



Quarterly Newsletter

March 2022

Humble beginnings in Nevis sprout an American Civil Rights trailblazer

Many of you may not have heard of *Constance Baker Motley*, but during Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson's nomination to the US Supreme Court on February 25th, she invoked our daughter of the soil

'Today, I proudly stand on Judge Motley's shoulders, sharing not only her birthday but also her steadfast and courageous commitment to equal justice under law... Judge Motley's life and career has been a true inspiration to me as I have pursued this professional path.' – Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson, associate justice-designate of the Supreme Court of the United States

Constance Baker Motley was born in Connecticut, USA, on September 14th, 1921 to Nevisian parents **Rachel (née Huggins)** and **Willoughby Alva Baker**. Before emigrating to the US from Nevis, Rachel worked as seamstress and a teacher, while Willoughby was a cobbler. In the US, Willoughby went on to be a chef for various Yale University student societies, while Rachel was a domestic worker and community activist, eventually founding the the New Haven National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP).

Inspired and exposed to African American history (especially the writings of W.E.B. DuBois) in her Sunday School and through her mother's activism, Motley's own childhood in Connecticut was mostly free of overt racism. She was, however, turned away at age 15 from a public beach because she was Black, and it



*Martin Luther King Jr., Constance Motley, and William Kunstler.
Photo: naacpldf.org*

is said that her interest in civil rights grew after that experience. It was most certainly cemented when she experienced Jim Crow laws firsthand: while traveling to a college in Tennessee she was at one point ordered into an old, rusty car marked “COLORED.” She wrote: “Although I had known this would happen, I was both frightened and humiliated. All I knew for sure was that I could do nothing about this new reality.” Eventually, Motley was in a position to dismantle abhorrent segregation laws, and she worked tirelessly behind the scenes to change the course of American history.



Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. chats with his wife, Coretta, left, and civil rights champion Constance Baker Motley before the start of an S.C.L.C. banquet in Birmingham, Alabama. Photo: AP

As the 9th of 12 children of working-class immigrants, she could not afford higher education, even after graduating with honours from Hillhouse High School. Fortunately, while speaking at a community centre, she caught the attention of a New Haven philanthropist, Clarence Blakeslee, who offered to pay for her education. Judge Ann Claire Williams, in her [2019 tribute to Motley in Judicature magazine](#), wrote that Motley “... learned as a teenager the importance of compassion and developed then a belief that one committed person can make a difference in the world.” Motley went on to earn a degree in economics in 1943 from New York University, and three years later, got her law degree from Columbia Law School.

In 1945, she became a law clerk to Thurgood Marshall, and over the next two decades, she worked on some of the nation’s most famous

From the Director...

Although we are well on our way into the year 2022, it would be remiss of me not to take the occasion of our first 2022 quarterly newsletter to wish you our dear friends and members a Happy New Year! It is with great excitement (and a little fatigue ☺) that I report that this quarter has been nothing short of activity-packed. Quite fittingly, this quarter also saw greater emphasis being placed by our team to recruit and mould our energy-filled youths into the next guardians of our island’s natural, cultural and historical resources.



As we welcomed new activities, as well as the revival of those previously rendered dormant by Covid-19, we were thrilled to incorporate our Hamilton Scholars and other student volunteers into our events and programmes. They proved to be helpful hands at our highly anticipated Jumble Sale in February and keen listening ears at the archaeological presentation made by Prof. Neal Ferris in March. A few of our junior art aficionados could also be seen absorbing the watercolour paintings of Howard Pain as we welcomed back our long-awaited ‘Meet the Artist’ event in March. Under the umbrella of Generation Restoration, staff members also led a group of youth volunteers to participate in the St. George Coastal Cleanup, organised by Hon. Eric Evelyn. Our commitment to engaging the next generation was best displayed at the Nevis Youth Careers Expo (NYCE) held in March, which saw our able team inspire tomorrow’s leaders to explore careers in history, heritage and conservation. Their interactions were rewarded by students so excited to join the field that many signed up as volunteers on the spot!

