



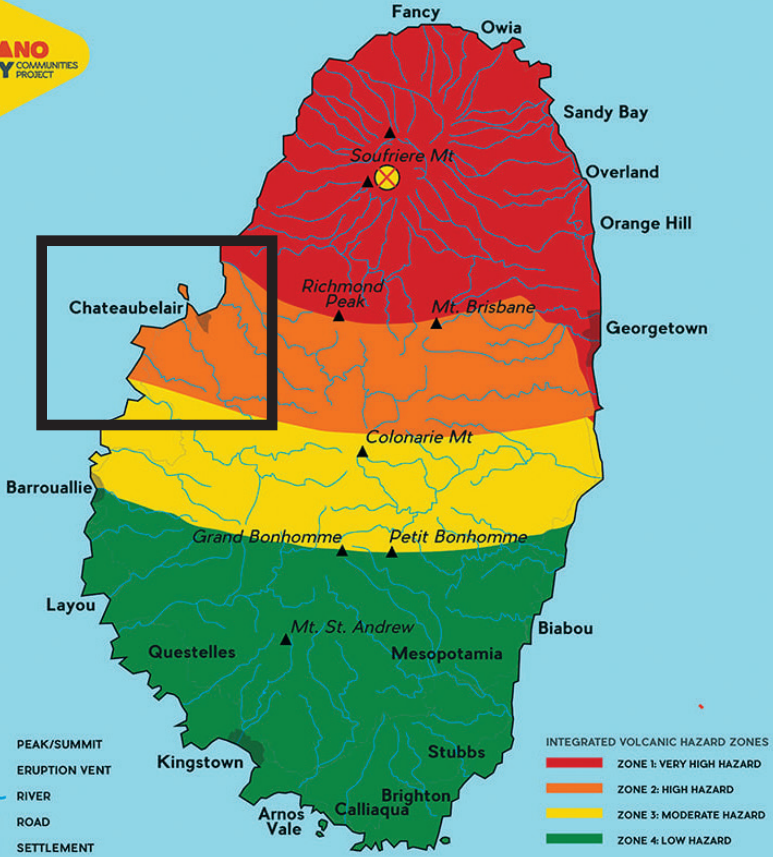
Stories of Soufrière

By Veneshia Harry, Maggie Winters, and
Kamryn You Mak

TABLE OF CONTENTS

<i>Introduction</i>	1
FITZ-HUGHES.....	7
CHATEAUBELAIR.....	15
PETIT-BORDEL.....	27
ROSE BANK.....	37
ROSE HALL.....	47
CUMBERLAND.....	53
 <i>Acknowledgments</i>	 56
<i>Photo Credits</i>	59





VOLCANIC HAZARD MAP FOR LA SOUFRIERE VOLCANO
Communities in the **red** and **orange** zones are likely to be evacuated for extended periods during an eruption.

Introduction

On the island of Saint Vincent, in the Lesser Antilles of the Caribbean, one volcanic peak rises high above the rest of the land at 1,234 meters in the northern area of the island. La Soufrière, locally called Soufrière, is the youngest and northernmost volcano on St. Vincent. The volcano produces pyroclastic flows, and started to deposit lava 4,300 years ago to create much of the island, but now only visibly erupting large vertical ash clouds and hot gasses like sulfur.

Previous eruptions include major events in 1718, 1812, 1902, 1971, 1979, and most recently, 2021. Many people alive today bore witness and experience to the 1979 eruption, which began on Friday, April 13. Almost exactly 42 years later, as if to celebrate her birthday, on Friday, April 9, 2021, Soufrière erupted again, sending ash well past Barbados, 190 kilometers to the east.

Months before, in late December of 2020, scientists from the University of the West Indies Seismic Research Centre (UWI-SRC) confirmed visual and satellite observations of a new hot spot and dome forming, and held a Cabinet Briefing and public press conference. The National Emergency Management Organisation (NEMO) issued their first Bulletin and raised the Volcanic Alert level to orange. Throughout January and February, more work was done to grow the monitoring network and capacity, observe the volcano, and inform the public. On March 21, 2021, many low-frequency seismic events and the first volcano-tectonic earthquakes were recorded, with scientists expecting magma movement upwards to the surface. By April 5, the number and rate of volcano-tectonic earthquakes increased to 50 earthquakes per hour.

In the late afternoon of Thursday, April 8th, NEMO raised the Volcanic Alert level to red and Prime Minister Ralph Gonsalves issued an evacuation order. However, many people shared that the government was made aware of the immediate need to evacuate many hours prior to releasing this information to the public. This evening marked the beginning of a mass evacuation of the red and orange zones, ultimately displacing over 20,000 individuals from their homes.

On the morning of Friday April 9th, at 8:41 a.m. the first explosive eruption occurred, sending massive plumes of ash and debris into the air. Some residents, like Claris Douglas of Rose Bank, used analogies of helicopters and jet planes to describe the rumbling that echoed throughout the island. The second and third eruptions occurred

at 2:45 p.m. and 6:30 p.m. respectively. Residents remaining in the red and orange zones were once again asked to evacuate. After repeated attempts to evacuate all residents, police and other emergency workers were permitted to evacuate the areas that evening.

Eruptions continued throughout Saturday, resulting in ashfall across all of mainland St. Vincent. Many described this as the worst and most frightening day of the eruptions, causing a handful of the individuals who stayed behind to evacuate. The constant shaking and booming reverberations of the eruptions proved intolerable for many, and the clouds of ash felt suffocating. Garfield Stapleton, of Chateaubelair, described the ash enveloping the island, stating that “night came three times in one day”. Throughout the day street lamps turned on and off, and chickens flew in and out of trees, confusing the darkness for nighttime each time it came.

In the following days, the eruptions continued and impacts reached far beyond St. Vincent. On Sunday, April 11th, Barbados Prime Minister Mia Mottley addressed the nation, which was now also heavily impacted by the falling ash. That same day, pyroclastic flows were confirmed via satellite images. On Tuesday, April 13th, Soufrière erupted at 6:30 a.m., officially marking the 42nd anniversary of her 1979 eruption. By Wednesday, eruptions were becoming less frequent, but the pyroclastic flows continued and lahar, a destructive form of mudflow consisting of volcanic debris, pyroclastic matter, and water, was spotted in the Rabacca





valley. Eruptions ceased on Thursday, April 22nd, nearly two weeks after the first explosive eruption took place.

