

# BAHA'I TRIP REPORT: MAURITIUS

This report documents the visit of **Terry Nelson Randolph**, resident United States citizen, and international Baha'i pioneer (Baha'i ID No. 3337), to the Republic of Mauritius and attendance at various Baha'i activities from September 7, 2003 to October 6, 2003.

## **September 7, 2003**

At 1630, we arrived in *Port Louis, Mauritius* aboard Air Mauritius Flight 852 after departing Johannesburg, South Africa at 1225. Our intended stay in Mauritius is for one month at which time we plan to meet Baha'is and participate in local community activities, explore the island, and then depart for Cape Town, South Africa.

## **Accommodations**

Accompanied by my son Na'il Amédée Naren Randolph (four years old), we proceeded by taxi from the airport to self-catering accommodations at the L'Escala Hotels, located just off Royale Road (near Mississippi Fried Chicken), Pereybere, Grand Baie.

Two weeks later, moved to Pereybere Beach Apartments, adjoining the Chinese Restaurant, Royale Road, located across the street from Pereybere Beach entrance.

## **Purpose for my visit**

The purpose for my trip was to familiarize myself with Mauritius leadership experience in government, business, and non-governmental organizations; and, as a visiting Baha'i and international pioneer, to meet local believers, and when and where possible visit Baha'i communities and engage support for teaching activities, Cluster development, and community consolidation efforts.

## **September 8, 2003**

Arrived at the National Baha'i Office, 40 Volcy Pougnet Str., Port Louis, where I met Sebrena, the receptionist, who introduced me to Mr. Satyanand Naikho, Executive Officer for one of the National Spiritual Assembly's administrative programs. I greeted two ladies seated having lunch in a rear office. Discussed my arrival and purpose, and was informed that the National Spiritual Assembly would be informed of my visit.

## **September 9, 2003**

Enrolled my son at Martin' & Ecol'ette Nursery School, Swan Properties, Pereybere, Grand Baie. Telephone number: 2634903.

Telephoned Sebrena to inform that I would Post my CV for the NSA's information. She informed that the NSA desired to meet with me the upcoming weekend.

## **September 14, 2003**

Call received from the National Spiritual Assembly, Baha'i Centre at 1316 (Tel. 2122179) to be invited to a meeting in Grand Baie on Tuesday, 17 Sep, 1900 to meet local Baha'i friends; then on Friday, Sep 19, to meet with the NSA at the Baha'i Centre in Port Louis. I was asked that I might consider ideas for the upcoming Jubilee celebration.

My ideas concerning the Jubilee celebration were expressed to Vasan Venkadee during our drive to his home. They involved organizing public events of a social nature to gain media attention, and to acquire recognition in order to gain prestige and influence for the Faith.

a) Plan an award ceremony in honor of a well-known and respected personage recognized for their services to humanity. I related an event planned and sponsored by the Local Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of Washington, DC in conjunction with the National Spiritual Assembly where the Xerox Corporation was a recipient of the Louis G. Gregory Award (in honor of the Hand of the Cause) for their community service work. Also honored was noted District Judge James Higginbotham (later to be appointed to the Federal Bench). More than 300 invitees attended to include business and government executives, recognized artists, community leaders, and others of note. The program and banquet, held at the Washington Hilton Hotel, was inclusive of

local and national media coverage. Much prestige was harnessed for the Faith that made possible follow-up events of similar nature.

b) Follow-up events included Consultant Programs included noted experts in their fields/professions (economists, scientists, authors, etc.) presenting their views on topics related to their area of expertise. Other venues included luncheons, panel discussions, professional presentations, and poetry readings, among others.

c) The Local Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of New York City were instrumental in hosting a panel discussion at New York City University that included noted Germany rocket scientist Von Braun (largely responsible for designing space rockets used to place a man on the Moon), and the widely published science fiction author Isaac Asimov. Several hundred people attended this event held in the university auditorium.

**The NSA might also consider:**

1) Joint sponsorship of events with like-minded groups and organizations can be considered. Organize community service programs and projects, and worthwhile endeavors as a way to be visible to the larger community and a means for attracting prestige for the Faith.