As we dive into our next quarter, we look forward to partnering our youths with our veterans for the betterment and continuity of our Society and Nevis as a whole. Stay tuned for upcoming activities inclusive of our Earth Day cleanup at Fort Ashby (April 22nd), Restoration of Nevis Wetlands Project, the development of a new Maritime Museum, practical beekeeping and a host of others. It promises to be yet another busy quarter, reliant on your continued involvement and support. Lastly, I offer a hearty congratulations to every member, volunteer, associate and staff who has contributed to the work and success of the Society over the years. While your great work is not being undertaken for the recognition, it was truly humbling to receive on your behalf, an award from the Ministry of Health and Gender Affairs, recognising the Society as an impactful group leading the charge on climate change adaptation and mitigation. Keep up the excellent work, the intangible rewards are all around us!

civil rights cases, including preparing the draft complaint in 1950 for what later became *Brown v. Board of Education*. As a young lawyer, she successfully litigated cases that ended segregation in Memphis restaurants and at whites-only lunch counters in Birmingham, Alabama, and defended Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s right to march in Albany, Georgia. She inspired many generations of African American women lawyers who became judges themselves, like Judge Brown Jackson. Motley has been hailed as dedicated, loyal, gracious, and as someone who loved her work.



Constance Baker Motley being sworn in as the new borough president of Manhattan by Mayor Robert Wagner as her husband, Joel Motley II, and son, Joel Motley III, look on, World Telegraph and Sun, February 25, 1965. Photo: Phyllis Twachtman, Library of Congress

She became the first African American woman to argue a case before the Supreme Court, as well as the first to serve as a federal judge. This was just the beginning of her “firsts”: In 1964, Motley became the first African American woman elected to the New York State Senate; in 1965 she was became the first woman and first African American chosen as Manhattan Borough President; and in 1966, President Johnson named her a Federal Court judge – the first African American woman to preside over a federal court.

“As the first black and first woman, I am proving in everything I do that blacks and women are as capable as anyone.” – Judge Constance Baker Motley

Judge Motley was the recipient of numerous awards during her lifetime, including the Candace Award for Distinguished Service by the National Coalition of 100 Black Women in 1984. In 1993, she was inducted into the National Women’s Hall of Fame. In 2001 President Clinton awarded her the Presidential Citizens Medal, and the NAACP bestowed on Motley its highest honour, the Springarn Medal, in 2003. Judge Motley continued to serve as a federal judge until her death in New York on September 28th, 2005 at the age of 84.



Watch now: [Constance Baker Motley: My Childhood](#)

PROJECTS:

WE'RE ON THE MOVE...

Due to relaxed entry requirements to the Federation and a resumption of cruise tourism, January through March saw a flurry of activity in our Museums and Gift Shop. Meanwhile, behind the scenes we have continued to fundraise for our projects through a variety of technical and financial partners; to date we have raised funding of over US\$ 270,000 for our current projects, including:

- **Restoration of Nevis Wetlands:** U.S. Forest Service Natural Infrastructure for Caribbean Resilience (NICaR) Program
- **Democracy in Action – Hamilton's legacy on his island birthplace:** Public Diplomacy Small Grants through the US Embassy Bridgetown
- **Beekeeping – Establishment of central breeding facilities:** UNDP GEF Small Grants Programme

- The **Nevis Archaeology Centre**, funded through an extremely generous personal bequest of Elaine Morris, is almost complete! Staff and volunteers – including Elaine and her husband, Clive Gamble – worked tirelessly to clear out the unsightly storage containers and move materials over to the new purpose-built centre, and we're excited to start landscaping the area anew. Looking towards the future, we will be raising funds to enable us to hire a junior curator/manager for the Centre who would be responsible for the day-to-day management of the centre. The ideal candidate would be a recent Masters or PhD graduate in archaeology, eager to gain some Caribbean experience and whose responsibilities would include:



- Sorting all the boxes into a numbered position of row/bay/shelf in the Artefacts Room and establishment of a spreadsheet of these boxes in these positions;
- Liaising with archaeologists/persons responsible in the past for any fieldwork including surface collection of artefacts in Nevis;
- Assisting visiting researchers to the Centre.



The ongoing **overhaul of the Nevis Island Archives** continues through the assistance of Christian Goodwillie and his team from Hamilton College. Urgent repairs to, and fireproofing of, the Archives roof are estimated at approximately EC\$ 50,000 (US\$ 18,500) for which we are currently seeking funds.

