

Three Heroines Assembly  
Oxford Spires Academy  
Black History Month 2023

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**Caribbean map**  
from *Wikipedia*



**Jamaican flag**  
from *Wikipedia*



**Amy Bailey**  
from *Flickr*

# Beautiful Amy Bailey

**to Professor Veronica M. Gregg, for her knowledge; and to my favourite auntie, Retinella Gayle (77), for her love.**

**Narrator:** Nanny Maroon fought with abeng and gun, from within the Blue Mountains. Two hundred years later, Amy Bailey fought with articles and activism, in inner-city Kingston.

Every country should be blessed with an Amy Bailey. A constant, sober voice, imbued with love for the nation. Wisdom for a few cents, from a daily newspaper. Level headed commentary for all to read. Through the *Daily Gleaner* and *Public Opinion*, she used the media as a passport - to send prayers for national improvement.

**Street Boy:** I was just a ragged boy,  
A regular on the streets.  
Skeletal frame half clothed;  
No shoe had dressed my feet.

We spent our days there,  
Every lane and nook.  
They said we were destined for GP;  
The future Kingston crooks.

Accustomed to hunger,  
Apparelled in dirt.  
We knew scolding and slaps;  
Visions of a clean shirt.

**Narrator:** Trained as a teacher, she had a lot to say about education. As well as blood, pedagogy ran through her system; as both of her parents and five of her siblings, were also teachers. For her, education was first and foremost – paramount. As we know, she was not the first to speak of it's central importance, but it was the way she tried to implement it's paramountcy.

In her educational evangelism, her clarion call was "More". More primary and secondary schools – more regular attendance in them. More vocational, technical and farm schools. More training colleges, as well as university extension. More offers of scholarships. Channels to education, to suit as many aspirations as possible. That education must be compulsory for all – no financial barriers. Paid for by government coffers and personal pockets; each citizen giving what they can. She encouraged philanthropy from the island rich. The thinking that education, especially for the young, should be of national concern to all adults. Sometimes she seemed like teacher, careers advisor and employment bureau, rolled into one. The giver of options and new possibilities – an Oracle at the Ocean of Horizons.

**Home Girl:** I'd heard rumours of Homecraft,  
A training place for girls.  
Never imagined being there,  
Thought I was stranded here;  
A dream began to unfurl.

Spent all my days,  
Looking after younger brothers.  
Days of nappies and snot,  
Beginning to rot;  
Then along came the rescuer.

Homecraft, Homecraft,  
Beautiful new mantra.  
Couldn't wait to start,  
So I could play my part;  
My dream of stepping higher.

**Narrator:** Like the African American journalist-activist, Victoria Matthews, who founded the White Rose Industrial Home, in 1897; she knew that theory and talk was not enough. So in 1946, with a loan, shared aims and donor generosity, she was able to set up the Homecraft Training Centre. She once traversed America on speaking engagements, raising money for this initiative. During her time at Homecraft, she is said to have supported six thousand young women. This centre offered education with a specialism; in the studies of Domestic Science and Home Economics.

**Street Boy:** One day while idling,  
This woman approached us.  
Expecting a telling off,  
Echo of the usual cuss.

But she smiled instead,  
Inviting us to converse.  
Surprised us with kindness,  
We'd expected a curse.

She opened the world of dreams,  
Hoping we would travel there too.  
Introduced new ingredients,  
Into aspiration stew.

**Narrator:** For forty years, Amy Bailey also taught at Kingston Technical School. Imagine that level of continuity, for the learners there – that strong foundation. Blessed were the students, supported by Bedrock Bailey.

**Home Girl:** She spoke of my siblings too -  
Jamaica Save the Children.  
With Una Marson,  
And May Farquharson;

Drive for the little denizens.  
Saddened by the children,

Denied an education.  
Begging on the streets,  
Selling sweets;  
A blight on every Jamaican.

**Narrator:** In a March, 1941 *Gleaner* article, entitled "Save the Children" she said.....I am appealing to one and all to let their hearts touch their pocket books. England is helping us to tide over our financial crisis by a gift. This is splendid; but we cannot expect the British Save The Children Fund or individuals over there to help us in a work that we ourselves must do.

**Street Boy:** Speaking of Dinthill Farm School,  
Really took me.  
My one enduring dream,  
Was of a career in carpentry.

I listened avidly,  
As she spoke of it's seventy acres.  
Dairy animals and sweet potatoes,  
The pioneering teachers.

I was in a reverie,  
Lapping up her every word.  
I sat like one entranced,  
Listening to this songbird.

**Narrator:** That's how she was – an instigator of inspiration; propelling the poorer students forward. She had the talent of dispelling doubt, filling the former space, with the reality of potential. The children and youth of Jamaica were truly blessed, to have her as their advocate. Talking of teaching and teachers, in a *Gleaner* article of 1928, entitled The Shortwood Old Students Association, she said.... There is the training in self control, self discipline, and self respect, the principles of which we must instil in them if they are to be a credit to the island. Not one of us is worthy of the profession unless we are burdened with the thought of our responsibility towards the young.