2) One Baha'i, a ranking employee of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), with the LSA's concurrence as cosponsor, for many months hosted a monthly luncheon at the Fund's national headquarters in Washington, DC. An open forum program open only to invited guest (Baha'i and non-Baha'i), he had obtained permission from the Fund's Executive Board for use of the facilities. Lunch was of the finest cuisine prepared and served by IMF Chefs and their staff. Those attending interrelated with each other, and Baha'is had the planned opportunity to present concepts, ideas, and principles of the Faith in a variety of ways to the attendees.

3) There are myriad opportunities to promote the principles of the Faith through involvement with the Lions Club, Rotarians, United Nations Association, human rights organizations, Toastmasters International, etc.

3) Joint sponsorship of events with like-minded groups and organizations can be considered.

4) Organize community service programs and projects as a means to attract attention to the Faith.

**September 16, 2003**

*Baha'i Meeting:* Home of Vasan Venkadee, 2000-2300; Venkadee Road, 7th Mile, Trfiolet. Tel. 7770689.

Invited to the Venkadee home to meet the family and friends from the local Baha'i community. We gathered in the living room where tea, hot chocolate, and mealie balls were served. My son Na'il was given a small Mars chocolate bar in an effort to break his shyness. Mr. Vishnu Appadoo, many years in the Faith, attended.

After prayers and music, I was asked to address the group. I related some experiences as a member of the Washington, DC Baha'i community with noted friends such as Dr. Ali Kuli Khan (translated the Hidden Words of Baha'u'llah into English, and father of Marzia Gail, noted author); how the Guardian, through the able assistance of Horace Holly, then Secretary of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of the United States and Canada, developed the Baha'i Administrative Model subsequently transplanted throughout the world by the early pioneers of North American community (Mr. Holly was elevated to the rank of a Hand of the Cause of God posthumously); and of my visits to various Baha'i sites in Iran to include obtaining the Holy Threshold of the House of the Báb, and a visit to Baha'u'llah's house in Tehran. A 'Question and Answer' session followed that included discussion of the future influence of the Baha'i Administrative Order on governments of the world. (*Reference: Messages to America. An early publication of the Guardian's letters. US Baha'i Publishing Trust, ca. 1934*).

Attending this meeting were:

Mr. Vishnu Appadoo  
Mr. Rajeshree Venkadee  
Mrs. Anouchka Venkadee  
Mr. Terry N. Randolph  
Ms. Sabrina Mookan  
Kishan Venkadee  
Damen Venkadee

(Baby) Shanya Venkadee  
Ouma Venkadee  
(Kids) Effen Venkadee  
Bhavin Venkadee  
Javish Venkadee  
Na'il Amèdèe Naren Randolph

Photographs were taken of the group.

I was given names of two Baha'i family's residing near my accommodations in Pereybere: Claude Carver, Tel. 2636190, Grand Baie, and Takah Dharambir, Tel. 2627067, Bain boeuf.

We were graciously transported by Mr. Venkadee, who, during the drive-time, conveyed information on Mauritius history, local primary school structures and programs, plans for the upcoming Baha'i Jubilee celebration, and the ethnic makeup of the Baha'i community.

### **September 19, 2003**

Met with the National Spiritual Assembly at the National Centre for about one hour. Discuss my research project in Leadership, Law, and Governance, desired participation in Baha'i activities, possibilities for a media connect, and the possible of making a presentation at the University of Mauritius.

### **September 23, 2003**

Received an early morning call to Claude Carver. Arrangements made to meet at the Chinese Restaurant at 1700. Picked up and driven by Claude to his home where we were greeted by his wife, Aniella, and their daughters. The family lives at Catherine Villa, School Lane, Grand Baie (near the Super U shopping Mall). Telephone 2630402, Fax 2636190.

Discussion focused on my background, the research project, and the growing need for leaders and executives to engage moral and ethical leadership, and possible benefits to be derived by Baha'is who participated in such programs.

It was decided that Claude would provide transportation on Friday to attend Feast in Bain Boeuf; and again on Saturday to attend a fund raising dance held to raise money in support of the R140, 000 goal requested by the NSA for the Jubilee celebration.

### **September 26, 2003**

*Feast of Mashihyyat*

Home of Dharumbir and Vishwanee Takan,  
Bain Boeuf, Pereybere

Feast began with prayers. The national Baha'i newsletter was read, with portions translated into English by Ruksha. The topic of Baha'i youth participation arose and I was able to relate the story of 'Dancing Bear', a youth in the Washington, DC community, who, by his manner and commitment to social change, unwittingly, prepared the DC Baha'i community for the advent of the 1960s social revolution.