... AND SO IS NELSON!



As most of you know, British naval hero Admiral Horatio Nelson met Fanny Nisbet in Nevis and married her at Montpelier Estate in 1787. Our **Nelson Museum** at Belle Vue was conceived and built to display an eclectic private collection of memorabilia of the life and times of Admiral Nelson. The late Robert Abrahams, a Philadelphia lawyer, collected all the items over the course of his life and displayed them at his Nevis home on the former Morningstar Estate. The full collection, which was bequeathed to the Society in 1990, has fascinated thousands of visitors to Nevis, including Queen Elizabeth II and other members of the Royal family who visited the island. While the popularity of Admiral Nelson among our British visitors is undeniable, we are eager to redevelop the space into a more inclusive **Museum of Nevis Maritime History**. The new museum would include the story of Nelson's brief visits and marriage here, but also expand on Nevis' rich maritime

history and include stories on Nevis boat building and fisheries traditions (lighters, fishing boats, traps, etc), shipwrecks (ie. HMS Solebay and HMS Childsplay) as well as the fascinating story of pirates in Nevis. Through the generosity of the **1805 Society** in the UK, the original St. John's Figtree Parish marriage register is being conserved, and together with a surrogate and a replica of Nelson's uniform, they will be officially presented at a brief ceremony in Nevis to commemorate Trafalgar Day on 21st October 2023.

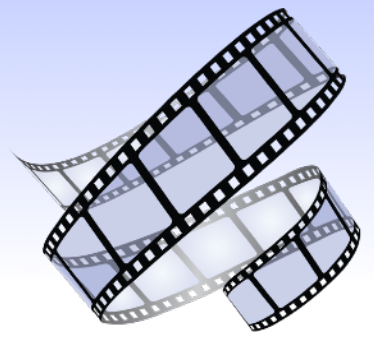


Society members and Canadian curators, Tina Bates and Phil Dunning, have been assisting with refining the Nelson collection. Together with Society member, Maureen Ferg, and our museum consultant, Lorna Abungu, the entire Nelson collection (both on display and in storage) was reviewed with a view to identifying a select group of items for eventual display. Tina and Phil also identified the priorities for paper conservation and made recommendations. The **Barbados**

Museum & Historical Society generously extended a "mates' rate" for the conservation work, and Lorna arranged for the safe transport of the objects to Barbados in March. We are extremely grateful to the Director, Alissandra Cummins, and Anne Bancroft, the Head of Conservation & Collection Care, who received the objects and will oversee the conservation in their impressive new conservation area, and their eventual safe return to Nevis.

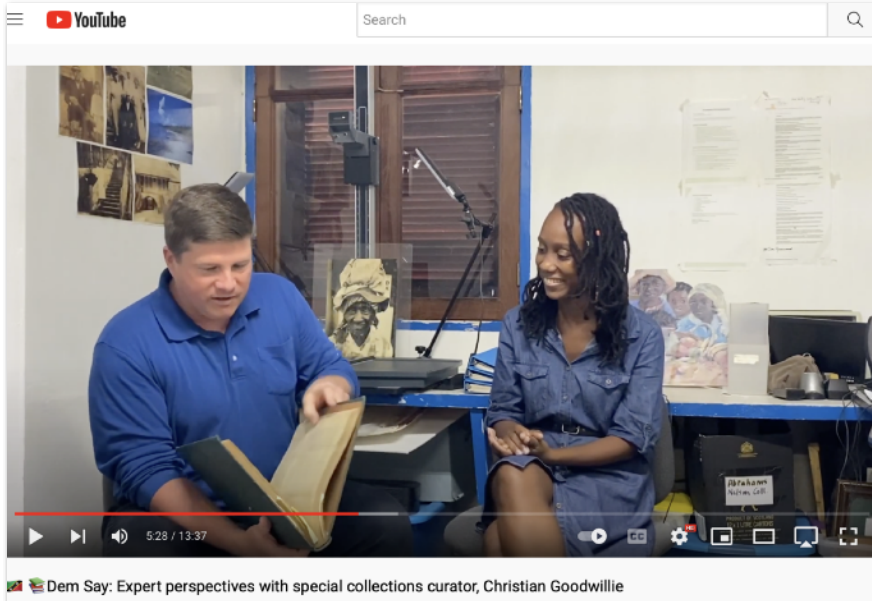


DEM SAY!



