

PETITION OF THE DESCENDANTS, RESIDENTS AND HEIRS OF THE PROPRIETORS OF PLANTATION NORTHBROOK (RENAMED VICTORIA).

GUYANA

COUNTY OF DEMERARA

In the matter of recognizing the historic and extraordinary contributions of the “Group of 83” Proprietors who purchased an abandoned plantation and thereafter established the First Village in post-emancipation Guyana; who pioneered a system of self-governance and introduced an economic system founded on the principles of co-operativism; and who thereby made lasting and significant contributions to the development of modern Guyana and emerged a model of global significance and continued relevance:

PETITION

To: The National Assembly of

The Co-operative Republic of Guyana

Public Buildings

Georgetown

THE HUMBLE PETITION of the Descendants, Residents, and Heirs of the Proprietors of Plantation Northbrook (renamed Victoria) for the recognition of the historic contributions of their Ancestors, then “Group of 83” Proprietors who established the First Village in post-emancipation Guyana and thereby catalyzed the Village Movement and its significant, indelible, and transformational contributions to the development of Guyana, respectfully sheweth:

1. That the petitioners are all adults and citizens of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana; and

Whereas the investment by the “Group of 83” Proprietors with the purchase of Plantation Northbrook, later renamed Victoria, represented the initial investment in the freedom and

independence of all Guyanese and signalled a firm resolve and unwavering commitment to the long-term development and future of Guyana;

And whereas the Village of Victoria was the first village to be established in post-emancipation Guyana and the said formation indicated the formal closure of the dark night of human degradation under slavery and represented the commencement of a new phase in the long quest of the Guyanese people for social and economic justice, freedom, and human dignity;

And whereas the pioneering spirit of the “Group of 83” Proprietors, who established, organised, and governed the Village of Victoria, embodied all the hallmarks of leadership, including conviction, courage and innovation; and that their unfaltering and just quest for freedom and human dignity, in spite of monumental setbacks and repeated reversal of fortunes, led them to establish a permanent community and, who through courage and leadership, inspired the “Village Movement” which spawned the rapid formation of villages in Guyana that now represent the home of succeeding generations of Guyanese;

Whereas their descendants and heirs courageously convened the First-Village Indaba - a Conference held in August 2010 - to galvanize residents to creative action in the spirit of the pioneering “Group of 83” in order to compensate for the deepening spread of hopelessness among the young and to arrest further decline in the social and economic fabric of the once prosperous and leading rural community, as well as in all villages in our beloved country;

And whereas that Conference also attempted to investigate and discover the fundamental causes for the precipitate decline of village economies and to evolve a new development paradigm and emerge a new model for village prosperity; and to stimulate entrepreneurial activities and foster renewal for Victorians and all Guyanese;

Noting that the Conference aimed to discover, document, and analyze with a view to strengthening the existing economic, financial and human resource development programs that currently exist in the Village in order to facilitate their improvement, expansion, and transformation for the benefit of Victorians and all Guyanese;

Noting further that the Village of Victoria pioneered, by way of the inaugural Victoria-Belfield Horticultural and Industrial Show of May 1898, the holding of agricultural exhibitions, and

noting the impact that the exhibitions have had on the development of agriculture and the agro industry, and that outcomes of the Conference contemplate a future akin to the spirit of the pioneering “Group of 83” for all Guyanese, individually and collectively;

Additionally, noting that the Village contains many landmarks of historical significance which must be restored and preserved for the cultural benefit of the Nation and as a legacy of Guyana’s pioneering spirit;

2. AND YOUR PETITIONERS AS IN DUTY BOUND DO HUMBLY PRAY:

(i) That the First-Village Indaba held in August 2010 be recognized as the “Rebirth of the Victoria 83” as an acknowledgment of the creative genius of the founders of the Village and their pioneering role in the continuing quest of the Guyanese people for the pinnacles of economic independence, social justice and human dignity.

(ii) That in a bold and studied manner an agricultural and trade show be organised and hosted by the Village of Victoria in 2014 in honour of the celebration of the 175th Anniversary of the founding of the Village and the commencement of the “Village Movement”, and in recognition that Victorians were among the first in the Nation to introduce the concept and event of the national agricultural show in Guyana; and that the organising committee seek and enlist wide support from government and industry for the preparation and hosting of this national event.

(iii) That in response to the overwhelming desire of Victorians attending the First-Village Indaba and persons who were unable to attend, that another Village conference be held in August 2011 during Emancipation Week and that “A Monument to Our Ancestors” be included in the formal and official activities of the nation for the observance of the United Nations International Year for People of African Descent and that the said Monument be unveiled at the identified central and historic location in the Village on the date the pioneering “Group of 83” purchased Plantation Northbrook.

(iv) That the historic landmarks and artefacts in the Village including the Wilberforce Congregational Church, be restored and preserved for the benefit of the villagers and all Guyanese, and that immediate steps be taken to approach the National Trust and other

organisations dedicated to such work for assistance to identify, catalogue, restore and preserve all landmarks and artefacts.

3. Wherefore your Petitioners humbly pray that the National Assembly will be pleased to accept and adopt their Petition.

Petitioners:

1. Michael Spencer
2. Maureen Philadelphia
3. Debbie Weekes
4. Lucretia Meusa
5. Angelene Poole
6. Rexford Jackson
7. Desmond Saul

Dated this 4th day of April, 2011.