

Kenneth M. Bilby Jamaican Maroon Collection

AFC 1983/008

Prepared by Michelle Forner



American Folklife Center, Library of
Congress

Washington, D.C.

March 2002

Encoded by Kate Culkin May 1995 ;
Revised March 2002 and September
2009 by Nora Yeh

Finding aid URL: <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.afc/eadafc.af002001>

Latest revision: September 2009

Collection Summary

Call No.: AFC 1983/008

Creator: Bilby, Kenneth M., 1953-

Title: Kenneth M. Bilby Jamaican Maroon Collection

Inclusive Dates: 1977-1991

Bulk Dates: 1977-1979

Contents: 1 box; .2 linear feet; 332 items; 300 manuscript pages, 29 10" audio tapes, and 3 videocassettes

Repository: Archive of Folk Culture, American Folklife Center, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Summary: An ethnographic field collection of sound recordings, moving images, and accompanying materials that document the music and dance of Jamaican Maroons, particularly the Kromanti Dance ritual complex recorded by Kenneth M. Bilby in 1977-1979, and in 1991.

Languages: Collection material in Jamaican Creole and English

Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Library's online catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically therein.

For a glossary of Maroon terms used in the Kenneth M. Bilby Jamaican Maroon Collection, see [Appendix A](#).

People

Bilby, Kenneth M., 1953- collector.

Bilby, Kenneth M., 1953- --Ethnomusicological collections.

Organizations

Smithsonian Folklife Festival, collector.

Subjects

Dance--Jamaica.

Field recordings--Jamaica.

Folk songs, Creole--Jamaica.

Kumina (Cult)--Jamaica.

Maroons--Jamaica--Ethnic identity.

Maroons--Jamaica--Music.

Maroons--Jamaica--Religion.

Maroons--Jamaica--Rites and ceremonies.

Maroons--Jamaica--Social life and customs.

Places

Jamaica--Religious life and customs.

Jamaica--Social life and customs.

Form/Genre

Ethnography.

Field recordings.

Manuscripts.

Sound recordings.

Videocassettes.

Administrative Information

Provenance

The sound recordings were loaned to the Library for duplication in 1983. The videocassettes were duplicated in 1994 for the Archive of Folk Culture collection from the original video tapes housed in the Ralph Rinzler Folklife Archives and Collections, Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage, Smithsonian Institution.

Processing History

Collection processed by Michelle Forner. Collection guide was encoded by Kate Culkin in May 1995 as part of the Dance Heritage Coalition Access to Dance Research Resources Project, funded in part by the National Endowment for the Humanities. In March 2002, the guide was revised by Nora Yeh under the guidance of Mary Lacy; and updated in September 2009.

Location

The American Folklife Center is the custodian for this collection; the preservation tapes, RWA 6073-6101, are housed in the Motion Picture, Broadcasting and Recorded Sound Division (M/B/RS). See the Collection Concordance by Format for more information.

Access

Listening and viewing access to the collection is unrestricted. Listening copies of the recordings are available at the Folklife Reading Room.

Restrictions

Restrictions may apply concerning the use, duplication, or publication of items in this collection. Consult a reference librarian in the Folklife Reading Room for specific information. See <http://lcweb.loc.gov/rr/mopic/folkrec.html> for information about ordering audio reproductions.

Preferred Citation

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: Kenneth M. Bilby Jamaican Maroon Collection (AFC 1983/008), Archive of Folk Culture, American Folklife Center, Library of Congress.

Bibliography

Bilby, Kenneth M. *Drums of Defiance: Maroon Music from the Earliest Free Black Communities of Jamaica*. Compact disc and accompanying booklet. Washington DC : Smithsonian/Folkways Recordings (SF 40412), 1992.

Bilby, Kenneth M. "Jamaica's Maroons at the Crossroads." *Caribbean Review* 9, no. 4: 18-21, 49.

Bilby, Kenneth M. "The Kromanti Dance of the Windward Maroons of Jamaica." *Nieuwe West-Indische Gids* 55, nos. 1/ 2 (1981): 52-101.