A week later, on April 29th, St. Vincent was hit with heavy overnight rains. The downpours in the heels of weeks of volcanic eruptions resulted in even more destruction, causing lahars, flooding, and landslides. The rain mixed with the thick layer of ash that already covered the island, creating a cement-like substance that was even more difficult to clean. On Thursday, May 6th, four weeks after the evacuation order was issued, the Volcanic Alert level was lowered back down to orange.

In the following months, islanders began to face the aftermath of the eruptions and work towards a return to normalcy. The government and other organizations, such as the World Food Bank and The Mustique Charitable Trust, provided different forms of monetary and material aid for those impacted by the disaster. This time proved difficult for many: livestock and crops were lost and destroyed, businesses closed, and teachers struggled to educate students who were spread across the island. Despite this, families, friends, and communities rallied around each other, helping to clear ash from houses and businesses and supporting each other in the face of numerous challenges.

In September 2021, NEMO declared that it was safe for residents to return to communities in the red and orange zones, although many had begun to move back in the prior months. Life has generally returned



back to normal in the years since the eruption, but impacts of Soufrière remain visible around the island. Vincentians say they continue to find ash in the cracks of their homes, and can still smell the sulfur on a rainy day.

Over three weeks in January of 2024, we visited six villages in the north leeward part of the island, listening to stories of people's experiences with Soufrière's 2021 eruption. Much of what people shared, from staying in their homes and watching all of the eruptions take place, to evacuating and all of the ups and downs of navigating aid and displacement, are collected here. Thank you to everyone who contributed to this collection and may these stories and photos bring you joy, laughs, humility, gratitude, and respect. For now, the giant sleeps...



Fitz-Hughes



Chesley Browne, Andre Francis, and Arthur Scott





Almost 50 years ago, Andre Francis was in Fitz-Hughes selling blackfish, when he met his lovely wife. From then on he called Fitz-Hughes home, and he and Arthur Scott have been friends ever since. Although not for quite as long, the two have been friends with Chesley Browne for nearly 20 years. These three friends have vivid memories of multiple eruptions over the past decades. Their experiences in Soufrière's 1979 eruption have stuck with them, and everything about the 2021 eruption led back to that. As they told us stories of all the animals on the loose in the wake of the eruption, they couldn't help but keel over in laughter as they told us a tale that began with the liberated animals and ended in multiple prison sentences.

As the story goes, when Soufrière erupted in 1979 the escaped animals were everywhere, nearly taking over the communities that people had temporarily fled from. They ran rampant through the streets and even into people's houses. Almost 70 miles across the ocean, a group of St. Lucians saw an opportunity. They hopped in a boat, and made the trip to St. Vincent, under the guise of wanting to purchase some fish. Upon arrival they started rounding up the loose animals, jumped back in the boat, and began the return with a boat full of goats and pigs. They didn't make it far though - they were caught by the Coast Guard in the midst of their escape and sent back to St. Vincent where they were arrested and sentenced to three years in prison. While we cannot confirm whether or not this story is true, it certainly makes the three friends laugh.





Unicka Millington and Rochael Pierre

Rochael Pierre and Unicka Millington have been teaching at the Fitz-Hughes primary school for almost two decades combined. Millington has been there since 2012, and Pierre since 2018. Together, along with Danlee Sutherland (who has been at the school since the November after the eruption) they teach grades five and six. In the year leading up to the eruption, Pierre and Millington were already dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic. They were navigating the world of the virtual classrooms and doing their best to cultivate the young minds of their students through the screens of their computers, which proved immensely challenging.

Days before they were supposed to make the long awaited return to in-person teaching, Soufriere erupted, leaving these teachers and students in the face of yet another disaster. As Fitz-Hughes and all surrounding communities were evacuated, their students were displaced all across St. Vincent. For the most part, students ended up in and around Kingstown, the capital, where the teachers began to set up shop, and continue to fight to educate their students despite the relentless tribulations.

They began with their grade six students, who were preparing for their exit exams, which allow them to move on to secondary school. They were provided a space to teach these students, and eventually began to teach their grade five students online. However, the small space and high noise levels proved incredibly difficult. It was nearly impossible to teach grade five students online in the same noisy rooms where they were conducting in person lessons with their grade six students. Luckily, a nearby church offered up their space so that the teachers could conduct each grades' lessons in separate spaces. Pierre and Millington would switch back and forth between the spaces, teaching their respective subjects, and doing their best to keep their students on track.

In the aftermath of both the pandemic and the eruption, Pierre and Millington expressed frustration over the lasting effects the lack of structure has had on their classrooms. Despite their valiant efforts to keep up with the traditional curriculums, the almost two years out of their school in some moments feels like a waste. Upon returning back to the school, they felt they were back at square one, with many students retaining very little of the materials taught in the COVID and

eruption years. Additionally, even years later they notice an overall lack of focus and respect in their classrooms which they credit to the years students spent learning online. These disasters have had lasting impacts on students' attitudes towards education, but Pierre and Millington remain hopeful that there will be a return to a more conducive and joyful learning environment. Their students are certainly in good hands. Pierre and Millington are the picture of resilience and patience, continuing to find great delight in watching their students grow in the face of great adversity.

Anonymous

One Fitz-Hughes resident, who prefers to remain anonymous, was sitting on the porch of his shop when the first eruption occurred. Soon after the blast he and his wife began their journey to Vermont, a community in the designated green zone, where they stayed on her parents' property for the next four months. He wanted to stay behind alongside his father who chose to remain in Fitz-Hughes, but ultimately his wife made him evacuate.

Roughly a week after the first eruption, he returned to Fitz-Hughes to evaluate the state of his shop, which he runs alongside his father. Upon arrival he saw a mess before him - the roof of his business had collapsed under the weight of the ash. Even after efforts to clean up the establishment, the structural damage caused by Soufrière's eruption remained, greatly limiting the operational space available to him. As a result, he can carry only a fraction of the stock he was able to hold prior to the eruption.

