

Nevis Heritage Project

Interim Report 2002

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with contributions by

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The Interim Reports on the Nevis Heritage Project are intended to facilitate the rapid dissemination of results from the fieldwork and other research being undertaken as part of the project

This report was edited by Professor Roger H Leech

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INTRODUCTION

This is the third interim report of the Nevis Heritage Project. It provides a detailed summary of the discoveries, and current interpretation of those discoveries, from fieldwork and research in 2002.

It is again a great pleasure to thank all those on and off Nevis who have contributed so much to the work of the project. On Nevis we are especially grateful to the officers and staff of the Nevis Historical and Conservation Society, to David Robinson and his colleagues on the Executive Board, to John Guilbert, Joan Robinson, Lornette Hanley, Gennifer Broadbelt, Gail Dore, Tessa Mills and Nicholette Walter, for their unstinting support and genuine enthusiasm for all aspects of the Project. Their help and personal interest have been essential to the success of our work on Nevis. We are equally grateful to those who have supported the project as a whole, most especially Drew and Marjorie Morris, Martin Dalgleish, Vince Hubbard, and Ed and Lennie Scull. We thank collectively those whose particular contributions are also recorded more fully in the separate sections of this Interim Report.

We are also again delighted to thank members of the Nevis Island Administration for their support and assistance. We thank Mr Lester Blackett, Director of Planning, and Mr. A. F. Merchant, Director of Agriculture, for providing us with the permissions to conduct our explorations on Nevis; without their full support and encouragement the Project could not be conducted, and we are extremely grateful for their official approval. We are also most grateful to Mr Aylton Liburd for help from the Nevis Prison Farm. Amongst landowners we would like to thank Mr. Bill Pinney for permission to work at Mountravers and Mr and Mrs Cedric David for permission to work around their goat pen. David Small again deserves special mention for his encouragement of the work at Mountravers and for his sharing of so much information from his documentary work on the Pinney papers.

The management and post-excavation work could not have taken place without the full backing and finance of the Department of Archaeology (Professor David Peacock, Head of Department) and the Faculty of Arts at the University of Southampton. For Themes One and Three we must also note with considerable gratitude the support of the British Academy. For both these themes the research projects have met with success in the successive competitions launched by the British Academy in its Larger Grants Scheme.

Finally we must thank Penny Copeland for her help in the preparation and production of this report.

Elaine Morris, Roger Leech, Andrew Crosby, Tessa Machling, and Bruce Williams, June 2003

THE NEVIS HERITAGE PROJECT

Brief History of the Project

In 1995, the Government of St. Kitts-Nevis announced that it would begin to develop the Newcastle Airport on Nevis in response to demand from increasing tourism and general economic growth in the Caribbean. The plans indicated that all structures in the village of Newcastle would be demolished to facilitate this necessary development. One unusual building, which fell directly within the line of the extended runway, was the Redoubt, a colonial fortification. In response to this threat, a small team of researchers organised by the Department of Archaeology, University of Southampton was quickly assembled to conduct a structural survey and archaeological excavation of the building with the aim to preserve the memory of this remnant of the historical past by archive records and photographs. The Nevis Heritage Project was created out of that experience.

Aims of the Project

The Nevis Heritage Project aims:

- to investigate the prehistoric and historic physical and social landscapes of Nevis as a sample of human history in the Lesser Antilles of the Eastern Caribbean prior to the destruction of that history by natural and human agencies
- to disseminate information about the heritage of Nevis (and St. Kitts) through a variety of publications and other media such as radio, television, exhibitions and the internet
- to train undergraduate and postgraduate students of history and archaeology in the methods needed to research the heritage of this island, and
- to involve Nevisian school children, teachers, citizens and visitors in exploring the heritage of Nevis.

Goals of the Project

The goals of the Nevis Heritage Project are:

- to raise awareness of the remarkable prehistory and history of this tiny island amongst not only the citizens of the Federation of St. Kitts-Nevis but also archaeologists and historians around the world
- to provide an impetus to make Nevis heritage a significant factor in tourism revenue
- to encourage government to improve heritage legislation and respect for the past as part of the future prosperity of the islands
- to help train the next generation of Caribbean archaeologists and heritage managers, and
- to begin the process of establishing a community heritage officer for Nevis.