There was discussion of plans for Africa's 50th year Jubilee celebration, and of Ruksha's six-month pioneer experience to Cape Town, South Africa as participant in a special youth project. Feast adjourned with prayers at 2145.

Photographs were taken, along with explanation for my documentation of Baha'i events.

Those in attendance:

Raja Takah  
Dharumbir Takah  
Terry Randolph  
Claude Carver  
Na'il Randolph  
Aniella Carver

Catherine Carver  
Cathy Carver  
Vishwanee Takah  
Ruksha Takah (secretary)

The Takah home is the center for activities in the area. Na'il and I were kindly transported by Claude Calver, accompanied by his family.

**September 27, 2003**

*Baha'i Fund Raiser Dinner*  
National Baha'i Centre  
Port Louis, Mauritius

Arrived at the Baha'i Centre at 1800 to attend the fundraiser dinner to raise R10, 000 in support of the NSA's overall R140, 000 goal required to host the Jubilee celebration. The event seemed well attended. Individuals arrived with prepared food donated for the event. After prayers, songs, speeches, and readings a table was prepared heavily laden with different foods: various styles of rice dishes, Chapati, India style chicken, tomato and onion salad, sweets, soft drinks, cake, and ice cream. Funds would be raised through volunteer contributions payment in payment for dinner.

After dinner, there were musical performances by children from various communities to include song and dance. In addition there was a competitive 'Question and Answer' session for both children and adults. This was spirited exercise with much joyous emotion as contestants vied for the correct answers. One hilarious incident occurred where one group was accused of cheating.

At a future activity many of the Friends would experience confirmation laughter because the group accused of cheating, which they denied, was seen actually engaged in this activity in a photograph I had taken. Truth came to light as the group was seen flipping through papers as they attempted to find answers to questions being asked.

As eating continued and the program progressed, persons designated would periodically address the audience in moderate ways encouraging them to remember the reason for the event, as the financial goal had yet not been reached. In this way continued contributions were acquired until the goal was reached.

During the event Creole, French, and a degree of English were spoken. There was much excitement during the competition as the various groups vied for the correct answers to questions concerning Baha'i historical facts. The event lasted longer than expected, and I was unable to attend the dance being held for the same purpose but at a different location. Called a taxi, and arrived home in Perebrey at 2215. Fare: R400. Usually the fare is R350, but road construction in Grand Baie means that one must travel a longer route to get to Perebrey.

**September 28, 2003**

*Baha'i Cluster Meeting*, Rivière du Remparte,  
Home of the Allagheni's  
Hibiscus Lane, Amikie, Tel. 4129483

The Cluster meeting was held in the front room of the Allagheni home, and is an ongoing activity for strengthening and consolidating of the community and expansion of the Faith. Counsellor Eddy Lutchmaya gave the opening address. This meeting was held the morning after the fund raising dance, which, Claude Carver told me, reached the R5000 goal.

**Cluster Programme:**

10:00-10:20 Devotion  
10:20-10:35 Counselor Eddy Lutchmaya  
                    Joke shared by Ram  
10:35-10:50 Break  
Song Ruhi 2 Group, Grand Gaube  
                    Community  
10:50-11:05 Building Momentum

- Presented by Brenda  
and Jevimi  
(Task Force)
- 11:05-11:20 Collaboration between  
Institutions Presented by  
Josérito (National Teaching  
Committee)
- Mime Ruhi 3 Group Pereybere
- 11:20-11:35 Cultural of encouragement by  
Rajen Pyneeandee (ABM)
- 11:35-12:15 Lunch  
Song Ruhi 1 group Cottage
- 12:15-12:25 Junior Youth Empowerment  
Program
- 12:25-14:00 Consultation

Mrs. Javeemi Mathian Pydiah, wife of Mr. Mevin Pydiah, both home-front pioneers from Rose-Belle to Rivière du-Rempart, narrated part of the program. Current address: c/o Baha'i Centre, R. du-Rempart, Telephone. 4126335. The wife invited me to spend a night with them at their home on the coming Wednesday. The plan never materialized.

