:53:11] Oh yeah, oh yes. Oh yes. That we know, those-those were cut after the British were there but the other tunnels, there were seven tunnels as far as we know and uh, and only two we have accounted for, so far. But um, there were other tunnels, which which were in other parts of that northern part of the island which were used for people moving from one place to the other. But of significance, all the tunnels are up in that northern part. This is how some of the concentration of the petroglyphs were around that Mesopotamia area. We find the tunnels up in the other **[XXX]** - I don't know if the people up in Mesopotamia were a little more religious? I'm not sure. **[13:39:04]** But it's significant that we find that. Yeah.

[13:43:04] AE: Ok, how's your battery? ... Just if you want to finish up with that?

EA: [13:50:04] Well, um, not very much more to say because those are the petroglyphs, the markings in the stone. Um, there's only one - well there's quite a lot to speak about petroglyphs but perhaps...

[14:02:24] AE: Not petroglyphs but the work stones...

EA: [14:14:08] I believe that, that persons from the earliest times would have used nature as best they could. Therefore, if they were going to make stone tools and they wanted to take whatever they found- nuts and crush them or corn and sort of reduce it to the correct size so that you could use it properly. Then they would use everything that they can find around. They made the mortars, which are the big things with the pestle and the middle for pounding. And they used the stones for- for crushing whatever they wanted to- big stones onto little stones. When we were children, they still used stones from grinding cocoa. You'd bake the cocoa and then pull off the top and then you would have one little round stone and a big flat one and you would crush it and then get your- your cocoa. When I was a child we enjoyed doing that.

[15:06:00] But the thing is that they would have used all the- everything that nature gave them, you know, they would have to use and they would use those stones for milling and grinding and that sort of thing, then for sharpening their own tools. If you realize that the cutlasses and so on didn't come in for the first time and started off with stone tools, stone axes and those had to be ground to a sharp edge on another stone. So one stone against the other would sharpen and **[XXX]** and so on. So that what we found, we found a number of- of depressions in the rock which were used for- for perhaps milling and grinding of the crops and also some depressions on the stones which were used for the sharpening of tools of one sort or another.

[15:59:02] Now of course, I just mentioned earlier on that whenever there was a volcanic eruption and the people had to run, they would leave everything behind so that every now and again you'd just come suddenly onto an area that

you'd find a number of these things congregated. Now we believe that it was not only an individual effort, but sometimes it was also a community effort where there would be a large stone and several persons from the community would come out and work on that particular stone. Like how the ladies would stand around and chat and wash? The same sort of thing they'd sit around and do whatever they'd have to do. So that some of the stones had several depressions, which meant that, several people had worked there, perhaps simultaneously.

[16:49:19] AE: Ok, that covers it. One LAST question. Do you have Carib ancestry? Did you grow up thinking you yourself were a Carib?

EA: [17:02:09] As a matter of fact, it came to my mind just yesterday that I might have Carib ancestry. Um, it's very fashionable these days to say that you are part Carib. So that most persons are trying to see if they can find a linkage but um... I had a very strange experience when I joined with some Garifuna people from Belize over to Baliceaux some years ago and they were having their ceremony and everything was going pretty well and I was just bystanding, looking on the full ceremony as it was taking place when the high priest suddenly stopped what was going on and came across to me and said, "The spirit said they want you in the ring." So I said "why me out of everyone else here, like everybody else looking on." He said, "No, the spirits said you have to come and join us in this worship." So I said, "no, I don't think I want to." He went in and they worked again for a little while and he stopped and he came and said "The spirits say they must have you in the ring." So I said "I'm not coming, I don't know who you're worshipping, what you're worshipping. I can't sing with you, I don't know the chants. I don't even know the language in which you are communicating."

[18:11:28] He went back to me a third time and he came to me and said "Well, look the spirits say you- I must, I must come to the thing." So I, sort of rather reluctantly, went to join them and started well, I said "Well what am I to do" and he said, "Just follow us." And I was able to follow them because I've done a little bit of dance movement myself and so we were swinging to the right and to the left. So I was having a wonderful time with them and so on but the spirits were not pleased that I had rejected the invitation on the previous two occasions and so I-I had a sort of major mishap just following that, before we got back to St. Vincent. But that is outside of the uh, the thing. So that, it could be, I asked them what they saw in me and they said, "The spirit said that you must come." And there were several people there and the spirit didn't tell them to take any of the other people so it could be that something was there between me, I don't know if the spirits realized that I was writing about the Caribs... I don't know what it was.

[19:14:28] But um, just a few days ago as I was looking back on my own family record, um I have, my father comes from the Grenadines but I think that is more of a European connection. But I think that my mother's mother would have had some Carib connection based on the names because some of the names. The

same people to whom she was related, I have in recent years found out that they had some sort of Carib ancestry. So it could be that I'm a little bit partly Carib too but I don't know if I carry the distinctive high cheekbones, and slit eyes and short hair – I have no hair at all [LAUGHING]. But, I am not sure but uh, there's a possibility.

[20:12:14] I think a lot of people- if they could really trace their family history far enough- would find that there would have been a criss-crossing of Carib ancestry as well. But unfortunately, a lot of people prefer to say that they have Scottish ancestry. [LAUGHING] That's how it is.

[20:36:16] AE: You want to tell us about the mishap was?

EA: [20:37:08] Not really. But I know it was supernatural.

[20:46:12] AE: Ok, thank you. Thanks so much. Don't move yet, I gotta get you- just look over here.