

Caribbean - "Wind"



Tracy-D.W.

‘History is...a matter of fact or perspective?’

(Tracy D Williams)



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Other titles in the 'Stories to be tolled' series:

Caribbean-'Rush'

*Nights at the Round Table- the Berlin
Conference 1884*

*Gone with the Wind? - Macmillan's Speech
for Change*

Introduction

By the start of the 20th century, America became more involved with the Caribbean after acquiring responsibility for Cuba due to victory in the Spanish American War (1898). America also sent aid to Jamaica when the island experienced an earthquake in 1907 and constructed the Panama Canal by 1914. The Canal gave America a huge interest in trade across the Caribbean. At the start of World War 2 (1939-45), many people in Britain's Caribbean colonies volunteered to fight on behalf of the British crown. More than ten thousand men and women went to work as sailors, air force personnel, soldiers and support workers.

As the relationship between London and Washington grew due to becoming war allies, Britain agreed to lease some army bases to America and grant them access to the air- fields and ports on some of the islands. Britain also granted permission for America to start trading with other countries across Britain's colonies. Despite this, Britain was still committed to providing support to its Caribbean colonies with the 'West Indian Welfare Fund' (1939) but the start of the War prevented this from happening. However, by the time the war had ended in 1945, Britain found itself with no money or resources to build its own public services. As the people of the Caribbean came to Britain's aid to fight the war, it came to Britain's aid again...

Chapter 2

Lights, Camera, Action!

Slowly but surely, the British Crown eased up on its dominant control,

Of the Trade Unions of these islands giving the ordinary man more of a role.

Then England recommitted itself through granting Universal Suffrage,

To Jamaica first in 1944, then to the other colony's governance.

This came at great cost to England as it waged wars and felt bereft,

It could barely fund its own infrastructure; it had hardly any money left.

Her cities were badly in need of reparation and for human labour,

So she called to the Wind, a cry for help, was this an opportunity to savour?

On the 22nd day of June in 1948,

A monumental happening like a seed began to germinate.

Like an actor playing their debut role, to grace us on the stage,

At Tilbury Docks, the *Empire Windrush* brought the dawn of a new age.

This ship sailed from Australia; it was no maiden voyage,

But it made one stop in Jamaica with the invitation 'all aboard!'

One pioneering generation saw this as their chance to shine,

To use their gifts and talents in an era of economic decline

Rebuilding this Great Britain was indeed quite a colossal task.

As the shortage of labour meant it became such a huge ask.

Nearly 500 Caribbean citizens saw the offer and answered the call,

Of the opportunity of cheap travel in exchange for paid work and more

These were the 'anointed,' the 'chosen ones' who decided to leave the sun.

For a cooler climate and ask 'what can we do?' and 'what should be done?'

Go to www.storiestobetold.com and check out the 'Caribbean-Wind' learning journey page for the 'What if' illustration, podcast and alternative time line for this story.

A Chronology...

1807- Slave Trade abolished.

1833/4 - Slavery formally abolished across the British Empire.

1939-45 - Second World War

1941- Atlantic Charter-Britain allows America to trade in the Caribbean.

1944 - Jamaica is the first Caribbean island granted universal suffrage.

1948 - British Nationality Act passed.

1958 - First Notting Hill Carnival event.

1962- Commonwealth Immigrants Act passed.

1971- Immigration Act passed.

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'History is not a matter of fact...but of perspective'... (Tracy DW)

Born and living in the UK Tracy DW has worked for over 15 years as a teacher and school leader.

Influenced by her many school projects on Black History and a desire to see a balance of perspective in teaching history in schools, Tracy DW presents Caribbean-Wind.

This is the first story to be published in the 'Stories to be Told' series celebrating a major turning point in the relationship between the UK and peoples of the Caribbean.

Guiding the reader through key events and mile stones in the Empire Phenomenon, 'Caribbean-Wind' is a poetic narrative on Britain's colonial past; why the British took control of so many countries, how it maintained its power and its impact on the many ethnicities and cultures that were changed forever.

