

STATEMENT OF WITNESS

Statement of: Dr. Bradshaw

Date of Birth:

Address:

Phone: (H) (W)

This statement consists of 4 pages each signed by me, is true to the best of my knowledge and belief and I make it knowing that, if it is tendered in evidence, I shall be liable to prosecution if I have willfully stated in it anything which I know to be false or do not believe to be true.

Dated the 16 day, of November 2020.

Signed:

Signature witnessed by:

STATEMENT:

My other general point is that in all of this we need to keep in mind what is and what is not relevant for the purpose of the Commission. Specifically, historical land losses by reason of theft, dispossession, adverse possession and/ or other such other unlawful or irregular means by which law was lost in Bermuda. In other words the evidence must relate to unlawful or irregular means by which land was lost. This excludes general discussions regarding societal organisation in Bermuda unless it can be linked to the terms of reference of the Commission.

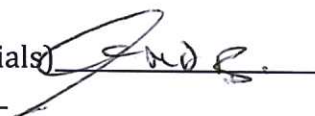
Base on my initial and our subsequent discussion with Dr Bradshaw I think the following out line of his evidence may work:

1. General discussion of the establishment and organisation of the Friendly Societies;

In UK legislation the friendly societies and the Free Masons are included together as fraternal organizations with a benevolent intent but in Bermuda they have always had very distinct paths and operation. This local distinction was an expression of a Bermuda story that was divided between those of white European roots and others of Black African origins. In Bermuda (until mid twentieth century) Free Masons were selected white men only. Contrarily, the friendly societies make no distinction on the basis of gender or of ethnic/racial origins or of religious practice or social class. Indeed, the friendly societies have always practised a trend of inclusivity based on their principle of promoting improvement of society. Using the dual themes of self help and mutual help as a driver the friendly societies of Bermuda have been critical and central to our social evolutionary path and today's achievements in the political and governance and social spheres as a start.

Bermuda's friendly societies arose due to the initiatives of 'free Blacks' even before the 1834 Emancipation event and immediately shepherded and buttressed the calm orchestration of those first post-slavery days when government and the church and other social organs were absolutely placid/torpid. The masses were organized so that by their own effort they took full responsibility for advancing their capabilities and their interests as individuals and for the benefit of their local neighbourhood communities. This

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was by regular and frequent meetings which taught and operated heightened democratic principles and 'parliamentary' skills so that the public achieved greater civic and general education. At the same time there was social and societal stability with more self-regulated economic progress. This gave meaningful progress without some of the social turmoil that was experienced elsewhere.

By committed and diligent efforts these masses, with negligible starter assets, were led to pool funds and self tax themselves to garner shared wealth in owned real estate and money. The telling point is that friendly societies believe that they function as stewards to hold and manage these assets for the benefit of members and the interests of the community at-large. The public was/is always encouraged to participate in and join in lodge activities and may benefit directly via membership or may have their interests and benefit secured by it being promoted by a member at a meeting.

2. The purpose of the Friendly Societies;

Lodges and lodge Orders might promote a particular interest but lodges generally sought to advance :-

- social benefit by attendance at meetings and commitment to the promotion of the Order and the lodge;
- benevolent benefit to members such as burial benefits, sick aid etc;
- protection of the interests of distressed members (and their families and associates) by self help and collective mutual help ;
- protection of the sick and injured and aged members.

3. The manner in which property was acquired by the Friendly Societies (cash, gift etc);

Designated trustees nominally held assets in their own name but assets were all commonly owned. Realty was sometimes bequeathed or gifted to the lodge body or might be purchased with lodge funds. Deeds and documentation were held by trustees and postholders; security depended on personal ethics and the operational integrity of the lodge. Sometimes banks and lawyers were used to hold deeds.

4. Did the Friendly Societies have deeds to the lands they acquired, if so, in whose names were these deeds; where they lodged in solicitors' offices? where?
(See answer to the previous question.)