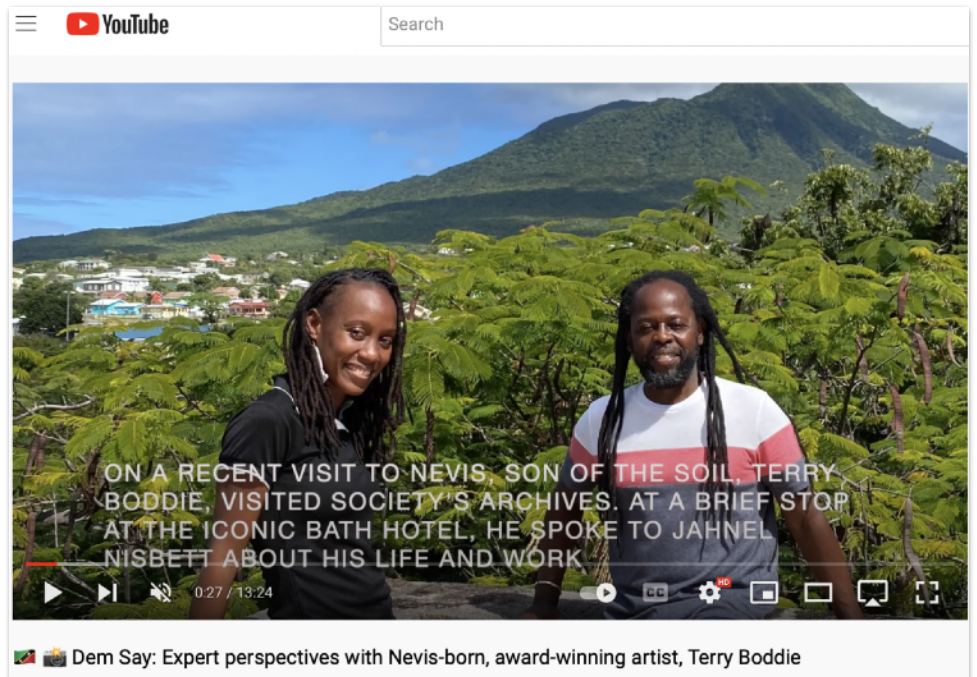
Have you been enjoying our in-house video series, “DEM SAY”?

You can watch all our episodes [👉 HERE!](#)



In **Episode 3**, our Director Jahnel Nisbett sat down with **Christian Goodwillie**, the Director and Curator of Special Collections at [Hamilton College](#) in the USA (named for Nevisian-born American Founding Father, Alexander Hamilton). Mr Goodwillie has been partnering with the Society for several years on the digitisation of our precious collections in the Nevis Island Archives, and in January he visited Nevis again to advise on how we can improve both the physical space and our holdings. In this episode, he shares his perspective on the importance of safeguarding our historical records.

What better way to end History & Heritage Month than with **Episode 4**'s inspiring conversation with Nevis-born, US-based award-winning artist, **Terry Boddie**! During his recent visit to Nevis, we were lucky to chat with him about his creative practice and scholarly work, both of which include his interest in archives. He is looking forward to examining our Nevis Island Archives in order to expand his 'Blueprints' series that looks at interconnected economic systems and social structures past and present, among other themes. Did you know that Terry's work hangs in the collections of the [Philadelphia Museum of Art](#), the [Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture](#), as well as private collections? Check out his work [👉 here](#).



ACTIVITIES & EVENTS

ANNUAL JUMBLE SALE



Our annual Jumble Sale fundraiser on Saturday, 19th February was a great success, in large part due to the generosity of many members who donated items, and the tireless efforts of all our staff and numerous volunteers, namely: Pam Barry, Tina Bates, Allerson Browne, Althea Campbell, Sheila Cohen, Joan Cottham, Penny Cox, Esmerelda Dick, Phil Dunning, Brad Hessler, Denys Hoyt, Kit

Fry, Gillian Hobson, Miriam Knorr, Lorenzo, Joy Napier, Bev Parry, Nicole Rogers, Jubal Sargeant, Carol Willauer, and the 2020 Hamilton Scholarship students: Aaliyah Fahie, Noella Maynard, and Joric Daniel. Thanks also to the Ministry of Social Development & Gender Affairs for the tents! To them all – and everyone who made purchases – we extend a hearty THANK YOU for your support of our work to safeguard Nevis' natural and cultural heritage!



