Interesting, comprehensive

The Book A — Z Of Jamaican Heritage By Olive Senior Heinemann Ed Books, Caribbean Ltd, The Gleaner Co Ltd)

Reviewed by Sheilah Garcia-Bisnott

The A — Z of Jamaican Heritage has been Justly acclaimed by many who have had the opportunity of looking closely at it, for neeting a crying demand for easily accessible and digestible material on varied aspects of success in having filled a gap.

Fortunately, in selection as well as treatment of reographical, social context as well as an unmistaeable feel for local attitudes and experiences made no ading. vivid, interesting, meaningful by a mind which evidently understands and appreciates the material which she handles.

local sorrounding; makes contact with the Morant later in the work do stand out from the pages in Bay Rebellion and Spanish-American War; and their realness; and although photographs such as that distant camp to the Kingston Harbour where too many sketches and photogrphs appear unclear, they have been summoned in an emergency.

And the Subjecy Coinage offers opportunity for comment on aspects of the history and use of "St. Andrew Parish Church" cannot be found until Jamaican currency, as well as revives for many the he discovers that "Saint (St)" follows "Star" here, quattie", the "bit-and-fippance" and related expe- instead of "Sag or Sah-" as appears to be more riences conveyed in the song of one who beg Dinah buy quattic sugar,

one big gill a coconut ile,

halfpenny pickle fish fe de brawta..."

Some readers will be surprised to read of the presence of camels in eighteenth century Jamaica; that the names "ganja", "chillum", "collie" are Indian and that "the concept of ganja as a holy weed is also a Hindu one." The entry under Kingston Indu rial Garage interested me at first by its mere presence here, then by its brief almost concealed reference to certain characteristic "highchested" Jamaican taste - of 1984 as of 1907!

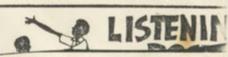
But there are disappointments, In an understandable effort to be concise, the writer sometunes appear to misrepresent details, perhaps the entry which refers to "Anancy" as "Jamaican name for spider", and that which comments that "bankra" is "Jamaican name for basket" may ocal culture. Already the advice is passed on: be considered merely unclear (at worst, misleading Check the A -Z", "The A - Z should have to the foreigner or the ignorant); but I consider it that." But many would be disappointed if the really odd that Tom Cringle's Cotton Tree is achievement of this work were confined to its presented as "no longer to be seen, having died in the 1960's after being damaged by a truck"!

My memory supported by issues of the Daily subjects the work achieves considerably more. A Gleaner (1969 and 1971), recalls that that wellksurprisingly large number and variety of topics nown tree fell "limb by limb" in 1971 apparently (with obvious limits, of course) are discussed with dying of old age after efforts of the Jamaica Tourist on eye for relevant detail, an interest in historical, Board and Trust Commission failed to preserve it. The intry appears lacking and could be considered

I was disappointed too with the quality of some of the decidedly appropriate, potentially useful and meaningful illustrations. While the Jackfruit which An entry on Newcastle, looks at broad setting, appears on the front cover, and the "market basket' manages to involve the reader briefly with soldiers that on our Half-Way-Tree Square in 1900 provide on an almost unbelievable three-hour walk from interesting illustration and make for good viewing; unsatisfying.

A reader may even be flustered by the fact that

Such failures are happily few, perhaps dwarfish beside the remarkable achievements of the A -Z; for a work of this kind and quality imposes on itself standards with which it dares not tamper, to any significant extent.



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