

WRITING IN THE TURKS AND CAICOS ISLANDS (TCI)

Writing in TCI did not begin with local persons of the Islands. The first '*Handbook of the Turks & Caicos Islands*' was written and published by J H Pusey in 1897 and 1906. He was serving in the islands as a Baptist Preacher from Jamaica. Another author from Bermuda, Hosay Smith, wrote a short history of these islands in 1968.

Long ago, it is said that the older folks on every island made up songs and verses; however, they were not written in books. This trend continued for many years. People lived and died, leaving a trail of folksongs about happenings that they experienced along with some bits of poems. Still, the lyrics were not written in books, not even on paper, because they were stored in memory. The government had many publications such as Colonial Reports, gazettes, special reports, and events of TCI. These articles captured much of TCI's history, but they were written and printed in the United Kingdom. Mr. H Sadler began writing about the Turks & Caicos as early as 1967. First, he wrote '*Turks Islands Review*'; later, he wrote a set of 7 books: '*Turks Island Landfall*' (in 1978). These were reprinted as a set of 4 spiral books in 1981 by his daughter Marjorie Sadler who in 1997 reprinted them as one book. In 2001 she reprinted that book with some additions *as 'A History of the Turks and Caicos Islands'*; however, they were not considered natives of Turks and Caicos Islands.

In the 1980s, natives began writing and placing their knowledge on paper for others to sing and recite in schools and elsewhere or adding music. Most of these were folk and cultural songs about everyday activities taking place on the islands. They were used for entertainment purposes and during festivals among friends and acquaintances.

In 1989 a group of TCI Teachers wrote the first history book for the Primary Schools: '***Our Country the Turks and Caicos Islands***' (revised in 1996 Second Edition). In this book, you will find songs composed by Nanless Taylor, Leathe Wilson, Noel Skippings, and other natives. In addition, there are ring games lyrics composed by natives. Many stories were told by our fore parents but were not written down. Later, persons found it necessary to write and print posters, pamphlets and invitations for special occasions, and writing became a part of the culture of the Turks and Caicos Islands.

Audley Astwood wrote a Book of Poems in 1998 printed and published in the islands by Tokora's Studio. Noel Skippings also wrote poems around this time but are no longer in print. Since the year 2000, many Turks Islanders have begun writing and publishing books, songs and poems. In February 2012, Joan Astwood-Sutton published a set of three books called '***Turks and Caicos Islands and Our Caribbean Neighbours***', '***Our Way of Life in the Turks and Caicos Islands***' and '***The Beautiful Treasures of the Turks and Caicos Islands***'. In July 2012, the TCI Education Department made a presentation to the authors of these books to formalise the incorporation of the books as a resource in the school curriculum. In February 2014, Joan Astwood-Sutton published three more books called '***Brer Annancy***' and '***Brer Pelican***' and '***Buster the Human Donkey and the Children***'. A reprint of the book '***Turks and Caicos Islands and Our Caribbean Neighbours***' was completed in 2019. In 2019, the Education Department approved the inclusion of books written by Joan Astwood-Sutton, Anya Malcolm-Gibbs, and Patronella Been, local authors, to the government school's curriculum resources. Today, many writers in TCI are publishing their work, who are members of the TCI Writers Society.