Bilby, Kenneth M. *Music of the Maroons of Jamaica*. LP record and accompanying booklet. New York: Folkways Records, 1981. FE 4027

Collection Concordance by Format

Quantity	Physical Description/Version	Location/I.D. Numbers
Manuscript Materials		
1	folder	
1	M.A. thesis	
Sound Recordings		

Quantity	Physical Description/Version	Location/I.D. Numbers
29	10" DT preservation tapes at 7.5 ips	AFS 21,959-21,987; RWA 6073-6101
Graphic Images 3	1/2" videocassettes, color	AFC 1983/008:V1-V3 (AFC Originals)

Scope and Content Note

The Kenneth M. Bilby Jamaican Maroon Collection consists of manuscript materials, audio recordings, and video recordings. The materials span the years 1977-1979 and 1991. Bilby conducted fieldwork in Jamaica from 1977 to 1978 as part of his research for a master's thesis in anthropology from Wesleyan University. His focus was on the traditional religion and music of the Jamaican Maroons (descendants of runaway slaves) who live in Moore Town, Scott's Hall, Accompong, and Charles Town. The collection is the result of a 1983 Library audiotape duplication project and a 1994 videotape duplication project, and includes a manuscript copy of Bilby's master's thesis. Bilby and another researcher, Diana Baird N'Diaye, recorded the Maroons in October 1991 as part of their fieldwork in Jamaica prior to the 1992 Maroon Program of the Smithsonian Festival of American Folklife. Duplicates of videotapes made in 1991 further complement the materials.

The collection documents the traditional music and dance forms that the Jamaican Maroons have maintained as part of their unique cultural identity. The materials focus on the ritual complex known as Kromanti Dance or Kromanti Play, a ceremony that incorporates a variety of music and dance styles. The ritual involves the possession of participants by spirits of Maroon ancestors, most often to heal spirit-caused ailments. The audio and video recordings include examples of various "pleasure" (yanga) and "business" (nyaba) styles of dance and music, such as Jawbone, Sa Leone, Mandinga, Tambu, Prapa, and Ibo. Also included are audio recordings of drumming demonstrations, processional music, grave digging songs, and related music of the Kumina and Convince religions practiced by non-Maroons in neighboring areas. The video provides visual documentation of the annual Nanny Day celebrations during which various styles of music and dance belonging to Kromanti Dance are displayed. Also included on the video are scenes of dance performance at the Symposium on Maroon Heritage held in Kingston, Jamaica; demonstrations of the uses of natural materials found at Nanny Falls; and demonstrations of Maroon music, dance, and crafts at Accompong, Jamaica.

Manuscript materials include an audiotape inventory created by Bilby, duplication concordance, background notes on the videotape and on an interview with Bilby at the American Folklife Center, a copy of his master's thesis based on fieldwork research, and Bilby's liner notes from published recordings that draw from these materials.

Description of Series

Container

Series

SERIES I: MANUSCRIPTS

SERIES II: SOUND RECORDINGS

SERIES III: MOVING IMAGES

Collection Inventory

<i>Container</i>	<i>Contents</i>
	SERIES I: MANUSCRIPTS
FOLDER 1	Collection Guide. Archive of Folk Culture administrative materials. The collection guide [this document], original audiotape inventory, duplication concordance, notes on Bilby interview and videotape content, and copies of liner notes from published recordings taken from this collection.
FOLDER 2	<i>Partisan Spirits: Ritual Interaction and Maroon Identity in Eastern Jamaica</i> . Kenneth Bilby's master's thesis, Anthropology Department, Wesleyan University. 1979.
	SERIES II: SOUND RECORDINGS
21,959-21,987 (AFS)	Song and Drumming Genres of the Kromanti Dance Ritual. 29-10" DT tapes at 7.5 ips. Duplicates of original field recordings on 40 5" audiotapes of various formats. Recorded by Kenneth Bilby in Moore Town, Scott's Hall, Accompong, and Charles Town, Jamaica, 1977-1978. Documents song and drumming genres that are part of the Kromanti Dance ritual complex. Includes music of the Kumina and Convince cults, drumming demonstrations, processional music, and grave digging songs.
	SERIES III: MOVING IMAGES
1983/008:V1 (AFC)	Symposium on Maroon Heritage, Kingston, and the Nanny Day Celebration in Moore Town, October 1991. One 1/2" VHS, sound, color, approximately 90 minutes. Filmed by Diana Baird N'Diaye and Kenneth Bilby. Documents music and dance performance at the Symposium on Maroon Heritage, Kingston, Jamaica, and music and dance at the Nanny Day celebration in Moore Town, Jamaica. Duplicate of hi-8 video from the Ralph Rinzler Folklife Archives and Collections, Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage, Smithsonian Institution, FP-1992-SUPER8-0090.
1983/008:V2 (AFC)	Nanny Day Celebration (cont'd) and Demonstration by Major Charles Aarons at Nanny Falls, October 1991. One 1/2" VHS, sound, color, approximately 2 hours. Filmed by Kenneth Bilby. Continuation of AFC 1983/008:V1 documenting music and dance at the Nanny Day celebration in Moore Town, Jamaica. Also documents demonstration by Major Charles Aarons of the many uses Maroons derived for natural materials found at Nanny Falls. Duplicate of hi-8 video from the Ralph Rinzler Folklife Archives and Collections, Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage, Smithsonian Institution, FP-1992-SUPER8-0091.
1983/008:V3 (AFC)	Arts and Crafts Demonstrations at Accompong, October 1991. One 1/2" VHS, sound, color, approximately 90 minutes. Filmed by Kenneth Bilby. Documents demonstrations of music, dance, storytelling, drum-making, and crafts at Accompong, Jamaica. Duplicate of hi-8 video from the Ralph Rinzler Folklife Archives and