**Home Girl:** Instead of just learning,  
Now I wanted to teach!  
Began to smile within,  
Stepping out of the bin;  
Higher branches within my reach.

Dreamt of Kingston Senior,  
Had visions of scholarship.  
She came into my life,  
"Be more than just a wife";  
Words like "pinnacle," "peak" and "tip."

**Narrator:** Under the heading *patron saint*, My Reader's Digest Universal Dictionary states... The guardian saint of any nation, place, craft, activity, class, or person. Surely, this can be applied to Amy Bailey: Patron Saint of the Poor Student.

**Street Boy:** She wanted to give us safety,

**Home Girl:** Parks and green spaces.

**Street Boy:** Combs for our hair,

**Home Girl:** Oil for our faces.

**Street Boy:** She opened our eyes

**Home Girl:** To books and libraries

**Street Boy:** Took us from the doldrums

**Home Girl:** To the state of dignity

**Narrator:** She was a perennial river; all her tributaries, led to the Great Lake of Upliftment.

Unlike Nanny Maroon, Amy Bailey has not been given National Heroine status. Where others saw delinquents, she saw dreamers. Where others saw future inmates, of the penitentiary, she saw prospective citizens, of the Jamaican society. Although her image is not featured on the island currency or on a postage stamp; I hope she remains a feature in the minds of many – stamped upon their hearts.

Referring again to my dictionary, under the heading for *beautiful*, it says such things as.....Pleasing to the mind.....Excellent.....Of great worth. Beautiful Amy Bailey.

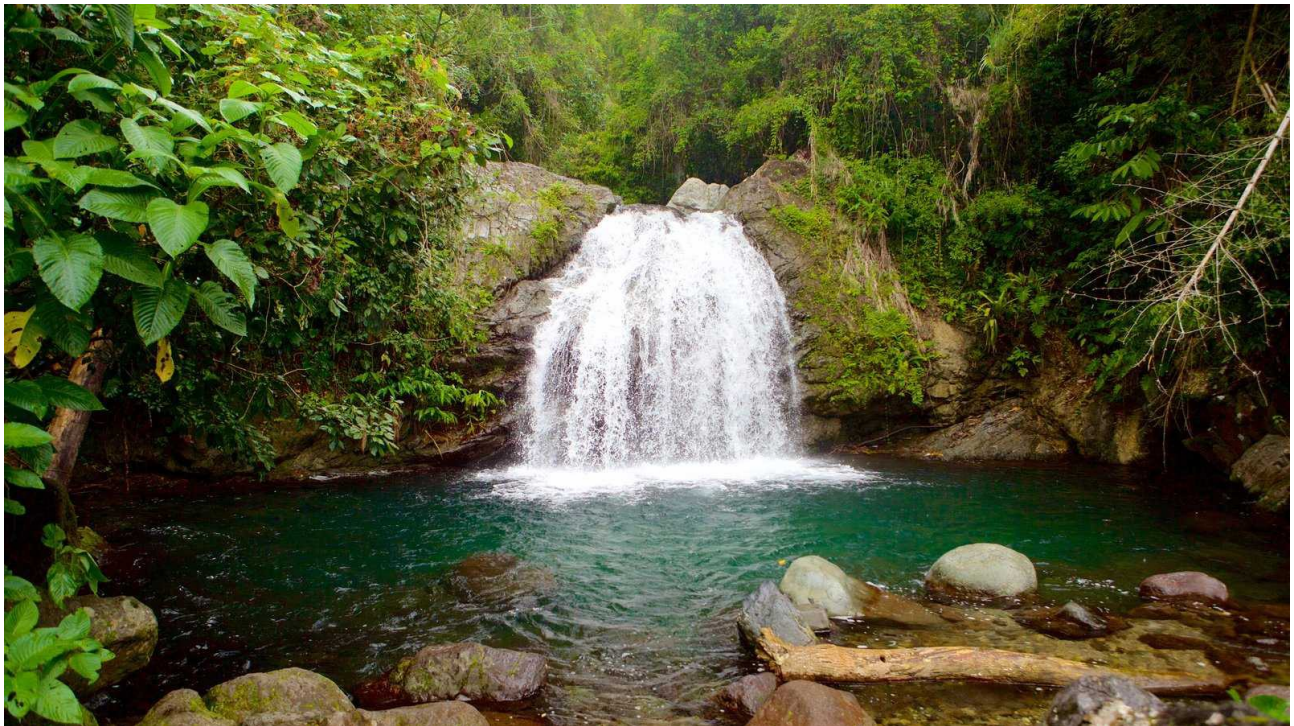


# WEST AFRICAN Capital City Connections

<b>CHAD</b>	Monrovia
<b>BURKINIA FASO</b>	Banjul
<b>GUINEA</b>	Bamako
<b>SENEGAL</b>	Dakar
<b>GAMBIA</b>	Conakry
<b>MALI</b>	Yamoussoukro
<b>IVORY COAST</b>	Bissau
<b>GUINEA-BISSAU</b>	Ouagadougou
<b>LIBERIA</b>	Nouakchott
<b>MAURITANIA</b>	N'Djamena



**Five Hundred Dollar note, known as a "Nanny."**  
from *Leftover Currency*



**Blue Mountains**  
from *Tropical Trips Jamaica*

# A Story for Amaya

Who shall we encounter today, Amaya? Who shall I introduce you to? I know, let's go and meet Nanny Maroon.