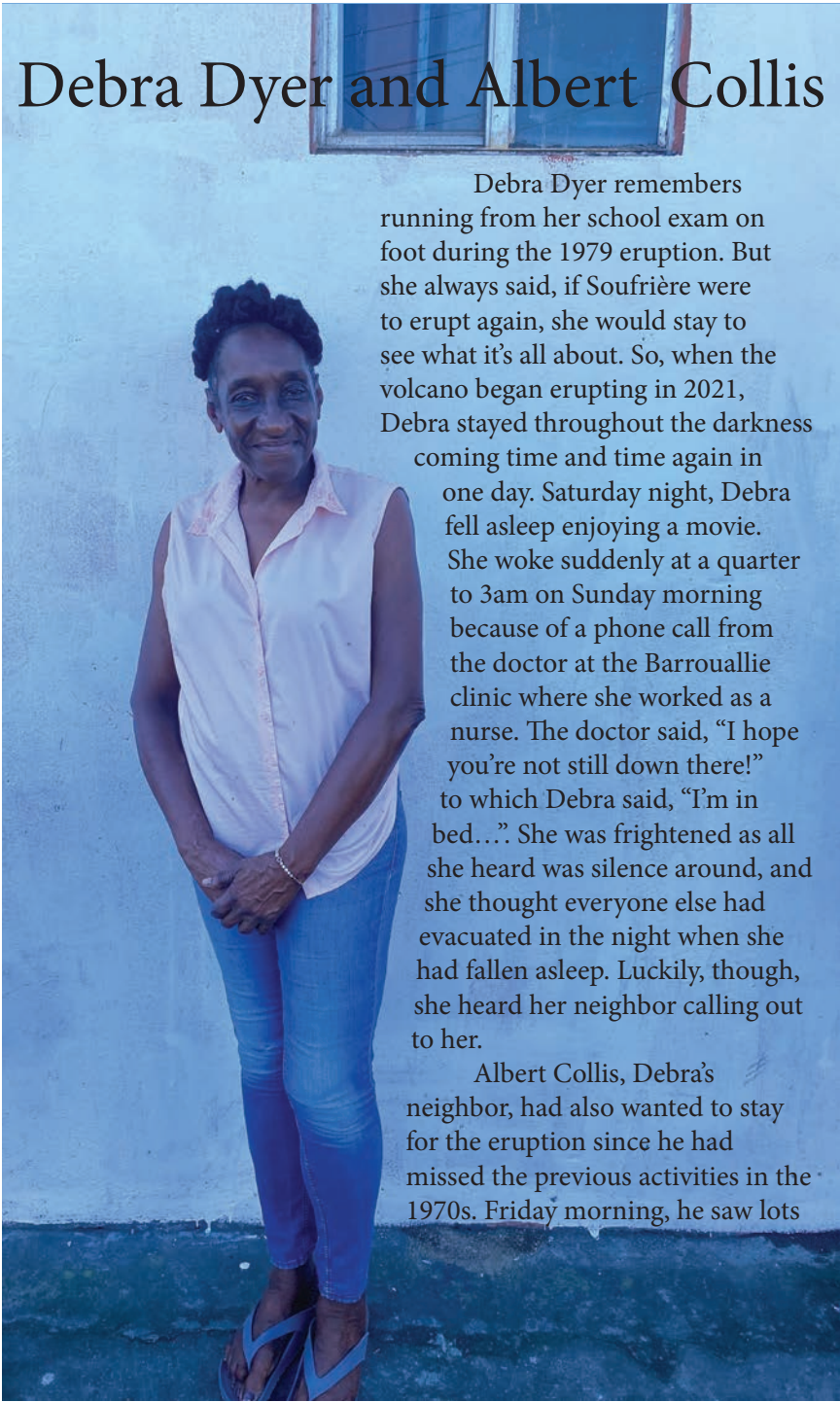
For this shop, like many others, business has been slow compared to before the eruption. This is due in part to the reduced workspace within the building. But this resident, like many other business owners in the community, attributes it to the struggling economy. In communities that heavily rely on agriculture as a source of income, the destruction of crops and farms during the 2021 eruption has left many people facing financial hardship. Even with efforts to regrow, many farmers have found that the layer of ash buried beneath the soil is killing their crops. These struggles leave community members with less to spend at local shops and businesses, which continues to be a struggle for this shop owner as well as many others in the area.



Chateaubelair



Debra Dyer and Albert Collis



Debra Dyer remembers running from her school exam on foot during the 1979 eruption. But she always said, if Soufrière were to erupt again, she would stay to see what it's all about. So, when the volcano began erupting in 2021, Debra stayed throughout the darkness coming time and time again in one day. Saturday night, Debra fell asleep enjoying a movie. She woke suddenly at a quarter to 3am on Sunday morning because of a phone call from the doctor at the Barrouallie clinic where she worked as a nurse. The doctor said, "I hope you're not still down there!" to which Debra said, "I'm in bed...". She was frightened as all she heard was silence around, and she thought everyone else had evacuated in the night when she had fallen asleep. Luckily, though, she heard her neighbor calling out to her.

Albert Collis, Debra's neighbor, had also wanted to stay for the eruption since he had missed the previous activities in the 1970s. Friday morning, he saw lots

of smoke was blowing. But the real excitement was late on Saturday when his whole roof collapsed as he was lying in bed. A beam crashed down an inch from his head as the roof fell in, almost killing him. He called out to his neighbor, “Debra! Debra!”. Debra went over to Albert’s fallen shop, where he was living, with her umbrella and a flashlight. She broke down the door and helped Albert out as they struggled walking through all the rubble.

Later on, Debra was called into work in Barrouallie and continued going back and forth by boat as people started recovering in the aftermath of the eruptions. Albert’s shop was destroyed and he lost all of his appliances and many other things. He was never compensated for his losses and has not been able to fix his place yet, instead living in a different house that he has stayed in since the eruption. Albert thinks another, even worse, eruption will come again, but when it does he still wouldn’t leave his home.