Collections, Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage, Smithsonian Institution, FP-1992-SUPER8-0092.

Appendix A: Glossary of Maroon Terms

Excerpted from APPENDIX D: GLOSSARY OF MAROON TERMS in Kenneth M. Bilby's Master's Thesis, *Partisan Spirits: Ritual Interaction and Maroon Identity in Eastern Jamaica*.

- abeng - signalling horn of West African derivation used by the Maroons.
- afana - machete, cutlass.
- African - a descendant of the Liberated Africans who came to Jamaica during the nineteenth century; a member of the Kumina cult (sometimes called "Bongo nation").
- asafo house - structure where Maroons used to hold public Kromanti dance ceremonies.
- asikere - mixed sugar and water, used in giving Maroon oath.
- bakra - white person.
- bigiman - a Maroon ancestral spirit.
- Bongo - synonym for African.
- Business dance - a Kromanti dance held for serious purposes, involving the invocation of ancestral spirits; outsiders are barred from attendance, except under special circumstances.
- busubrandi - a set of ritual motions used by Maroons in Kromanti dance (also sometimes used to refer to the gestures of threat made toward outsiders in Kromanti dance).
- clean-yeye - not in a state of spirit possession; normal state of consciousness.
- Country - ritual language (either Maroon or African) with magical or invocational power.
- dancer-man - Maroon ritual specialist.
- dodging - the Maroon practice of conscious evasion or trickery, used to protect the secrecy of Maroon supernatural knowledge.
- duppy - ghost, spirit.
- fete-man - Maroon ritual specialist; central figure at Kromanti dance.
- granfa - a Maroon possessed by a male ancestral spirit; also, the term used to address such a person (female form, grandy).
- jege - object used by a fete-man for divination.
- jijifo - Maroon term, meaning "to dodge."
- John Thomas - the term used in the Maroon "spirit language" to refer to St. Thomas parish; also, a Maroon drumming style considered to be close to Kumina drumming.
- jumbie - ghost, spirit.
- Kromanti dance - a traditional Maroon ceremony in which Maroon ancestors take possession of living participants, and offer their aid; it is held most often for the healing of spirit-caused ailments.
- Kromanti Play - same as Kromanti dance.
- kumfu-man - same as fete-man, or Science-man.
- Kumina - an Afro-Jamaican religious cult; the ceremonial dance done by members of this cult.
- kwatamassa (quartermaster) - ritual assistant who attends to the granfa or grandy at Kromanti Play.
- myal - possession by the spirit of an ancestor (either Maroon or African).
- niega - classificatory term used by Maroons to refer to non-Maroon Afro-Jamaicans.
- obeah - power over spirits (Maroons most often associate the term with outsiders, and claim that it refers to evil workings).
- obroni - a non-Maroon person; a person with no Maroon blood (synonymous with "Stranger").
- pakit - a personal spirit owned and used by a Maroon fete-man; the main source of a fete-man's power.
- pikin ("child") - term with which a granfa addresses the clean-yeye persons in his presence.
- Pleasure dance - a Kromanti dance held solely for purposes of recreation, in which ancestral spirits are not purposefully invoked.

- salo - private Maroon ritual similar to Kromanti Play, but without drumming or spirit possession ("salo" is sometimes used by Maroons interchangeably with "Science").
- Science - power over spirits.
- Tamboo - a Maroon drumming style, similar to Kumina drumming.
- titai-man - same as fete-man, or Science-man.
- trim - to ritually prepare oneself for a potentially dangerous encounter.
- White-a-miggle - a part-Maroon person; a person of mixed parentage.
- work-man - same as fete-man, or Science-man.
- yarefo - a sick or dying person; also, a corpse (in Maroon Country).
- yenkunkun - a "true-born" Maroon; a full-blooded Maroon.
- yoyo - a "true-born" Maroon; a descendant of Nanny.