

Frank Cundall, O.B.E., F.S.A., F.R.Hist.S.

1858-1937

Ob. November 15th, 1937



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ON November the 15th, 1937, the Institute of Jamaica sustained a great loss in the death of its Secretary and Librarian.

Mr. Frank Cundall was born in London on the 17th of January 1858. He was educated first at private schools and after at King's College, London, which he left in 1875. He became associated with his father Joseph Cundall, a writer and editor of Art Books, assisting him in many of his publications.

In 1883 he held the position of Assistant Secretary to the International Fisheries Exhibition, which office he also held on the Health and Inventions Exhibitions of 1884 and 1885. He was Chief Assistant to the Secretary to the Royal Commission of the Colonial and Indian Exhibition in 1886, and published "Reminiscences of the Colonial and Indian Exhibition", which was dedicated by special permission to Queen Victoria. In 1889 he was Assistant Secretary to the British section of the Paris Exhibition, when he was created Officer d'Academie (France).

Mr. Cundall took up his duties as Secretary and Librarian of the Institute of Jamaica on the 6th of February, 1891 which position he held until his death.

For many years Mr. Cundall was actively occupied as a leading member of numerous ecclesiastical and educational Boards in Jamaica, while abroad he was a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries, the Royal Historical Society, Honorary Corresponding Member of the Institut Historique et Heraldique de France, the American Antiquarian Society, the American Jewish Historical Society, the Hispanic Society of America, the Ontario Historical Society, and Academie des Jeux Florimontains.

He had planned as his chief work a History of the Govern-

ors of Jamaica, the result of his long researches into Jamaica History; the first volume was published in 1936 and the second was released a few days before his death. The third and fourth volumes were in preparation and the former practically completed. It is hoped that it will be possible in the future for the Institute to complete this series.

His many publications include:—"The Story of the Life of Columbus and the Discovery of Jamaica", 1894, his first connected with Jamaica; "Historic Jamaica"; Lady Nugent's Journal"; "Jamaica Negro Proverbs" with Dr. Izett Anderson; "Jamaica Under the Spaniards" with Mr. J. L. Pietersz; "Studies in Jamaica History"; "Life of Archbishop Nuttall"; "Jamaica's Part in the Great War", and "The Darien Venture" published in 1926 as one of the series of Notes and Monographs of the Hispanic Society of America. He also produced three most important bibliographical works "Bibliographia Jamaicensis" the "Bibliography of the West Indies" and "The History of Printing in Jamaica" in addition to a series of historical guides to the Island beginning with "Jamaica in 1895" and concluding with "Jamaica in 1928". He was co-editor of the "Handbook of Jamaica" from 1907 and sole Editor from 1920.

This short narrative of his work and activity is imposing enough in itself, but it is difficult in print to convey any adequate impression of the great cultural influence which his personality and work have had upon Jamaica. Before Mr. Cundall's arrival in 1891, the opportunities for the appreciation of history or general culture were limited and the Institute itself had only been in existence for a few years.

It is no exaggeration to say that the present position of the Institute of Jamaica as the leading historical centre of the British West Indies is due to Mr. Cundall's individual effort and determination.

The splendid West India Reference Library and the Gallery of Historical Jamaica Portraits and illustrations which were his especial interest will ever remain a lasting monument to his memory.