

The History of Hanover



Hanover holds the title of the smallest parish in Jamaica as it is only has an area of 177 ² miles or 458.43 sq.km. However, the terrain is mainly low lying with some mountainous regions. It also holds the distinction of being the second rainiest parish in the country. The towns include: Green Island, Sandy Bay, Ramble, Dias,

Cascade and Lucea. The parish is bordered by St. James in the easterly section and by Westmoreland in the south. There is evidence that the original inhabitants- the Tainos once resided in the parish as their remains have been found at Rhodes Hall estate, Kew estate, Haughton Hall estate, Green Island Harbour and New Found River. The Spanish later occupied the island after the voyage of Christopher Columbus who claimed it as a part of Spanish colony. At the introduction of the Spanish, the Tainos were decimated as a result of Spanish brutality and diseases which they contracted from the Spanish.

Piracy was also one of the hallmarks of the early history of Hanover. Pirates would operate from the nearby coast specifically Negril Bay which was once an embarkation point for pirates. In fact, Henry Morgan who later became Governor of Jamaica was said to be the owner of 4000 acres of land in Riley, outside of Lucea.

After the expulsion of the Spanish from the Island in 1655, the English laid claim to the island. Officially, Hanover was established on November 12, 1723 from a section of Westmoreland. The reason given was to facilitate the 'ease of the inhabitants.' Prior to that, the residents had signed a petition complaining about the expense and inconvenience that they incurred for example having to travel up to fifty miles to pay taxes. The exact name was derived from George I, then

monarch, who had familial ties with the house of Hanover in Germany. Initially, there was the proposal to name the parish St. Sophia to commemorate the memory of King George I mother but it was overruled by the Assembly.

Supported by slaves from Africa, Lucea had its fair share of plantations and was a key participant in producing sugar during the 17th and 18th century. In 1776 sugar and rum from the estates were exported from Lucea. By 1768, the parish had 71 sugar plantations, 13,571 slaves, 8,942 heads of cattle and an annual production of 7, 500 barrels of sugar for that year. A census conducted in 1824 revealed that there were: 502 whites, 1,438 free coloureds and 22, 945 slaves. During colonial times, Lucea was a vibrant trade port as it was quite common for sales of slaves to take place at the port.

Religion

During the 18th century there were attempts to introduce more formal European religious teachings to the enslaved Africans. The Presbyterians sent two missionaries to the island on the request of planters who wanted to provide their slaves with religious instructions in 1827. One missionary, the Reverend James Watson, went to Lucea and eventually built two churches, one in 1830 and the other in 1832 in Green Island. The other went to reside 9 miles outside of Lucea.

Post Emancipation

Typical of the post emancipation period the economy of Hanover became diversified and less dependent on sugar. The new peasantry engaged in the production of crops such as yam, cocoa, plantain and cassava. A particular variety of yam known as the Lucea yam later became affiliated with Hanover. Hanover became very prolific in Agricultural production at that time. To enhance the labour force after the emancipation of slaves, several immigration schemes were developed from within Jamaica. These schemes recruited people voluntarily from: India, China and other parts of Europe. The East Indian Scheme which took place between the years of 1845-1917 saw some of the immigrants coming to Hanover.

Contemporary Hanover

Nineteenth century Hanover saw items that were exported from the harbour up to the 1960's. In the 1970's there was the exploration of crafts. In the 1980s there was a sojourn into agro- processing with tumeric processing. Additionally, in 1962 a cocoa fermentary was established.

A "deepwater pier" was constructed but exportation from that particular port ceased in 1983 when the port was closed. Not only, did they supply neighboring parishes but also Panama which had many workers from Jamaica and such it was common for ships laden with provisions to sail from the Lucea Harbour. In the 1930s as well, the parish was famous for its cattle production as there were numerous grazing pens in areas such as, Settlewood, Burnt Ground, Knockalva, Ramble, Haddo among others. There were also some banana plantations in places such as: Kenilworth, Paradise Point and Westfield. Fishing is another economic activity in which some of the citizens participate. Hanover in 1989, engaged in manufacturing; Jockey International a clothes manufacturing company operated out of the parish where they produced over {20,000} twenty thousand dozen units per week. Initially, they employed approximately four hundred and fifty persons and had made plans to expand there facilities.

Tourism is another mainstay of the parish and provides employment for many. Some popular hotels are, Roundhill, Tryall and the new Grand Palladium.

Notable things about Hanover

- The remains of a sugar factory and distillery can be found in In Kelinworth
- The historic clock which was installed in 1817 was initially intended for St. Lucia. However when it ended up in Jamaica, the locals claimed it and funded outstanding amounts through a subscription service. The clock which is adorned by a German Helmet sits atop the old Lucea courthouse.

- Tryall Golf Club was previously a sugar estate and currently houses a 200 year old water wheel – from the time of slavery.
- In Lucea, Fort Charlotte which was built to defend the harbor from French raiders is the namesake of the George III's Queen.
- The actual date of the establishment of the Parish Church is inconclusive but records of the earliest recorded baptism was 1725 , 1727 and 1749 respectively were the dates of the earliest recorded marriage and death respectively.
- In 2007, Chigwell a small farming community in the east of the parish was flooded for months from rains that were associated with Tropical Storm Nicole.
- Hanover shares the Negril strip with Westmoreland.
- Fat Hog Quarter – is an ode to the fact that pigs were reared in this area in the 1700.
- Cascade has a number of Fern species
- In 1985 the parish was affected by flooding which left a number of residents homeless.
- There are claims that the Lucea Parish church has a tunnel from the church to Fort Charlotte
- The Lucea Police Barracks was once the Hanover District Prison from the 18th century. It is now home to the Hanover Museum.

Sources Used

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