5. Dr Bradshaw mentioned that land was held in trust in what manner was inter generational transfer secured;

The lodges with which we are most familiar in Bermuda (such as the Odd Fellows; Good Samaritans; Shepherds; Elks etc) are part of international families of the lodge types (known as Orders) with coordinating head quarters in the USA or the UK especially in the form of the Grand Lodge. All lodges owed allegiance to a Grand Lodge. The Grand Lodge could approve that if a lodge was closed or failed any remaining assets were to be given to a lodge of the same Order or to a lodge of an acceptable Order or to the general community. The objective was that the lodge and its assets would serve the community's interests from one generation to the next and would extend even if the lodge was closed. The lodge arose from within the community and grew within the bosom of the community and retained resources for the community.

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6. Can Dr Bradshaw identify the lands that were acquired over time and the lands that are held as of this moment. If there is a discrepancy can he explain it;

A scan/sample overview of lodge real estate in 1920

Lodge name	Status of real estate etc	comments
SPoI (St. Geo.)	???nonresponsive	
V and A (Som.)	?? nonresponsive	
Alexandrina (Pem)	Still held	
Victoria Lodge (Pem)	Owned by BIU	
PRU (War)	Still held	
Star of Warwick	Private hands by known path	
WMAHS & LoI (Pem)	Private hands(PLP)	
L Ir. (Som)	Still held	
LFoD (Pem)	Still held	
Loyal Star of Hope (Ham)	Private hands ?? path	
Rechab/Princess Louise (St. Geo)	Private hands ??path	

7. Dr. Bradshaw mentioned that he believes that some property in St Georges(?) is collecting rent but he does not know where the rent money is going. Can he follow up on this by doing a search of the property, and find out where the money is going. He may wish to speak to the current occupiers who may have banking and other informations as well as evidence of the instrument under which the property is being leased - (this may have to be followed up by the investigation team - it is very vague but it may be the tip of an iceberg)

The lodge building and lands of Somers Pride of India Lodge (SPoI) of the Grand United Order of Odd Fellows is on Main Road, St. Georges. Established since 1848 the lodge is not in communion with any other friendly societies and is non-operational. The building is rented but the management of assets appears obscured and opaque. Persons who appear to be responsible will not respond to inquiries or outreach from brother lodge members (Alexandrina Lodge) or to the Bermuda Friendly Societies Association

A Shepherds Lodge site (Guiding Star Lodge) on West Side Road in Somerset was rumoured for years by senior lodge members and Somerset people to have been misappropriated by powerful business interests. This veil is even harder to pierce as told by Somerset residents. It now sits as an overgrown site and perhaps we await its final and total disappearance from public scrutiny and memory.

8. Any other information that may point to a land loss in Bermuda;

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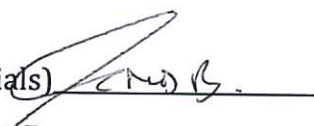
Even as I have presented this concern, I have been made aware of an associated possible land loss regarding "glebe lands" that were reportedly acquired for the formerly enslaved. This is so recent to me that I am only now develop seeking to develop it. See a related presentation to this Commission by C. Attride-Stirling.

Also, I cite a curious situation with regards to the Hamilton Parish Friendly Society. There the assets seem to be 'disappearing' from public awareness and into private hands via a 'single family' in an enduring process over some generations.

9. Would Dr. Bradshaw like to see any recommendations from this commission?
The Commission can initiate a path forward that will prevent the disappearance of the assets from public memory and awareness to become the 'historic real estate losses of tomorrow'.

There is a Land Registry now and better records via Land Valuation and such sources. The means for location of legal ownership papers is thereby somewhat eased. A proper formal investigation can be produced by government means and authority and would certainly seem to be a proper government function. This important area may throw light on the status or possible concerns about other somewhat similar situations like ownerships by church congregations and other collectives which have been of long standing and have descended from 'historic Black communities'.
. Would Dr. Bradshaw like to see any recommendations from this Commission?

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