

A Brief History of the Economics & Statistics Office

Economic and Statistical Reporting in the Early Years

The very first official statistics on the Cayman Islands was the 1802 census, which was conducted by Edward Corbet, a staff aide to the Governor of Jamaica, Lieutenant General George Nugent. At that time Corbet recorded 933 residents on Grand Cayman, including 545 slaves. He reported that the sister islands of Cayman Brac and Little Cayman were uninhabited, being visited only by turtlers during the summer season.

As a dependency of Jamaica, experts were brought from Kingston to conduct statistical and economic surveys. With the launch of the West Indian Federation in 1959, Cayman ceased to be a dependency of Jamaica and gained its own constitution. During the intervening years, assistance came mainly from the British Development Division in the Caribbean, based in Barbados.

Creation of the Portfolio of Finance

In 1955, the Treasury Department was created from what was previously the Department of Treasury, Customs and Post Office. Mr. Desmond V. Watler was appointed as Cayman's first Treasurer, with Mr. Vassel G. Johnson as Assistant Treasurer.

In 1969, the title of Treasurer was changed to Financial Secretary. Under the new constitution that came into effect in 1972, the Financial Secretary, Mr. Vassel G. Johnson, became an official member of Executive Council (Cabinet) with responsibilities for the following areas: Treasury, Savings Bank, Currency Board, Companies Registry, Bank Inspection, Development Unit, Exchange Control, Budget, and later Insurance, Statistics and Computers.

Changing the Statistics Law in 1970 and 1996

A new Statistics Law was passed in March of 1970 to replaced Law 14 of 1967, which became obsolete as the Cayman Islands separated from Jamaica. It gave legal backing to the census conducted later that year. Despite the successful passage of this Law, the community at large was concerned about Government's increasing need for information. These fears were heightened when government started looking into the cost of living. Of particular concern was the invasion of privacy. This was echoed in Hon. Annie H. Bodden's address in the Legislative Assembly on 1 May 1970:

...I opposed the Law, not the part of the Census taking but I opposed the Law which gave the authority to go into a man's or woman's private residence and search up what they know, and also as to their income, what they spent, how much they made, and so on. Now I feel that a part of this Law is a good Law, and my resolution is that the Law be re-examined, not done away with, I'm not advocate that.¹

The Financial Secretary explained why it was important to collect the various economic and social statistics. Key users such as developers, and investors were surprised at the lack of information on the economy.

The Statistical Law was revised in 1996. The law is referred to as **Statistics Law (1996 Revision)** and is still in use.

Evolution of the Economics & Statistics Office

It was not until 1976 that the Statistics Unit was established in the Portfolio of Finance with Mr. Ned Solomon, Executive Officer and Ms Carolyn Cupidon, Clerical Officer. In 1977, Mr. James A. Hunter was appointed as Sr. Assistant Secretary in the Portfolio of Finance with

¹ Ulf Hannerz, Caymanian Politics: "Structure and Style in a Changing Island Society" in Stockholm Studies in Social Anthropology – 1 (Department of Social Anthropology, University of Stockholm, 1974) 155

responsibility for Development and Statistics. The total staff complement at that time was five, including the vacant post of Executive Officer.

On the 22nd October 1983, Mr. Graham Jones was seconded from the United Kingdom Statistical Services to become Cayman's first resident Statistician. His successor was Mr. Phillip Turnbull (1985-1990), whose post was upgraded to Chief Statistician in 1989. Other Chief Statisticians included Mrs. Penny Bassett (1990 -1992), Mr. Brian Boxill (1992-2003), and Mr. Christian Lajule (2003 – 2004).

In 1986, Mr. D. M. Scott was recruited through the British Executive Services Overseas (BESO) as a short-term Economic Development Advisor. On a more permanent basis, Mr. Rudyard Robinson was appointed as Chief Economist and served in that capacity from 1988 to 1993. He was followed by Mr. Lyndon Martin who served as Assistant Economist between 1993 and 1995.

Between 1995 and 2000, the Economics & Statistics Office was created with Mr. Brian Boxill as Director and Dr. Elizabeth Parsan as Deputy Director responsible for Economics. The Economics section was separated from Statistics in 2000 and was headed by Dr. Parsan until 2003. The Economics & Statistics Office was finally reconstituted in 2003 under the Directorship of Ms. Catharine Read and with Mr. Christian Lajule as Chief Statistician.

The following persons have headed the economics and statistical agencies since their inception¹:

Ned Solomon	1976 -1977	Executive Officer, Statistics Unit
James A Hunter	1977 - 1979	Sr. Assistant Secretary, Development & Statistics Unit
Edward Solomon	1979 - 1980	Higher Executive Officer, Development & Statistics Unit
Susan Toole	1980 - 1981	Higher Executive Officer, Development & Statistics Unit
Carolyn Cupidon	1981 - 1982	Executive Officer, Statistics & Information System
Carolyn Cupidon-Ebanks	1982 - 1984	Assistant Statistician, Statistics Unit
Graham Jones	1983 - 1985	Statistician, Development & Statistics Unit
Phillip Turnbull	1985 – 1989	Statistician, Statistics Unit
D. M. Scott	1986	Economic Development Advisor, British Executive Services Overseas (BESO)
Phillip Turnbull	1989 - 1990	Chief Statistician, Statistics Office
Rudyard L. Robinson	1988-1993	Chief Economist, Portfolio of Finance & Development
Penny Bassett	1990 - 1992	Chief Statistician, Statistics Office
Bryan Boxill	1992 - 2000	Chief Statistician, Statistics Office
Lyndon Martin	1993 - 1995	Assistant Economist, Portfolio of Finance & Development
Bryan Boxill	1995 - 2000	Director, Economics & Statistics Office
Dr. Elizabeth Parsan	1995 - 2000	Deputy Director, Economics & Statistics Office
Bryan Boxill	2000 - 2003	Chief Statistician, Statistics Office
Dr. Elizabeth Parsan	2000 - 2003	Director Economic Research Unit
Catherine Read	2003 – 2004	Director, Economics & Statistics Office
Christian Lajule	2003 - 2004	Chief Statistician, Economics & Statistics Office
Stran Bodden	2005	Acting Director, Economics and Statistics Office

Michael Godfrey	Jan to March 2006	Acting Director, Economics and Statistics Office
Maria Zingapan	April 2006 - Present	Director, Economics and Statistics Office
Ronnie Andersson	Oct 2007 – Aug 2009	Chief Statistician, Economics & Statistics Office

¹The persons listed include the most senior person within the office at the time.

Historical Tidbits

1802 First Official Population Census

1891 Population Census

1911 Population Census

1921 Population Census

1931 Population Census

1943 Population Census

1960 Population Census

1970 Population Census

1976 Statistics Unit was established

1979 Population Census

1983 Cayman's First Resident Statistician appointed

1989 Population Census

1991 Household Income and Expenditure Survey

1992 First Labour Force Survey

1999 Population Census

2003 The Economics and Statistics Office reconstituted

2007 First Survey of Living Conditions

2008 First National Accounts Survey



ECONOMICS AND STATISTICS OFFICE

PORTFOLIO OF FINANCE AND ECONOMICS

Information on hand