Patricia Glasgow

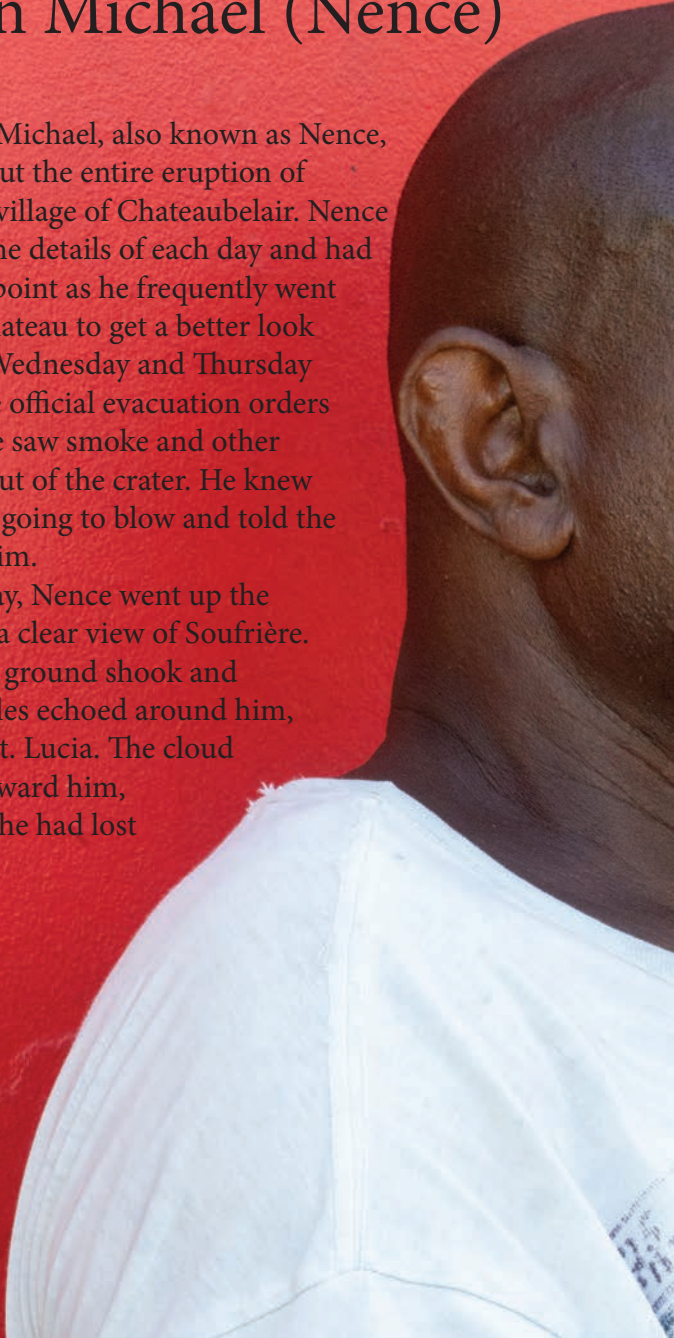
Patricia Glasgow is a preschool teacher at a private preschool associated with the Methodist Church in Chateaubelair. When the volcano erupted, Patricia and some of her family evacuated to her daughter's house on Thursday night, where about 11 of them stayed for a couple of months. There, they had no water and bought everything from the supermarket with the money they had, rather than wait in line for three to four hours in the hot sun to collect the aid boxes that were being provided by different relief programs.

As for Patricia's students, they were also scattered around as they had evacuated their homes. Patricia was able to contact and locate her students through their parents on Facebook. She found a platform in Facebook to connect with her students, singing nursery songs on Facebook Live to them. They talked about the eruption and were able to come together, much like the rest of the community, through discussing experiences and processing feelings—mainly of being scared. Many of the kids were traumatized from seeing and feeling the eruption, as well as being displaced to unfamiliar places, and attendance dropped by a third. Some of the students were sick afterwards too, with colds, fevers, and the flu. Their school was covered in ash and since then has received no aid or support from the government, even as they still need repairs. A team from the *Logos Hope* boat, a floating book fair that sails the oceans, cleaned the entire building with water. Though Patricia was scared and overwhelmed when she first returned to clean up, she kept some ash for the science center and her class returned to its full 35 students in September!

Glaston Michael (Nence)

Glaston Michael, also known as Nence, stayed throughout the entire eruption of Soufrière in his village of Chateaubelair. Nence remembers all the details of each day and had a good vantage point as he frequently went up the hill in Chateau to get a better look at the volcano. Wednesday and Thursday night, before the official evacuation orders came out, Nence saw smoke and other things coming out of the crater. He knew the volcano was going to blow and told the others around him.

On Friday, Nence went up the hill alone to get a clear view of Soufrière. Suddenly, as the ground shook and deafening rumbles echoed around him, he lost sight of St. Lucia. The cloud of ash rushed toward him, and before long he had lost





sight of Richmond. He turned his back, sheltering himself against someone's home for safety, as the nightlike darkness enveloped him. Later, as he held his arm out in front of his face, he could not even see his own hand.

Nence returned the following days, recounting Saturday as the worst eruption. There was smoke, ash, and lightning, and Nence let the "darkness come and cover [him]." He stayed on the hill for the majority of the day as the ground shook like there were earthquakes. Even though he was "waiting for death" in the clouds of ash and power of the eruptions, Nence said he wouldn't evacuate for anything besides a hurricane.



Glenroy Franklin

When Soufrière erupted this time around, Glenroy Franklin was not scared as this was his third time experiencing an eruption. Previously, as he was a young boy, his parents had the family evacuate. But this time, Glenroy stayed in his home in Chateaubelair. Once the volcano erupted, the ash was so thick that he wore a wet shirt around his face and goggles for protection. He walked around on his crutches, stepping toe first so that the ash wouldn't rise and cloud up. Glenroy was able to buy food from Rosie's store, the only place open, and had begun storing water months ago so was prepared.

After about a month, Glenroy and a friend from Pito traveled to Campden Park because they were tired of the ash. Glenroy stayed in a provided emergency shelter for six months, traveling back and forth to his home, though, to garden and harvest. Besides farming, as many people in Chateau rely on for livelihoods, Glenroy helped his friend clean off roofs for money. The shelters provided cooked meals and there were also aid boxes with food, clothing, and other necessary goods.

Glenroy noticed that the eruption brought people together. Many people would lime at the wharf in Chateau, sharing their views on the community. It was a happy time with gatherings and laughs on the beach. Glenroy is a great swimmer and because of his one leg, many people would watch him and take pictures. Overall, being on crutches made it easier for Glenroy to get around because he could hop over things and get through the ash.



