

Restoration Work on Childhood Home of Marcus Garvey

Prime Minister, the Hon. Bruce Golding broke ground for restoration work on the childhood home of Jamaica's first national hero, the Right Excellent Marcus Garvey which he said will not only be a shrine but an attraction to tourists.

The home located at 32 Market Street, St Ann's Bay, will be restored as much as possible to its original structure and will include a ceremonial park where persons can learn about the life and work of Garvey. It will be unveiled next year and listed as one of Jamaica 50 legacy projects. Mr. Golding said the launch of the project is symbolic as it is not only being done in National Heritage Week but would have been symbolic at any other time as Jamaica is on the eve of celebrating its 50th year of independence and the project should have been done long ago. "One of the reasons why I took such an interest in it was because I was embarrassed every time I heard somebody mention how Marcus Garvey old house looks. There are countries all over the world that make a shrine of the birthplace or home of their heroes and we have done so too, so why not Marcus Garvey?" Mr. Golding said. The Prime Minister said though history has not confirmed that the home was Garvey's birthplace, it has affirmed that he spent his formative years there. He said there are issues to be worked out with land titling and ownership but the Government is working in accordance with the law to make the necessary arrangements for the proper relocation of the current occupants. "We in Jamaica have not perhaps done as much as we need to do to propagate, to evangelize the philosophy of Marcus Garvey. There have been calls for it to be taught in our schools and that is something I have supported and also calls for it to be part of our curriculum" Mr Golding said. He added that several efforts have been made for the pardoning of Garvey in the US which have been unsuccessful, and in Jamaica, there are some legal procedural issues that have been encountered. He directed Minister of Culture, Olivia Grange to enact a Statute or Act in Parliament before the 50th independence celebrations to recognize that Garvey is not a criminal but Jamaica's most internationally famous and effective hero.