LET'S CLEAN UP



We've proved once again that we're not afraid to get our hands dirty for a good cause! On 26th February we were proud to partner with the **St George Gingerland Coastal Cleanup**



at Indian Castle as part of the "Let's Clean Up" month organised by the area representative, Hon. Eric Evelyn, who is also Minister of Culture, Youth, Sports and Community Development in Nevis, and Federal Minister of Environment. The Society was ably represented by Jahnel Nisbett, and Eliesel Ramirez Dorsett, who made us proud to be part of #GenerationRestoration!



THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF NEVIS

It was a full house on Wednesday, 9th March for Professor Neal Ferris' public talk on the archaeology of Nevis. Professor Ferris is back to continue his important work of investigating the archaeology of Nevis, and broader activities will also include community consultation, archival and oral history research, site documentation and inventory, educational and promotional content, and developing curation, conservation, and management strategies and local

capacities in the Federation. Prof. Ferris will be recruiting persons to be part of the team – project manager/field & lab support – and we were delighted that several students turned out for the talk and expressed interest to get involved. If you'd like to get involved, send us an [Email](#) us today!

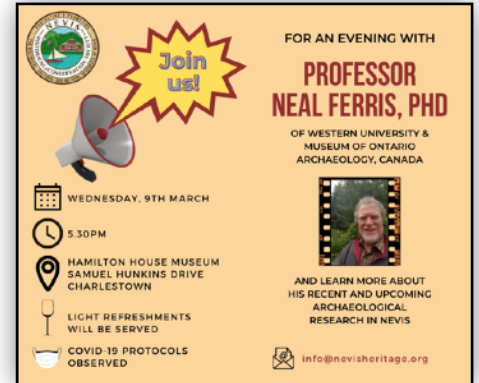
INSPIRING TOMORROW'S LEADERS!

Kudos to our dynamic Director, Jahnel Nisbett, for an amazing job as one of the organisers of the first ever [Nevis Youth Careers Expo - NYCE](#) on 25th March, where the Society was represented by Eliesel Ramirez Dorsett and Lorna Abungu.



Instead of lamenting that our youth aren't interested in History or Heritage, we went out to share the important work that we do and it was rewarding to see how excited the students were about the many study and career opportunities in the heritage sector, whether in our Federation or beyond. We were thrilled that so many students were interested to know more, and

even signed up to be volunteers! We had a special guest appearance by Sergio Villavicencio, Vice President of the [The Alexander Hamilton Awareness Society](#), and historian Johanna Yaun, who were happy to see how many students knew about Hamilton, whether through the musical, the museum, or history books. Will YOU be Nevis' next Archaeologist, Historian, Curator, Exhibition designer or Conservator???



FINE OLD BONES

What better backdrop for the temporary exhibition "**Historic Charlestown: Fine Old Bones**" than the iconic Hamilton House (aka Trott House). This special exhibition opened on Tuesday 29th March with a welcome cocktail and an exuberant crowd. The stunning watercolour paintings are the work of **Howard Pain**, a Canadian artist and long-time resident of Nevis, with a long career in advertising and graphic design. In 1990 Howard and his wife fell in love with Nevis, where – in 1993 – he established an art gallery, with a plan to return to his early interest in painting.



In the decades since then, he has produced a sizeable body of work, and we were pleased to share his latest works, showcasing the stunning historic architecture of our beloved capital, Charlestown.

Small reprints are available for sale in our Museum Gift Shop, and *Historic Charlestown: Fine old bones* – a large format book of paintings and historical comment – will be available by order. Drop into the Gift Shop TODAY!