Petit-Bordel

An aerial photograph of a coastline. The top half of the image shows deep blue ocean water. The bottom half shows a large area of brownish-green water, likely a lagoon or estuary, with a white sandy beach visible at the very bottom left corner.

Veneshia Harry

Veneshia has vivid memories of her Soufrière experience. Her emergency bag was packed since December, but until it actually was happening, Veneshia kept the looming eruption in the back of her mind. As a gravel miner at Richmond beach, Veneshia went Thursday afternoon to show someone where their gravel order was. On her way back home Petit Bordel the official evacuation order was issued. Her daughter left that evening, anxious to get to safety, but

Veneshia took her time. She walked up the road to the shop in Pito to talk with others and collect some money that someone owed her. She said if she was leaving, she'd better have her money then!



Later that evening, she got onto an evacuation bus with her youngest son, Troy, that was headed to Chateaubelair, where boats were departing from. However in the face of emergency, the bus was crammed, disregarding the usual Covid pandemic social distancing protocols and lowered seat capacities. Veneshia, with her and Troy's bags, was asked to put her young son on her lap for the bus to fit more people. That was not going to work for them so when the bus passed through Pito again, Veneshia and Troy got off and went back home. She said a prayer for Soufrière to wait to erupt until the morning so they could at least see where they were going. Veneshia's oldest son told her to go to bed and he'd wake her if anything happened. With that, Veneshia was able to sleep soundly and wake up in the morning.

After her usual morning on Friday, April 9, she went up the Petit Bordel hill to look at the volcano. It was overcast as she debated joining the trucks headed to Richmond for gravel collecting. After thirty minutes, she decided to go back home and had plans to leave at 9am. But then, she heard "what sounded like after a fighter jet left. That rumble... We're living in a valley so it's echoing." Veneshia turned to her son Troy and said, "This is it. The volcano is erupting." They quickly left the house and began walking up the hill away from the volcano. Her brother-in-law was also in the road and according to Veneshia, "up to this day I can't say what he told me cause I heard him talking but I was so scared... I looked up and was scared all of this is coming back down... The last time I looked up was just by the sign that says 'Welcome to Petit Bordel.' I got even more scared and walked faster."

After walking some, her brother-in-law picked up her and Troy in his car and brought them to Vermont where they stayed for a week. They spent the following two weeks in Barrouallie, but Veneshia continued going back and forth to her home in Pito. What she saw was that "The place was just grey. The trees that were supposed to be standing straight were drooping over. There were animals everywhere. So many dogs. Everyone's dogs were in my yard. They just sensed once someone was home." After three weeks, Veneshia and her son went back to Pito and stayed there. There was lots of ash to clean and dogs to cook for. She said, "Even though it was covid time, there was a lot of gathering... liming, drinking, eating, hanging out. It was a generous time. You didn't need money to drink. Once you were there, someone would just give you a drink... The kids had fun. It was like a holiday, vacation." People were able to come together in the face of so much community need. Veneshia said, "Some people have stated they wanted the volcano to erupt again. They had so much fun!"

Fitzroy Delpheche

Fitzroy Delpheche, from Petit Bordel, encountered challenge after challenge in the aftermath of the eruption—but today tells his story like a comedy. When Soufrière erupted, he didn't evacuate until Friday to Campden Park with a friend. The friend dropped him off at their relative's house and then promptly returned to Pito to make money cleaning roofs. Fitzroy was then left in the basement with no facilities and stayed for three months. The people who lived there said they were not a hotel and offered him no food or support, especially since his friend—their relative—had left. To use the bathroom, Fitzroy would wait until someone upstairs was awake and could help him up the stairs, which he struggled to get up on his own. They would often leave early in the morning and not return until night, leaving him stranded, unless a friend came to help. He would go to a different friend's house to be able to get some food every day as no one around would help him out much with money.

From afar in a different country, Fitzroy's kids tried to help him out. They had arranged transportation for him to evacuate and a house to go to, but Fitzroy's friend hadn't wanted to go that far. Once in Campden Park, after his kids had been searching for him on Facebook, they started sending money to the owner of a shop to deliver to Fitzroy what he needed. Unfortunately, without anyone's knowledge, that man was keeping the money and not dropping anything off to Fitzroy. He was so hungry, lost a lot of weight, and suffered greatly—saying it was like he had no stomach, only two backs! Sometimes his god daughter would pass through and comment on how no one was taking care of him, but wouldn't offer her help either. At one point, someone visited him and gave him \$20 just because of how rough he looked. A friend would come by and take him to his house for visits. Fitzroy even went to the beach with friends but was so weak that he couldn't go into the water, only lay in the sand. But now, Fitzroy is alive and well and back in his home in Pito.









Kurwin Sampson (Chang-I)

In Petit Bordel, Kurwin Sampson, more commonly known as Chang-I, stayed for the eruption for the excitement of it. He said, "I'm a person who likes adventure and has a lot of curiosity, so I wanted to see what it was like." Though Chang-I was scared, he also said watching the volcano was a sight to see, something he couldn't look away from. On both Friday and Saturday, he went up the Petit Bordel hill to get a better view of the eruption and felt heavy rumbling, heard what sounded like thunder, and saw ash going up into the sky with red looking lighting, and the ash falling like sand. There was darkness everywhere but the streetlights came on to give them some light in the faux night.

With all of the excitement and activity, Chang-I's family was worried about him and he had mixed feelings of if he should stay or leave. Some of the scientists he spoke to said he was okay to stay but needed a wet rag to cover his mouth and nose. Chang-I decided to leave on Wednesday on a boat to St. Lucia, watching that final eruption from the water, though the ash followed them. There he stayed in St. Lucia for about a month before returning home to an ash-covered Pito. When Chang-I returned, a lot of people came together to help clean the community. But some people never returned, maybe finding "a better life wherever they went." If the volcano erupts again, Chang-I will happily stay.



Rose Bank



Joel Harry, Shemron Harry, Jeremiah Harry, and Emmanuel Harry

These four brothers, who all live right next to each other in Rose Bank, found themselves scattered across St. Vincent in the months after the eruption. The most worried of the four, Shemron evacuated days before the eruption occurred, with his girlfriend, son, and daughter. They headed to a private home where they remained for a few months. Emmanuel, the youngest of the brothers, evacuated the Thursday night the evacuation order was issued. He headed to a public shelter in Barrouallie with their older sister and his son, where they stayed for three to four months. Joel, the eldest brother, evacuated Friday morning to a private home in Fountain where he stayed for a couple days, before settling down in Camden Park for a few months.