Met and had conversation with Mr. Vadivel Allaghen, uncle to Jimmy Allaghen. Now 80 years old, he has a personal goal to attain his 100th birthday. His plan is steeped in techniques for "right living" acquired from the written works of various natural health practitioners. Mr. Allaghen became Baha'i after a long and difficult path through Hindu, Islam, Tamil, Christian, and Buddhist religions. Mr. Vadivel has a history of long service to the Cause, and is largely responsible for the extension of the Faith into his family. Though never married, due to acceptance of responsibility as head of household (mother, father, siblings, etc.) during a time of great trials and difficulties. "Now, I'm happy", he says, referring once again to the problems he has faced and overcome. I photographed him, and attempted to encourage his nephew, Jimmy, to enquire of his uncle's background and development it into a written work.

Living at this residence: Mrs. Gungamah Allaghen (Mother), Mr. Darmonlingum Allaghen (Father), Mr. Shidan Mooravan (Nephew). All are Baha'i. Mr. Vadivel, lives nearby.

I photographed the meeting while in session and a group photo afterwards. Also photographed were Allaghen Darmonlingum and his granddaughter, Shidan Mooravan.

Lunch was served consisting of rice, rice with egg, vegetables, and sodas for the thirsty. After lunch, a neighbor decided to fire his cane field. To the sound of crackling and spitting burning sugarcane stalks, those with automobiles thought it advisable to move them to avoid possible damage by fire.

Once again, Claude and his wife expressed their kindness to me by offering transport to and from the meeting. And along the way we had stopped to pickup Mrs. Shamlia Chinopiel, Caporal Street, Goodlands

### **September 29, 2003**

*Meeting with Mr. Sharma Gopual*  
Baha'i Centre, Port Louis

I had a most enjoyable and enlightened session with National Spiritual Assembly member Mr. Sharma Gopual. His interest in moral and ethics as performance requirements for leadership capability is commendable. We discussed ideas pertaining to my project, and his interest in the subject.

In my view, current leaders, those holding positions of influence in government, business, non-governmental organizations, communities, etc., must consider the approach to their duties from a moral and ethical framework. Those holding positions of influence and have undergone moral and ethical training have found it to be tremendously benefit. A new awareness was acquired with a new perspective on methods for problem solving. Employees quickly notice the changes in leadership focus, and responded with renewed interest in the quality of their own job performance.

Those conducting the training do not involve themselves in the internal political affairs of those being trained. Religious considerations are tactfully never interjected into the program. Other than this approach would constitute a violation of professional ethics, and for certain would soon undercut the trainer's effectiveness as a professional.

Because solutions to humanity's plight are contained in the current Revelation, it is the responsibility of a Baha'i to apply these principles and concepts in new and unique ways to assist those being trained in finding solutions to their organizational and personal leadership problems.

Leadership and management training is become a popular and expensive enterprise. Many individuals, even those with poor qualifications and lacking capability, are reaping great financial benefits. My approach is to provide quality moral and ethical leadership training not only at just corporate levels, but to integrate the corporate with the grassroots, a group effort inclusive of the two for greater learning experience.

In my experience those in leadership positions 'hunger' for information on new approaches to old performance problems. They often are 'blind' to functional changes in society that are having profound impacts on executive leadership, administrative systems, and managerial functions. Functional changes are necessary if leaders are to meet the challenges of a rapidly changing environment. Rarely in this 'new world' does one find a 'know-it-all' leader; though individual ego's remain rampant, consultants are now the resource of choice in assisting leaders to meet executive and administrative challenges.

Mr. Gopaul seems interested in engaging some form of ethical and moral persuasion, perhaps at community level, business, or in private enterprise. In this day and age, with the continual slide into decay of countless leaders and organizations, such efforts are commendable. We agreed to exchange views through correspondence. He, Na'il, and I were photographed in front of the Baha'i Centre.

