

**HONOURABLE OLIVIA GRANGE CD MP
MINISTER OF CULTURE, GENDER, ENTERTAINMENT AND SPORT**

MESSAGE

On the Occasion of

TACKY DAY 2019

**Claude Stewart Park
Port Maria, St. Mary**

Tuesday, June 4, 2019

Salutations....

Let me from the outset thank Mr. Derrick ‘Black X’ Robinson, Chairman, and other members of the Tacky Heritage Group for the invitation to me to send a message on this very important occasion. This is an occasion worthy of memorializing because of its importance in the celebration of our own freedom.

I wish to commend the Tacky Heritage Group, the Municipal Corporation led by His Worship the Mayor Councillor Richard Creary, the JCDC St. Mary Office, and the people of St. Mary for planning and supporting this annual celebration of Tacky Day. St. Mary should be proud of this great African Jamaican, Chief Tacky, who resisted chattel slavery and fought against the English colonizers in fierce battles just 21 years after the signing of the Maroon Treaty of 1739.

I also greet in a special way, Hon. Errol Johnson, Custos of St. Mary, and Dr. Morais Guy, Member of Parliament for Central St. Mary. I also recognize Hon. Robert Montague, Member of Parliament for Western St. Mary and Minister of Transport and Mining, for his advocacy in embracing Chef Tacky as a great leader. I also thank Dr. Norman Dunn for delivering this message on my behalf. The involvement of the political leadership of the parish underscores the importance of this occasion.

Today I am pleased to welcome to St Mary and Jamaica, Mrs. Esther Stanford-Xosei - reparationist, jurisconsult, community advocate and radio broadcaster - our Guest Speaker for the occasion. I wish to commend her on her extensive support for the Reparations movement in the United Kingdom as well as the services she provides that are aimed at restoring pride and dignity to our people of African descent. I wish for her an energizing stay in this the land of Marcus Garvey, Bob Marley and a host of luminaries who have embraced the cause for the redemption of our people by all means possible.

Finally, let me welcome the students and teachers, parents and friends to this celebration of Chief Tacky. Among the important reasons why we celebrate these activities is to ensure that our children hear the story from us, Tacky's grandchildren, and learn of their outstanding heritage. It is my hope that they will all leave here at the end of the ceremony with more knowledge and pride regarding their heritage; that they would become more determined to take every advantage of their educational opportunities by understanding the sacrifice of life made by Tacky and

his followers so that their grand and great grandchildren will be free to be educated, free to become what they want to be, free to never again be enslaved, controlled or manipulated by others.

Today, we salute Chief Tacky for his military prowess, dexterity in planning and skill in navigating war against the oppressors and his selfless decision to give his life to the project of slavery's abolition. Chief Tacky is numbered among the Akan warriors that were captured and brought to Jamaica as slaves but who never submitted to enslavement, but were determined to give life if necessary so that the act of inhumanity would end. Tacky fought bravely for months until, betrayed, he died from a bullet from the oppressors. Yet, even in death, he mesmerized the oppressors and was victorious as they were not able to find his body.

It is well worth remembering that we are from a noble ancestry. We come from a people who were not afraid to die for the cause of freedom, even knowing that they themselves might not experience it. Theirs was the discipline and endurance that never gave up nor diminished. Their passion for freedom as they knew it in Africa kept bubbling in their veins as they sought means to resist every effort of the planter class.

Today as we remember and celebrate Chief Tacky, let us remind ourselves that the best way to elevate this great warrior is to ensure that in our current reality we are part of the solution and not of the problem. As our nation contends with violence and crime against each other, we pray that there will be a re-awakening of the spirit of unity and community that will help us to engage with each other to create new havens of peace and justice.

To the children in the various schools in St. Mary, I say to them: Salute Tacky every day in the ways in which you live as one, helping each other, working hard at school and ensuring that we live as one Jamaican family. To the teachers I say: Yours is the duty to teach not only subject matters to our children, but also to teach them values such as tolerance, respect for elders and for each other, discipline and perseverance. To the adults from the community, I say: Let us return to the time when communities reared children and saw it as fundamental to keep them safe and secure.

Today, our best way to celebrate Chief Tacky is to adopt his spirit of resilience, discipline, fearlessness and meticulous organization as we all join hands and heart

to make Jamaica the place of choice to live, work, raise families and do business.

God bless you all St. Mary. God bless our children. God bless Jamaica Land We

Love.