

March 17, is more commonly known to the Irish community as St. Patrick’s Day or the Feast of St. Patrick. In the British Overseas Territory of Montserrat, the day is also known as St. Patrick’s Day, but celebrated for a totally different reason. The Irish (mostly Roman Catholic) re-settled on Montserrat after being shunned in other British controlled Caribbean colonies after ongoing feuds with their English Protestant counterparts. They were made landlords over much of the English sugar plantations. They mixed freely with the slaves brought to work the plantations and soon enough, a unique Afro-Irish culture developed. However, the slave population quickly outnumbered the white population and as throughout the Caribbean colonies, a slave revolt was inevitable in Montserrat. Some from the island’s slave population, desiring freedom, planned a rebellion for March 17, 1768. This day was specifically chosen because the slaves were aware that their owners would be otherwise occupied with their celebrations of St. Patrick’s Day. House slaves were instructed to take hold of any and all the weapons they could find inside the Government House, while field slaves would seize the building using whatever was at their disposal. The planned rebellion was unsuccessful in that there was a traitor in their midst, who leaked the plan to the authorities. Those thought responsible for the planning of the rebellion were captured, tried, hanged or brutally punished.