*Note: As follow-up to our meet, promised researched information on topics discussed was sent to Mr. Gopaul via email soon after my return to South Africa----using the following information:*

*Mr. Sharma Gopaul  
Department of Health and Medical Service Faculty of Science, University of Mauritius  
Reduit, Mauritius  
Tel (250) 416-6590 (Residence)  
vgopaul@intnet.mu (Residence)  
gopaulv@uom.ac.mu (Work)*

### **September 30, 2003**

*Devotional Meeting, home of Rajen & Sheila Pyneandee, Auxiliary Piments, (Near Radison Hotel). Tel. 2617146*

We gathered with community members to discuss various topics related to the Baha'i Faith. Some personal experiences in Baha'i communities in various locations throughout the world were presented, to include, efforts put forth by many communities to solve difficult problems related to internal conflict. Often personal fear is the chief culprit. Therefore, I attempted to encourage progression beyond this type influence by relating two concepts: 1) *Light at the End of the Tunnel*--When one is in process of carrying out plans often-time the way forward looks dark and foreboding, depression sets in, and the urge to give up takes over the mental faculty. Such hard times requires staying-the-course. When in darkness persevere until there appears a slight flicked of light in the far distance. An encouraging sign, energy is renewed, and the knowledge that the goal is obtainable elevates one's spirit.

2) *Foot Placement*--When facing a challenge (hot water) often we have misperceptions about it, thus, causing tremendous fear of failure. This calls for having the courage to place one's foot in hot water and wait for the water to cool rather than taking your foot out just because you THINK the water is hot. More often than not, our fears are not verified

3) *Heel of the Foot*--Personal fear is suitable for placing under the heel of one's foot. To conquer fear captures the image of fear being under the heel of your shoe. Then rotate you foot and grind fear into the dust.

Someone stated that sometimes individuals/communities become incapacitated because the messages from the Universal House of Justice are not understood, they are found to be very difficult to comprehend.

I related a story that one believer wrote the Universal House of Justice on this very topic; and asked given the nature of things why didn't the House of Justice write in a less complex manner. The response received stated that the House of Justice was not about to lower its standards. Therefore, it was incumbent of the individual to evaluate himself or herself to meet the requirement.

Food was served prior to meeting, and television was planned for the children. Photos were taken after session completion. Meeting started approximately 2000 and lasted until 2215. Rajen and wife Sheila provided us with transportation.

#### **October 1, 2003**

I was invite for an overnight stay this date by Javeemi and Mevin Pydiah at Rivière-du-Rempart Baha'i Centre. Tel. 4126335. This did not take place. Probably do to a misunderstanding of plans or lack of communication.

#### **October 4, 2003**

1600 Hours. I received Rjen and his friend at my apartment to discuss possible ways of overcoming obstacles, both real and imagined, to personal growth as a means for releasing energies necessary for Baha'i teaching and consolidation work.

#### **October 4, 2003**

*Unity Meeting*, 1730 Hours. Home of the Takahs, Bain Boeuf, Preybere

Meeting started at 1800 with prayers. I was asked to share some of my Baha'i experiences with the group, and chose to talk once again about Washington, DC because of its rich Baha'i heritage and the quality of Baha'i issued from its bosom; and those that has visited that 'Abdu'l-Bahá blessed city on a number of occasions: Hands of the Cause of God--Mr. Paul Haney, Dr. Kahdem, Mr. Bill Sears, Dr. Muharjhi; with specific questions answered about Mr. Enoch Olinga.

Mr. Olinga graciously attended the programs we had organized for his visit, to include, meeting with the Press, and the opportunity to meet local believers. His personality was robustness, and he was keen on spiritual insights.

I also talked about Dr. Ali Kuli Khan and Dr. Stanwood Cobb, both noted Baha'is, and both of who had been the presence of Abdu'l-Baha. Discussed the Baha'i administrative structure, and how it was raised throughout the world, and of its uniqueness in being open to receive the world's rich religious and cultural diversity.

Dinner was served, and included the largest chicken leg I had ever encountered in all my years of eating chicken. When I expressed this in a humorous way, everyone laughed. It was explained that the family bred chickens were fed a special diet. India influenced cuisine was served accompanied with wonderful steamed rice.

Fifteen to twenty people were in attendance. Mr. Dharumbir, a retired police administrator, and I discussed the impact and aftermath of the war in Iraq, and the meaning inherent in a coming 'New World Order'. He was able to relate references contained in Hindu Scripture and prophecy to the "Golden Age", that time in the future of the Baha'i World Commonwealth. All had a most enjoyable time.

My son enjoyed the special attention he received, consumed dinner with gusto, after which he played on the front yard swing.