Jeremiah also left Friday morning, leaving in such a hurry that he almost fell down the stairs. He and his girlfriend went to a shelter in Peter's Hope, before heading to a shelter in Clear Valley after a couple of weeks. Jeremiah remained in Clear Valley as long as they let him, and when he was eventually kicked out he and his girlfriend took all the chicken in the shelter with them. The shelter manager called the police, who asked who the stuff in the shelter belonged to. The manager replied that it belonged to the people who were in the shelter, and the police asked "then why did you call us?" and that was the end of that!

During the months they were evacuated the brothers still found time to see each other. For the most part the brothers would meet up in Clear Valley and hang out just like they do at home. In general they look back on the time fondly, their experiences were full of lots of liming, drinking, laughing, and spending time with friends. But it is safe to say these four brothers - Joel, Shemron, Jeremiah and Emmanuel - are happy to be reunited after the eruption.



Clariss Douglas

Clariss Douglas - a close friend of the Harry brothers - is the owner of a small business in Rose Bank. When Douglas first came back to check on her store after Soufrière's eruptions began, she could hardly breathe. The ash was all around her, and she could feel it filling her lungs. In search of fresh air, she stuck her face into a hole in the wall of a nearby home. Luckily, the space was somewhat protected from the ash and she was able to catch her breath enough to make it to her store.

In the aftermath of the eruptions there was much work to be done. Not only did Douglas have to worry about cleaning her home, but she had to clear ash from her business as well. Unfortunately her store remained closed for many months after the eruptions ceased. Douglas realized that after the disaster most Vincentians in the impacted zones were receiving food, water, and other necessities through various aid packages. Because of this, there was not much business for her store, so she did not reopen until the government and other organizations had largely stopped giving out this form of aid.





Stino Ince

By the end of 2020, it became clear to experts that a volcanic eruption awaited Vincentians in the coming year. As a new dome emerged and seismic activity increased, the Vincentian government searched for able-bodied individuals to join the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT). Stino Ince, inspired by his father's positive experience in the same role decades before, decided to volunteer.

In the following months he, along with other participants, was trained in Richmond by the National Emergency Management Organization (NEMO). Each community had their own CERT team, and despite Rose Bank's team being the smallest in numbers (with only seven people), they came in second place in their training program. Along with their training, he and other members were in charge of keeping residents informed and ensuring individuals who would need assistance had worked out feasible evacuation plans.

When the evacuation order was issued, Stino and his fellow volunteers helped evacuate everyone, particularly elderly and disabled members of the community. Once everyone who was willing to evacuate had gone, Stino evacuated to Kingstown where he worked with NEMO to package and distribute aid boxes to his community. He was also one of the first to return home, helping clean and clear the roads and houses in his community. He enjoyed the peace and quiet while Rose Bank remained largely evacuated, but is happy that everyone has safely returned home.







Lenroy Matthews (“Allaman The Running Man”)

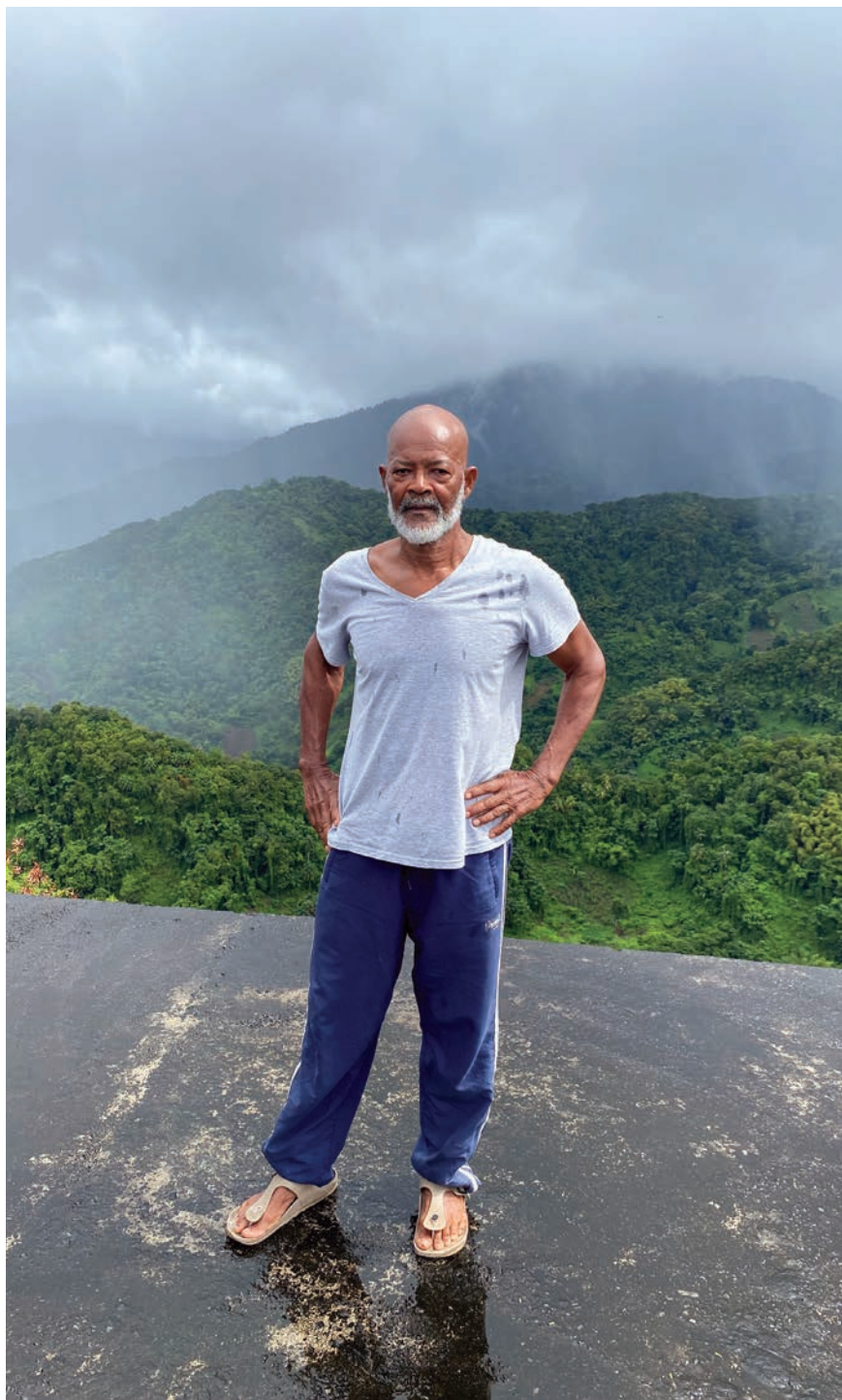
Lenroy Matthews and friends call him “Allaman the Running Man” after his experience with Soufrière. On the Friday of the eruption, Lenroy was out with his friend trying to catch iguana. When they saw darkness coming over the hill, he went home to add more clothes to his emergency bag. He took a shower since he’d been without a shirt in the bush and was getting cleaned up. But then, he heard this giant rumbling and shouted out to his mother, what vehicle is making that noise? She replied that it was Soufrière, and that was when he took off running!