GET INVOLVED: CURRENT CAMPAIGNS



Jewish Cemetery in Charlestown

The Jewish Cemetery in Charlestown is a truly unique heritage site, revealing a fascinating and little-known aspect of the island's history. Within its current boundaries are the remains of numerous Jewish graves dating to the 17th and 18th centuries (between 1679 and 1730). There are 19 marked burials, and previous archaeological work suggests that as many as 44 additional unmarked burials may be present at the site. Some headstones show still-legible engravings in Hebrew, English and Portuguese, while others are worn and weathered. The site is managed by the Nevis Historical and Conservation Society, and requires regular funding for its protection and upkeep, including landscaping. Contributions can be made online [👉 here](#)

The Alexander Hamilton Scholarship Fund



The **Alexander Hamilton Scholarship Fund** was established in 1965 by the Trott family, and every year awards 20 deserving Secondary School students in Nevis – selected by the Ministry of Social Development – with a bursary for uniforms, fees, books and other supplies. In return, the Alexander Hamilton scholars get involved with the Society's numerous activities through volunteerism. Until now, the Scholarship Fund was set at EC\$10,000 (or US\$ 3,700) and is supported locally by our Members, local individuals and businesses, past scholarship holders and members of the wider community. We were unable to hold an in-person Tea Party and Award Ceremony (which also serves as a fundraiser) for the past two years, and we are instead turning towards online fundraising so as to be able to assist these deserving students.

Given the annual cost of inflation, the economic downturn caused by the pandemic, and the most recent drastic increase in fees, goods and services, we feel it is only fair to be able to offer each student something that will make a difference in their academic career. We hope you agree that EC\$ 500 doesn't go as far as it used to! As such, we have raised the amount to the equivalent of US\$ 10,000 (or EC\$ 27,000). If you would like to contribute or learn more about the Fund, you can come into the office and speak with the Director, Jahnel Nisbet, or the President, Richard Lupinacci, for more information. You may also make your donation online [👉 here](#) – no amount is too small!

STAFF NEWS

Congratulations to Jamilah Clarke, our Gift Shop attendant, for completing the University of the West Indies (UWI) Open Campus course: "Office Administration: Principles and Practices". The Society actively encourages and supports staff training, and we know she'll put those skills to great use!



Meanwhile, we bade farewell to Deus Herbert, who served as a Gallery attendant and also assisted in the digitising work at the Archives. Deus joined the Society through the SKN government's Skills Training Empowerment Program (STEP), which seeks to empower participants by providing training to assist in the development of the requisite capabilities and entrepreneurial skills. We'll miss Deus as part of our team, and wish him much success in all his future endeavours.

Kudos to our Director Jahnel Nisbett for being one of three young professional women (together with Society Member Althea Campbell and Careve Williams) to recently launch **Sis Inc.**, a non-profit virtual resource centre for women, by women. Launched on International Women's Day (March 8th, 2022), Sis Inc. offers free services to women in the areas of legal advice, notarisisation, career coaching, academic counselling and other professional services.



thank you!

We extend special thanks to the following members & friends for their generous contributions in cash or kind!

Marge Abel, Tina Bates, Juliette Borchers, Sheila Cohen, Joan Cottham, Phil Dunning, Maureen Ferg, Kevin Garland, Christian Goodwillie (Hamilton College, NY), Miriam Knorr, Annie Lupinacci, Irene Macek, Elaine Morris, Karen Peterson, The Hermitage, Nevis Island Administration, Barbados Museum & Historical Society

Additional thanks to Elaine Morris for the generous contribution of several books to the new Archaeology Centre!



Society Awarded!



In honour of **International Women's Day**, celebrated in March this year under the theme “Gender Equality Today, for a Sustainable Tomorrow”, the Society was recognised as an **impactful group leading the charge on climate change adaptation and mitigation**.

We would like to express our sincere gratitude to the Ministry of Health and Gender Affairs for recognising the Society’s work and our commitment to the environment. We are proud to lead the charge of protecting and promoting the culture and natural resources of Nevis through biodiversity, and this regard would like to thank our Biodiversity Committee chair, Ms Isabel Byron, Biodiversity Committee staff representative Ella Bendeito, as well as Member Miriam Knorr, for all their invaluable efforts.

Our Director Jahnel Nisbett and Eliesel Ramirez Dorsett accepted the award on behalf of the Society at a colourful award ceremony held on 8th March at the Nevis Performing Arts Centre.