#### **October 5, 2003**

Arrived at the Baha'i Centre, Port Louis for departure with the Centre caretakers for a *Devotional Meeting* held at the home of Mrs. Vijay Lutchimi Chinapiel

19 Latanien Street, Ste Croix  
Port Louis. Tel. 2405941.

Devotional Meetings are usually held per month in support of cluster development. I photographed the group seated in the front room prior to dinner being served.

Prayers were said and readings from the Writings of Baha'u'llah. Dinner was served in the dining room consisting of Chinese style cuisine, prepared with pride by three lady's of the family, each expressing her well-founded joy and love for food preparation. Vijay Lutchimi, who functioned both as organizer and host, with the able assistance of various family members, served the children in the kitchen. Her mother, who was present, commented on the large framed family photograph gracing the rear wall of the entrance room. Vijay Lutchimi has lived with her family in this house for more than 30 years. Her oldest son was just four years old when the family first moved in.

Indian music played from the radio tuned to a popular local station. It soothed us as we dined with friendly conversation. I had the opportunity to meet Barinder Cundassamy and learn of her Shik background, cultural history, and family heritage, her father in particular. She married a Mauritius man, through whom she came to the Faith. I told her of my former residence in Battle Creek, Michigan where I organized meetings every third month that I named 'Unity Fest'. Having a very large house, designed and constructed for large gatherings, programs were designed to allow those attending to learn and experience other cultures. Drawing on residents from Battle Creek and sister communities, Kalamazoo and Ann Arbor, and students from Western Michigan University. Thirty to forty people always attended these events. On one such occasion I invited a fellow postgraduate student and his wife, both Sikhs, to speak about their culture and religion.

I attempted to engage Mr. Jaya Thavir in conversation, but he explained that he was not fluent in English. I promised Shamla Chinapiel to send her a copy of my son's naming document, and also to provide information on research sources specializing in names for newly born children. One year married, she is scheduled for delivery during the first quarter of 2004. Address: Caporal Street, Goodlands, Mauritius. The meeting closed at 2100.

I'm especially thankful to the many friends who were instrumental in providing me proper names and correct spelling for those persons photographed. Special thanks to Mrs. Pellegrin in particular, who, with her husband Joselito, are caretakers of Baha'i Centre, Port Louis. She provided background information on the Fund Raising dinner, and was instrumental in providing the bulk of the names with correct spellings of many individuals in photographed I had taken. At this meeting, Vijay Lutchimi and her family were very helpful in assisting me to complete the 'naming' task. This would be the last meeting I would attend prior to scheduled departure from Mauritius for South Africa on 6 Oct 03.

For my return trips to Pereybere from Port Louis during late evenings I would hire a taxi. From previous experience, I had found two whom seemed reasonably priced (R300-350), reliable, and trustworthy. This evening I engaged Laiken, Telephone: 7657306. The other taxi driver, I mistakenly deleted his name from my database.

One month was indeed a short time in which to experience the wonders of Mauritius and to enjoy meeting Baha'i friends. With a sometimes-turbulent history, so true of us all, the Baha'is of Mauritius have emerged from their 'trials by fire' into a community strong at its core and commitment to championing the "Cause of God". The community is determined to do its part in building the sustaining fortress upon which the future "Baha'i Commonwealth" will stand.

I thank all who gave assistance to Na'il and I during our stay. There were many invitations to events, and invites to visit Baha'i homes. May bounties from the All Mighty continue to shower upon you.

*The Mauritius Trip Report  
December 26, 2003  
5 Tristan Lodge, Apt. 401  
Beach Road, Mouille Point  
Cape Town, South Africa  
Email: DNDI\_DOLF9@Yahoo.com*

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Warm regards,

**TERRY RANDOLPH** (*USA Baha'i ID #03337*)

**PS.** Effort was made to provide a creditable record of Baha'i activities attended, and provide correct spelling for names of people photographed. All mistakes are solely mine, for which I alone bare responsibility.

\*Photographic documentation of Baha'i events in Mauritius will be stored in archives along side other like materials that record activities of various Baha'is and Baha'i events in locations in the United States and several countries since 1965. They will thus be held and preserved by me as authentic materials depicting Baha'i history until such time as I am able to prepare them for publication. In several instances I have given copies to those photographed.