

STANGIB LTD.

601 Franklin Avenue / Garden City, N.Y. 11530 / 516-746-4666-7 • 212-895-3160

PRESS RELEASE

JAMAICA

Christmas 76 depicting Belisario Prints (2nd issue)

8 November 1976

Process: Lithography

Designer: Clive Abbott from

Pane: 25

Belisario Prints 1837

Stamp Size: 27.94 x 44.45mm

Printer: John Waddington of

Souvenir Sheet Size: 140x108mm app.

Kirkstall Ltd.

Watermark: Jamaica Pineapple

VALUES & DESIGNS:

10 cent - The Queen or "Maam" of the set-girls had absolute authority over the lively and graceful dancers called "Set-Girls". The large blue bow and blue tipped feathers on her hat, identify her as "Queen" of the "Blue" Set-Girls.

20 cent - The Band of the "Jaw-Bone John-Canoe" used very primitive musical instruments. The "Gumbay Box" or "Bench-drum", a small wooden frame with a goat's skin tightly stretched over it and the "Jaw-Bone" which has the lower jaw of a horse with the teeth loosened.

50 cent - "Koo,koo or Actor Boy" competed each year for the title of the "smartest dressed". The stamp shows the runner-up in Christmas 1836 who is shown lifting his mask to cool his face with the fan.

Drawn from life by I.M. Belisario, Christmas 1836.

From diverse stores of records, the following information has been pieced together concerning the artist and etcher Isaac Mendes Belisario.

Belisario was probably born sometime between 1790 and 1800. He may have been a grandson of a Rabbi of the same name who died in 1791. Belisario's father was Abraham Mendes Belisario, married to Esther Lindo and having six children. So much for probable family.

He is best known for his engraving of the interior of the Bevis Marks Synagogue, London, from a picture painted by him. Belisario published the engraving in 1817 when he

lived at 5 Simouth Street, Mecklenburgh Square.

Other addresses that he is known to have lived at were 14 John Street, Bedford Row in 1818 and in 1831 Belisario resided at 12 Finsbury Chambers.

It is a matter of record at the Royal Academy that he exhibited landscapes and a portrait in the years 1815, 1816, 1818 and 1831. The Old Water-Color Society records show that Belisario exhibited works of art on four occasions.

Jacob Andrade in his "A Record of the Jews in Jamaica", Kingston 1941, page 158 states that Belisario painted both a portrait of Hazan (cantor - a synagogue official who sings or chants liturgical music) Isaac Lopez and my (Andrade's) maternal grandmother in 1835 and has them in his possession.

The British Museum has a lithograph portrait of the actress, Ellen Kean (1805-80) engraved and painted by Belisario and published by him in 1832.

An interesting account of "John Canoe" is given in Belisario's "Sketches of Character", (Kingston 1837). Copies of the portraits are in the Jamaica History Gallery of the Institute of Jamaica as is the book "John Canoe".

In the West India Reference Library there is a story concerning an oil painting hanging in an accountant's office entitled "Kelly's Jamaica" unsigned. In 1868, a friend of the accountant saw this painting and recognized it as a water color she had seen for sale at Reilley's Gallery in New Orleans for \$700. She obtained a photograph of the painting (11"x7 3/4") and sent it to a Miss MacGregor. The water color is signed M. Belisario and entitled "Sugar works at Kelly's". The details and view are exactly the same as that of the oil, the only difference being that the water color has some geese and turkeys in the foreground.

Also at the West India Reference Library is "Draftsman and Lthographer 1830 * "Sketches of character". An illustration of the habits, occupation and costume of the Negro population in the island of Jamaica. Drawn after water and in lithography by I.M.Belisario." Kingston, Jamaica #1 (1837), #243

(1838). All plates (four in each book) printed by A. Duperly.

Jamaica Herald and Commercial Advertiser, July 29, 1835.

To those who are lovers of the Arts, who delight in contemplating miniature resemblances of the "human face divine" we earnestly recommend an early visit to the studio of Mr. Belisario, at the southeast corner of the Parade in this city. We yesterday had the gratification of seeing the^{sic} likeness of Sir Joshua and Lady Rowe and of Dr. Ferguson painted by that gentleman - It is but justice to the artist to say that they are not only beautifully drawn but are also what may be strictly termed "first sight" striking^{sic} likenesses. We scarcely know which to admire most - the elegance and truth exhibited in the full length miniture of her ladyship, the dignified serenity depicted in the countenance of Sir Joshua (who is represented full length sitting and robed in his Judges costume or the delightful half-length miniature of Dr. Ferguson. Upon the whole, however, we incline to the opinion that if there be any difference the Artist has been happiest in the likeness of the Doctor. The accessories in all three are also in very correct keeping. To say that Mr. Belisario deserves great credit is but faint praise to appreciate his merit properly, the pictures must be seen West India Reference Library.¹³

Thus, an on-the-spot observation of Isaac Mendes Belisario.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Andrade, Jacob A.P.M., A Record of the Jews in Jamaica; Kingston 1941
 Jewish Historical Society of England; Transactions Sessions 1935-1939
 Vol.xiv - 1940 Belisario
 Journal of the Institute of Jamaica p. vii
 Jamaica Herald and Commercial Advertiser, July 29, 1835
 West India Reference Library

STANGIB, LTD. extends the warmest thanks to A. Silvera, Acting Head Research & Publications, The Institute of Jamaica for complete cooperation in the preparation of this release.

prepared for StanGib, Ltd.
 601 Franklin Avenue
 Garden City, New York 11530

PLEASE SEND A CLIPPING OF THIS RELEASE TO MRS. LESLEY FORD
 AT THE ABOVE ADDRESS.