We'll go high up, little friend, into the mountains called Blue, where the coffee drunk around the world is grown. There'll be the red of the tody, gold of the oriole and the green of the parrot. And green will be everywhere, all the thousand shades of that colour.

Nanny Maroon came from a West African country called Ghana. Many of the Black people who first came to Jamaica, centuries ago, came from countries such as Ghana and Nigeria.

Some were called Ashanti,  
Others called Edo.  
Some were called Fante  
Others called Ibo.

Like the others, little one, she was enslaved. No one wants to be enslaved, so she escaped, leaving her chains on the plantations where she was forced to work - and headed for the protection of the mountains. She gave thanks to Nyame – the Ashanti term for God – for giving her freedom. Others joined her, including her brothers who'd been enslaved at the same time. Soon there was a thriving community, living together and growing food.

Yam and sweet potato,  
Plantain and callaloo.  
She'll cut a coconut, Amaya  
And share it with you.

As well as martial skills, she had medicinal ones also: she was known as a healer, a "bush doctor." Knowledge she'd learnt in Ghana, she put to use in Jamaica: the use of root, bark, leaf and flower. A long time ago Amaya, in this country too, before it came in bottles and boxes, medicine came from Mother Earth. And in many parts of Africa, as well as the Caribbean, people still visit the herbalists, or use the ancient knowledge.

When the stomach's playing up,  
Let there be Ginger.  
And as a skin cleanser,  
Use Aloe Vera.  
Take Lemon Grass,  
To deal with a fever.  
Choose Dandelion,  
Protection of liver.

Her martial skills ensured that the community – known as Nanny Town – was protected against those who tried to take them back to the plantation, dragging them away from freedom. They knew the forest well, so used camouflage and ambush.

A brilliant organiser, little one, she was the perfect choice as leader. An image of her is on the Jamaican \$500 dollar note, known as a "Nanny." In honour of her many skills and leadership qualities and because she was a symbol of freedom, in 1975, the Jamaican government made this 18<sup>th</sup> century figure, a National Heroine: Jamaica's only official female hero.

We'll stand and salute,  
This woman that was wise.  
Defended freedom,  
From the tricks and the spies.

The Mango Hummingbird and the Swallowtail Butterfly, are waiting to welcome you. And on the way, we'll drink from a mountain stream; the freshest, sweetest water, to pass down the human throat. Come Amaya, let's go and meet Nanny Maroon.

# Berbere Spices Anagram

GGINRE

NCIMU

CNNNIAMO

CMMOAARD

LLIIHC PPPEESR

SEVOLC

LLAECIPS





**Louise Bennett aka Miss Lou**  
from *13<sup>th</sup> Street Promotions*

# Tale of The Mango Juggler

The Mango Juggler always wore yellow and green and only appeared on one day of the year: September 7th, birthday of Miss Lou. Where he came from, no one knows and where he went to after the performance, we were equally ignorant of. He came, performed and went. You see, everyone would gather round her statue in Gordon Town Square and amongst the tributes and candles, Mango Juggler would perform. Where as other jugglers might have found the mango too heavy, he said he liked the shape of the fruit, as if his hands had been moulded to hold and catch it. It seemed like the Goddess of *Mangifera*, had personally blest his hands.

He would juggle and as he manipulated the rise and fall, he'd chant of his favourite fruit, such as *Mangifera Chant*.

Can I take a leaf or two,  
For the diabetes sufferer:  
Mango.

You assist the leaf doctor,  
The one called Mama Liliane:  
Mango.

Born and raised in Asia,  
Now you bless the whole world:  
Mango.

Giving thanks for the healing,  
The sweetest generosity:  
Mango.

As always, Jah Folk was a great source of information. He encouraged discussion, about the medicinal benefits of mango and told us about Liliane Nerette Louis, a Haitian storyteller and traditional healer. People coming to buy pineapple, mango, ackee or coconut water, joined in the discussion. The pavement became a place of joyful opinion, as well as daily trudging. As laughter weaved its way amongst the fruit and conversation, we spoke of festivals too; yam festivals in Ghana and mango festivities in India.

As the assembled began to take over the path and the curbside of the road, people having to step out into the traffic to pass by, Jah Folk, with a mango in his little shoulder bag and a coconut in his hand, said farewell to all, walking on, tipping his head now and again to drink: storytelling can be thirsty work.

An African School Production

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**Natty Mark Samuels**