To all the women awarded for their individual efforts, we say Congratulations!

CALENDAR OF EVENTS



Please get in touch if you'd like to donate towards, or get involved with, any of our activities!

- ▶ April 22: Earth Day cleanup at Fort Ashby, 8am-12pm
- ▶ 18 May: International Museum Day
- ▶ July: Slam Poetry competition (part of the “Democracy in Action” project)
- ▶ 22 July: Unveiling of Alexander Hamilton statue on the museum grounds
- ▶ September: Coastal Cleanup (date to be announced)
- ▶ November: Arbour month
- ▶ Last Tuesday of every month: “Meet the Artist” at the Museum Gift Shop
- ▶ 3rd Thursday of every month: meeting of the Board of Directors
- ▶ Monthly "Movie Night": Nevis Past & Present (footage from the Archives)

Q1 MUSEUM STATISTICS (JAN-MAR)

Seventeen cruise ships called at the Charlestown pier in the 1st Quarter of 2022! These statistics reflect the Museum of Nevis History and Hamilton Museum only.

1556

TOTAL
MUSEUM
VISITORS

(up from 888
last quarter)

482

VISITORS
FROM
32 TOURS

(up from 331
last quarter)

1074

WALK-IN
VISITORS

(up from 557
last quarter)

RENEW OR JOIN TODAY!

We've partnered with the GivenGain Foundation to provide a secure platform for our members to pay [ONLINE!](#)

Members who have not yet renewed their membership – and those wishing to join – are encouraged to do so by coming by the Museum of Nevis History and renewing/joining in person, and paying by cash, EC\$ cheque or credit/debit card.

You can also join/renew by submitting the online form at www.nevisheritage.org and following the prompts for online payment.

Your support DOES make a difference!



A HAMILTON FOR HAMILTON

Since the establishment of the first museum in 1986, our Admission fee has remained at US\$ 5 for visitors and EC\$ 1 for nationals and residents. Since then, we have added two more museums, and in 2019 we unveiled a new exhibition in the Museum of Nevis History.

Given the staggering loss of revenue during the pandemic, and the rising cost of maintenance for our buildings and exhibits as well as programming and general operations, we are implementing a rate increase w.e.f. 1st January 2022. We hope that our international visitors will feel that US\$10 for a memorable Hamilton experience is worthwhile!

SKN nationals and residents still pay only EC\$1 for entry and entry is FREE for Members and all children under 10.

Please note that US\$10 (or equivalent) is a combined entry fee for the Museum of Nevis History, Hamilton Museum, Gift Shop and museum grounds.

SHOP TALK



All things Hamilton!
T-shirts from \$15 US
(\$40 EC)
as well as other
Hamilton gifts:
books, socks,
collectible coins, and
MORE!



We also have a wide assortment of books, unique and handcrafted gift items like ornaments, frames, paracord key chains, carved whistles, Newcastle pottery, one-of-a-kind jewellery, water-marbled items and original paintings and photographs. Come in and see our newly framed historic maps!



WE ACCEPT



DEBIT & CREDIT

DON'T FORGET:

FLASH YOUR
MEMBERSHIP CARD
AND GET 10% OFF* !

* except
antiques



Free WiFi in our
Museums & Gift Shop



Our Team

Jahnel Nisbett – Director
Gail Dore – Senior Archivist / Ag. Administrative Officer
Eliesel Ramirez Dorsett – Gallery supervisor/Membership Officer
Arcquela “Ella” Bendeito – Gallery attendant/Assistant archivist
Jonathan Ward – Gallery attendant/Admin. assistant
Jamilah Clarke – Museum Gift Shop attendant
Miriam Knorr – Museum Gift Shop supervisor
Lorna Abungu – Museum / Communications advisor
Patrick Howell – Audio-Visual support
Keithly Amory – IWEco & NICaR project coordinator
Jenny Lowery – Consultant, Nelson Spring Restoration Project

Executive Board 2021

Richard Lupinacci – President
Todd Miller – Vice President
Warren Moving – Treasurer
Anthony Gajor
Gillian Hobson
Kris Liburd
Terence “Tee” Liburd
Sylvester Meade - Heritage Manager, NIA
Maurisha Robinson
Charles Ward

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