



Tribute to Samuel Bertram Bandara, M.A. (UWI)

Main Library, University of the West Indies (UWI),

It is impossible for me to believe the sad news of the passing of my friend – Sam Bandara. Was this what he meant, when he mentioned to me in my last conversation with him last August, that he had some plans he was going to reveal to me when I returned from Suriname? It hurts me that he would not have revealed this to me at that time so that I could prepare to take the shock. My heart sorely aches -

Sam Bandara, who has served as Field Director of the Maroon Heritage Research Project (MHRP) since 1991 has been the brain behind the successes we made in Jamaica and Suriname. Sam helped me pioneer my research by leading me through an information retrieval process to prepare the way for the very first archaeological reconnaissance and survey of the Blue Mountains of Jamaica. He had come to my project with a considerable experience in field archaeology originally started in Sri Lanka where, with his experience from the University of London, School of Oriental Studies, he lectured in Archaeology at the University of Sri Lanka, Peradeniya from 1971-74. Sam continued his archaeological endeavors working with Dr. Karl Watson of the History Department and helping students with interest in Archaeology. Sam Bandara helped with the development of the UWI Archaeology program mostly behind the scene and supported the MHRP in many capacities from project coordinator to Field Director in Jamaica and Suriname. He was also responsible for the revival of the Archaeological Society of Jamaica becoming an executive member all throughout the years until and even after my departure from UWI. He was also responsible for archival and historical records on Maroon groups, maps, field sketches was mostly responsible for the organization and supervision of the field data documentation, artifact processing as well as statistical records and inventories in both the field and the laboratory in Jamaica and Suriname. He paid his own way many, many times to help with the MHRP in Jamaica and Suriname becoming the most liked member of my team. Many past UWI students who have shared field work times with Sam know exactly what I mean when I characterize him the best I have ever had as a friend. A true and sincere friend and a colleague – dedicated and truly sincere.

Sam has left us with all the deep knowledge of the deep interior Maroon sites of the Saramaka and Matawai of Suriname – knowledge of which only very, very few can boast. His pioneering expeditions are still well remembered by many in the Suriname interior. It is impossible to describe Sam's capabilities: tirelessness, dedication, high sense of initiative and spirit of collaboration, enterprising and a person who makes things happen. He was not only a true colleague but also a right-hand person of the project, a major advise in all issues of logistics and field operation of my project and ready at all times, even on the spur of the moment's call. Above all he was very, very humble. Sam was always cheerful and optimistic. His humor and field stories are boundless. Sam is a model personality – simple, humble, accommodating and will simply sacrifice his comfort in any situation for the well-being of any one. Sam will be remembered as a highly

respected member of the International Association For Caribbean Archaeology (IACA) membership help since 1996; the University of the West Indies Publisher's Association since 1989, a revered member of the Archaeological Society of Jamaica since 1988; Association of Caribbean Historians since 1989; and the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) 1982. Sam is always prepared for any eventuality and I am sure that as death laid those icy hands on him he was ready and prepared. My last conversation with Sam was just before I left for Suriname in August and the last time I tried to contact him was by e-mail a couple of weeks ago. We had some plans about a publication but he mentioned to me that he had other plans – I do not know whether leaving us for eternity was the plan he had not revealed. Sam was truly sincere friend; he was even more a family person; a community person; he was very well loved and admired among all Maroon communities anywhere we have worked in Suriname and Jamaica. His departure leaves deep wounds and vacuum in our hearts; our eyes drenched in tears; our minds filled with unforgettable memories of his charming and humble personality. Sam is certainly irreplaceable. I wish, as I say my farewell on behalf of my self and my family and on behalf of all of us of the Maroon Heritage Research Project in Suriname, Jamaica and the United States of America, to humbly ask Swarna and the entire Bandara and the extended family to accept and share our deepest condolences. We join you in asking for a perfect peace as he journeys away back to our source. Sincerely, Kofi Agorsah, Project Director ([Link to Shades of Grey>>>>>>](#))



Sam, Lane, Stanford and Christine the
field in the Suriname rain forest (1998)

Sam Bandara – Curriculum vitae

Education:

MA Business Management, University of the West Indies, Mona, Jamaica, (1993-95)

B.A (Hons) Second Class Upper, University of (Ceylon) Sri Lanka, Peradeniya, Sri Lanka (1963-67)

a. Appointments:

2000 - UWI Library, Mona, Personnel ??

- 1995- Part-Time Lecturer, Archaeology, Dept. of History, Univ. of the West Indies, Kingston, Jamaica.
- 1994-Now Field Director, Maroon Heritage Research Project, Univ. of the West Indies, Kingston, Jamaica
- 1983- Head, Acquisitions Section, Library, University of the West Indies, Kingston, Jamaica.
- 1987- Librarian II, University of the West Indies, Mona, Kingston, Jamaica.
- 1978-91 Part-Time Lecturer, Archaeology, University of the West Indies, Kingston, Jamaica
- 1978-87 Librarian III, Main Library, University of the West Indies, Mona, Kingston, Jamaica.
- 1974-77 Head Master, Trinity College, Kandy, Sri-Lanka
- 1970-74 Assistant Librarian, University of Sri Lanka, Peradeniya.
- 1971 Visiting Lecturer, Department of Archaeology, University of Sri Lanka, Peradeniya.
- 1968-70 Research and Teaching Assistant, School of Oriental Studies, University of London, England

b. Publications:

Bandara, S.B.

- 1995 Maroon Heritage Research Project: 1995 Excavations at Seaman's Valley, Portland, Jamaica, *Mona News*, University of the West Indies: 3 & 8.
- 1993 Review of Suriname and the Netherlands Antilles: An annotated English Language Bibliography, by Enid Brown, In *Social and Economic Studies*, 42 (2/3):271-73.
- 1991 Review of Suriname: A Bibliography 1980-1989 by J. Derkx and I. Rolfes, In *Social and Economic Studies* 40 (2): 161-165.
- 1988 Comparative study of religion: A Christian approach, *Caribbean Journal of the Study of Religions*, 9:19-26.
- 1987 Problems of scholarly journal publishing in developing countries, *Information Development*, 231.
- 1985 Caribbean Accessions at the University of the West Indies, Mona Jamaica, *Library Acquisitions: Practice and Theory*, 9 :105- 119.
- 1982 Acquisition through exchange: A New Approach to International co-operation, *Proceedings of the Conference on acquisition and Bibliography of Commonwealth and Third World Literature in English*, Commonwealth Institute, London: 227-238.
- 1979 Jamaican National Bibliography, *International Library Review*, 13: 311-321.
- 1979 Can University Libraries serve the National Library role in developing countries? *Libri*, 29,:127- 143.

1978 Sri Lanka, *Asia/Pacific Literatures I English: Bibliographies*, (Ed. E. Robert and Judith McDowell, Washington D.C. Three Continents Press: 1-28.

1975 A Bibliography of Sri Lanka Literature in English, *World Literature written in English*, 14: 450- 492.

c. Synergistic Activities

He was the Head of Acquisition of the main Library of the University of the West Indies and the Editor of *Caribbean Review of Books* and helped compile historical information, maps and sketches regarding location Maroon sites; Executive member, Archaeological Society of Jamaica (ASJ) was a founding and a very active and Executive member of the Archaeological Association of Jamaica (ASJ).