

Commissioner's Report 1908

Grand Bahama
Asst Rest Justices Office
January 2, 1909

I have the honour to Submit for the information of His Excellency the Governor the following reports of my district for the year ending Dec. 1908

Finance

Grand Bahama not being a port of entry has no direct import or export revenue. The only revenue derived is from King's fine Liquor Licenses Postage fees stamps

Trade

Some trade has been carried on with Miami Fla Via Bimini by one of our vessels. Labourer[s] 24 in number have gone over to Fla in search of work. In her return back foodstuff as imports – shingles and lumber

For consumption in Nassau Market, Red Peas Black eye peas, Indian corn, Peanuts and Benny, Onions and Cabbages have been sent /

Sponge

The industry has gone down considerably to the great discomfort of many agents and owners of sponging craft, but has revived somewhat in November.

Turtle

By the Capture of our vessels seven in number by Cuban Revenue Cutters on their way homeward from Pedro bank has caused a depression in the trade. They not only lost the shells gathered but all other fishing gear was seized also.

Sisal

Sisal in being extensively cultivated through out the whole island. The fibre is prepared by hand cleaning about 50 or 60 acres have been planted this year, 4000 lbs of fibres have been sent to market at the rate of 1 1/2d & 1 3/4d per lbs from the various district. Water Cay district leading the crowd in the trade. /

Bark

About 500 lbs of log wood bark had been gathered and sent to Market at the rate of 1 1/2 per lb. this new industry is carried on in the Eastern district, Freetown and High Rocks.

Cotton

An experiment in the cultivation of Sea-island Cotton has been conducted by a few planters together with the A. R. J. and proved a success. Cotton has always been cultivated on this island in days gone by when the price was the meagre rate of 2d lb by the old islanders. Nowaday the present farmers are too dilatory to carry on the industry. Georgia cotton can be seen in many old fields growing profusely.

Onions

A very good crop of onions has been harvested in the district of 8 Mile Rocks Barnett's pt. Smiths pt. and Golden Grove. At the first shipment in April the prices was a good 2d per lbs but it went down in May in consequence of the market being glutted. No more shipment was made until July when a fair price of 2 1/2d to 3d per lbs was obtained.

Stock Raising

This industry is moving on by leaps and bounds. Every person who can buy a heifer calf. During the year 40 head of beeves have been sent from the various districts to Nassau Market where a liberal price had been obtained. If this state [of] things continue Grand Bahama will become again what it had been in days of youre—A stock raising land./

Friendly Society

There are three Societies formed to aid the sick and furnish decent burial at 8 M. Rocks Sett pt and Smith's pt. Total number of members 98

Births 84

Deaths 28

Public Roads

Roads have been improved and extended making travelling on foot more practicable than heretofore. Very much remains to be done to this large island in order to make efficiency.

Shipping (Coasting)

Entered from the port of Nassau and other ports 68 Vessels, 698 tons, 449 men. Cleared 78 vessels 1152 tons, 695 for Nassau and the great Bahama Bank. There are 19 other crafts (spongers) in the district of Carrion Crow harbour and Water Cay which I have no control over in the way of entering and clearing.

Crime

There had been seven cases on the Criminal side of the Magistrate's Court reported during the year. All were of police regulation. 4 were fined, 2 dismissed for the want of proper evidence, and 1 bound over to keep the peace.

Education

There are 3 schools in the district. 1 Bd school situated at 8 Mile Rks and 2 Church of England schs. The 8 M. R. sch number 180 on the register with an annual attendance 192 days average 92 In consequence of the down pour of rain /

Education Continue

In July Sept & Oct. the number of days have fallen off this schools has been regularly and punctually open and is progressing fairly well. Schools are wanted at Settlement of Freetown, High Rocks and Sweetings Cay Ch schools are situated at Smith's pt East dist., and Settlement pt West dist. These schools have done much good among the Village boys and girls by imparting to them the rudiment of education.

Postal Statistics

Letters received at the dist. post office during the year.

Letters 526, Reg Letters 20, News 105,

Books 280, Post-Card
Letters 358

30 Letters Dispatched
Reg do. 3, Books 3.

Climate

Rainfall 69.96. No of days which the rain fell 74. Highest reading of Barometer 30.03 lowest 29.07 Highest temperature 89o lowest 55o. The first quarter of the year was very dry. Rain begun in April and continue to October the potatoe fields rotted down by reason of the flood. Grand Bahama appear to be in the track of every storm. We escape this year thanks to God the Cyclone that wreaked the Windward Islands. We had a small brush from N.E. on 1st Oct. Settlement Point and Water Cay had the worst of it./

Public Health and Sanitation

Malarial fever, Diarrhoea and the Flu [?] were prevalent during the year. The latter is an epidemic in every district I visit this troublesome disease is present.

General Remarks

A government relief of 12 barrels of grits to the famine stricken Settlers of the Eastern district have been sent in August.

The Cause of Suffering arise from not having a good crop of Guinea Corn harvested in Dcer when a beautiful winter season was pending From January to April [March] was dry. Rains begin in the latter and April and continued a heavy downpour until October, when a flood set in. The Islanders of 8 M. Rocks tilling the white land at the time of the rain saved a crop of peas to the amount of 30 bushels while other district not being cautious planted all their seeds in the black land and lose all their efforts by the flood. Large quantity of land crown and private are still here in spite of forest-fire yearly to be fallowed, but it requires enterprising mind to bring its latent virtue, not including the mine of Wealth which prist [?] in its Vast Pine barren.

Revenue

Custom

Kings fines and constables fees	2	10	0
Liquor licenses	10	0	0
Post offices Stamps sold	2	12	0
Postage collected		7	0
Custom duty on Parcels	2	4	0
Turn over	17	13	0

Imports

The following are the principal articles imported during the year via Nassau and Bimini

Imports

Flour, Grits, and Meal
Pork, Beef, canned meat
Rice, Sugar, Rum, Wine, gin
Lumber, Shingles, nails

Export to Nassau

Sisal 4000 lbs	25	0	0
Bark	3	2	6

Citrus Fruit	25	0	0
Onions	22	0	0
Peas	12	0	0
Peanuts and Benny	12	8	0
Total	99	10	6

I have the honor to be

Sir

Your obt. Servt

Jno Adderley

Ass. Res. Justice

2 Jan 1909

Transcribed from the original by James Baker as a reference so that these past "snapshots" of the Island's economic and social history are available.