Lenroy still had soap all over his body and didn’t stop to dry off before putting on pants and shoes and grabbing his bag to leave. Someone had said anyone that stayed would die so with that fear motivating him, Allaman the Running Man left everyone else behind. What he didn’t realize he was also leaving behind was a trail of his belongings as in his hurry, he hadn’t closed up his bag properly. Some distance up the road, with his belongings scattered behind him, he realized everything had fallen out and had to turn around to pick it all up. He collected everything again and was back on the move - even faster than before. A friend who was transporting people with their truck passed him and he hopped in. Though he was frightened, Allaman the Running Man lives to tell the tale!



Rose Hall





Percy Lampkin

From atop a ridge in his home village of Rose Hall, the highest settlement in St. Vincent, Percy Lampkin watched Soufrière erupt from his bedroom window and on top of his roof. As there was trembling and vibrations, Percy stood on his roof with other neighbors that stayed in the village, taking pictures of the big ash clouds and dust falling. They felt safe from their vantage point, being high up on the hill and far enough away from the volcano. He figured that “If it’s safe for it [volcano observation station and monitor] to stay there, then it’s safe for me.” In the north leeward area, Percy is the only amateur radio broadcaster, reaching others in his network all across the Caribbean. He relayed updates to others about the eruption and status of the volcano as his brother, down the street, wrote updates on Facebook.

Many had left Rose Hall once the evacuation orders were made and the volcano started erupting. But according to Percy, “the ones that stayed back provided security for the rest of the village.” He said, “We blocked the road with a big pile of ash and had guys liming [hanging out] there so anyone who wanted to come through had to say hi.” This way, no unfamiliar people could enter the village and there were no incidents of crimes or break-ins like in other places. The people who protected the village from around the ash pile were called “ash bums.”

In the period of about three months when most others didn’t return, all around Rose Hall was very dusty. All of Percy’s crops were covered in ash and destroyed. He ended up leaving and staying with his daughter for two weeks because there was nothing he could do and he had “cleaned up what we had to clean up then the wind and rain” cleaned the rest. Eventually, Percy got government aid because he is a registered farmer and his land was covered in ash. Though he thought the emergency response agencies did well under the circumstances, he thought “the list was too big” of people receiving aid so the people who needed it most didn’t get enough support because everyone was. Now, Percy’s village has mostly returned and he is able to plant crops again.

Telikah Samuel

Telikah Samuel recalled her Soufrière experience from behind the counter of her store, which sits along the main road of Rose Hall. Her house is right below, facing Soufrière. Helene James, dressed in a vibrant yellow shirt that matched the welcoming walls of Samuel's business, smiled and listened to her friend as she shared her tale with us.

Thursday night, once the evacuation order was issued, Telikah washed and prepared her produce for the Town market as always. But, she left around 8pm for Layou, where she had a private apartment through her stepson to stay throughout the evacuation. Friday morning, the van of vendors that always travels to Kingstown picked Telikah up in Layou, instead of in Rose Hall where she normally is, and made their drive to town. At the market, she heard rumbling and went outside to see a huge ash cloud rising up. At the end of the selling day, Telikah and the others rode back to Rose Hall.

That's when her stepson called and helped transport her, her husband, and her brother to the apartment in Layou, along with a stove, fridge, and extra mattress. Telikah had already visited the apartment, in the months before when everyone knew that Soufrière was going to erupt at some point, and saw that those were the appliances they would need. Regarding her preparation, she said, "we have more than enough time. Some were rebellious. I was one of them. I didn't pack anything. I had my meds and shoes on my feet... I knew where everything was to grab."

Telikah made the apartment comfortable but would have rather been at home. She visited after a month but was too scared to stay since everything was covered in ash. All of the goods on her shelf expired and went bad. Over in Layou, Telikah was able to receive money from the World Food Program because of her and the others' long-term health complications, food boxes from government aid, and payments for being a farmer and the crop damage. Additionally, she didn't have to pay bills for a while after the eruption. Telikah had applied for aid as a business owner since all of her goods could no longer be sold, but she never received word on her application or aid. After the eruption, as many others were also receiving food and aid, business was very slow at her store. People didn't need anything besides occasionally wanting to buy chicken. But overall, Telikah said, "Everything was good... I was walking a road where I needed a lot of help and I got it... The volcano erupted at the right time."





Cumberland





Julian Morris

When Soufrière erupted on Friday, April 9, 2021, Julian Morris was where he's often found—on the beachfront in Cumberland Bay. He and some others were facing the water when suddenly, “It was like a big earthquake for a long time, like a jet taking off.” They turned towards Coulls Hill and saw smoke coming up behind the hill. When Julian walked up to the road, he saw lots of traffic, people walking with fridges and goats, rushing to evacuate. On the water, there were boats coming and going, evacuating people as well, including three big catamarans for public transport. Julian, however, stayed in his home in Cumberland. He said, “It was exciting to me! I have my big tv, I didn't want anyone to take it.” He stayed behind both for the excitement and security to protect from robbers.

