

Red, Black and White

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The Parish of St. Elizabeth in Jamaica is known for Red Bauxite Soils, Black River and a special group of people. Read this to know why the Balck River turned black.



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Subba Rao

Saint Elizabeth is the patron saint of falsely accused, the homeless, widows, and young brides. The Parish of St. Elizabeth on Southern coast of Jamaica was appropriately named after the patron saint as some people in the parish could have been falsely accused of stealing a mango, breadfruit or orange from neighbor's yard. On the banks of Black River, on any given day one can see few widows selling fried fish and certainly there were many young brides to be looking for men to marry.

The soils of St. Elizabeth were turned bright red from geological events that occurred millions of years ago that deposited red Bauxite mineral rich in Aluminum, now the source of wealth for the nation. The red soils also support a wide range of crops from sugar cane to coconuts with abundant harvest.

Limestone hills with its underneath aquifer occupy central St. Elizabeth feeds a river with fresh crystal clear water that turns black in the vicinity of a rum distillery. The nutrient rich dark effluent from the rum distillery flows into a nearby limestone crevice entering the underneath aquifer thus turning the clear water into Black River. This phenomenon may be unknown to the local people used to see the water dark in the Black River for several decades.

The Parish of St. Elizabeth was also known for a special group of people with physical attributes distinctly different from rest of the population; some have very fair skin almost white, some have freckles on their face and some have streaks of blond hair. A crew from a Scottish ship wreck over hundred years ago on the coast of St. Elizabeth could have contributed to the alien features. This group of people was always identified as people from St. Elizabeth from their unique physical features, but never accused of anything.

The events of the ancient past changed the color of soil, river water and skin of some people also enriched the land and the people with wealth and goodness in the parish of St. Elizabeth. Perhaps the patron saint was watching over the people of her namesake Parish.

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