The next day though, as darkness came in the middle of the day for hours, he was scared and “only at that time did [he] start thinking did I make the right choice.” Julian put the thoughts aside and went inside to get some candles, water, and packets of biscuits to hunker down. Eventually, the darkness lifted and life could resume. Julian said, “The only problem was you had to batten down. The ash was so much had to wear mask and goggles. For one plus weeks. Two weeks.”

Other than that, as most of the village had evacuated besides Julian and a couple others along the water, he spent time checking houses in the village, cleaning ash off roofs, and cooking for the dogs who all would gather to be fed by him. He washed his crops off with water and with some that made it, was able to sell them at the Barrouallie market. Overall, “It was an experience. I did a lot of sleeping. There was a break in water, electricity. I just leave my tv on cause I don't have to pay for it. I eat, sleep, watch movies.” Regarding the rest of the community, “some never come back,” while others came back after two weeks, gradually, or some not for two months once the government gave clearance. For Julian, he saw that “things go back to normal that quick. Even the dogs bark at me. I feed them!” He is up to much of the same as before the eruption and hopes that another one doesn't come because he “got things to do” but would stick it out again.

Acknowledgements

We would like to express our infinite gratitude to everyone who contributed to this project - we could not have created this book without you. Thank you for welcoming us to your island, communities, and homes, for offering your stories and experiences, and for all that you taught us. We are so grateful to all the people of Fitz-Hughes, Chateaubelair, Petit-Bordel, Rose Bank, Rose Hall, and Cumberland; and specifically to those listed below who were so kind in sharing their personal stories of La Soufrière with us. Some individuals names are not listed, either by personal choice or our inability to obtain permission to include them. We are equally grateful to all of you for all you contributed.

Chesley Browne
Andre Francis
Judith Mcdowall
Unicka Millington
Rochael Pierre
Authur Scott
Danlee Sutherland
Leon
Raphael Browne
Albert Collis
Debra Dyer
Glenroy Franklin
Amos Glasgow
Floy Glasgow
Patricia Glasgow
Verena Harry
Glaston (Nence) Michael
Magnis Providence
Adella Skinner
Winston Skinner
Garfield Stapleton
David Tony
Stephen Williams
Fitzroy Delpheche

Veneshia Harry
Kurwin (Chang-I) Sampson
Christopher Samuel
Agnes Browne
Kemuel Corke
Claris Douglas
Raheem (CJ) Edwards
Brewester Harry
Carlos Harry
Emmanuel Harry
Jeremiah Harry
Joel Harry
Shemron Harry
Elmo Hooper
Stino Ince
Shangi John
Sandra Joseph
Lenroy Matthews - "Allaman The Running Man"
Helene James
Percy Lampkin
Samuel Lampkin
Telikah Samuel
Julian Morris



Maggie and Kamryn want to give the biggest of thank yous to Veneshia Harry, our wonderful research assistant and co-author. Thank you for showing up for us everyday with a contagious smile on your face, and making us feel so at home in your community. This book could not have happened without all your wisdom, support, and patience. Thank you for all the laughter and stories - we were so lucky to have you on our team!

Thank you to Chris, Phoebe, Fleur, Cyprian, and Kyle for all your support and kindness. And a special thanks to Rat and Grantley for transporting us every day and getting us where we needed to go. We learned so much from each and everyone of you.

Thank you to all of those at Richmond Vale Academy, for housing us, feeding us, and welcoming us into your community.

Thank you to Aly Ollivierre for providing us with data for our maps and for providing us with advice and great recommendations throughout our stay in St. Vincent.

Thank you to Mike and Kristina for all your hard work putting this opportunity together. This class could not have happened without you and we are so grateful for your support and knowledge.

Lastly, a huge thank you to Valerie Costello for all your help and support putting this book together. Your wisdom, constant patience, and deep investment in this project was an amazing gift. You helped us bring this book to life!



Photo Credits

- Cover: La Soufrière erupting from a boat headed to St. Lucia - Kurwin Sampson
Table of Contents: View of La Soufrière from RVA - Maggie Winters
Page 1: Volcanic Hazard Map - NEMO
Page 2: La Soufrière - Joseph Findlay
Page 3: La Soufrière's dome - Victoria Shuster
Page 4: La Soufrière erupting from a boat headed to St. Lucia - Kurwin Sampson
Page 8: Andre Francis, Arthur Scott, and Chesley Browne - Maggie Winters
Page 10: Chesley Browne - Maggie Winters
Page 11: Arthur Scott - Maggie Winters
Andre Francis - Maggie Winters
Page 12: Stephen Williams - Asher Brownstein
Page 16: Canyon Landscape - Joseph Findlay
Page 18: Debra Dyer - Maggie Winters
Page 19: Albert Collins - Asher Brownstein
Page 20: Garfield Stapelton - Asher Brownstein
Page 21: Rosie's Shop in Chateaubelair - Asher Brownstein
Page 22: Patricia Glasgow - Asher Brownstein
Page 24: Glaston Michael (Nence) - Asher Brownstein
Page 26: Glenroy Franklin - Maggie Winters
Page 28: Mouth of River Landscape - Joseph Findlay
Page 30: Veneshia Harry - Maggie Winters
Page 33: View of Pito from Rose Hall - Kamryn You Mak
Page 34: Adella Skinner - Asher Brownstein
Page 36: Kurwin Sampson and friends during eruption - Kurwin Sampson
Page 38: Sunset Mountain - Kamryn You Mak
Page 41: Harry brothers and Claris Douglas - Maggie Winters
Page 42: Stino Ince - Maggie Winters
Page 44: Agnes Browne - Maggie Winters
Page 45: Raheem (CJ) Edwards - Maggie Winters
Page 46: Lenroy Matthews - Maggie Winters
Page 48: Soufrière on a rainy day - Maggie Winters
Page 50: Percy Lampkin - Maggie Winters
Page 53: Helene James - Maggie Winters
Page 56: Cumberland Sunset - Kamryn You Mak
Page 58: Cumberland Sunset - Maggie Winters
Page 61: Veneshia Harry, Kamryn You Mak, Percy Lampkin, and Maggie Winters
- Maggie Winters
Page 62: Samuel Lampkin - Maggie Winters
Back Cover: Floy Glasgow - Asher Brownstein



Department of Anthropology &
Davis Collaboration in Conflict Transformation
Middlebury College
Middlebury, VT 05753 USA