

How Does 9 Mile Differ Today From When Bob Marley was Alive?

9 Mile is a small village in St. Ann Parish, Jamaica. Both the birthplace and final resting place of Reggae legend Bob Marley, it's a "must see" for any fan of his.

Outside the areas the tourists tend to flock – Ocho Rios, Negril, and Montego Bay – most of Jamaica is poor. Indeed Jamaica is one of the poorest island nations in the Caribbean. For the tourists who tend to frequent all-inclusive resorts, there may be a certain amount of shock when seeing begging children and drugs (mostly marijuana) sold openly on the street. This is the scene all over Jamaica, with the exception of the aforementioned areas where tourism requires a more scenic view.

The 9 Mile of the 1940s through the 1970s was not unlike what you'd find in Kingston, where pickpockets are second only to gang violence on the crime scale. From the point of view of a tourist, who is not accustomed to seeing this, it would surely be quite shocking to witness. However, the big difference between 9 Mile today and that of the time when Bob Marley grew up is his fame and fortune.

Whether you arrive to 9 Mile by way of hired Taxi or you've rented a car or a tour company, indeed you'll likely be met by begging children and a Rastafarian or two hoping to sell you some marijuana, but by and large it's safe. This wasn't the case 30 to 50 years ago.

Today, 9 Mile is owned and operated by Bob Marley's family. Indeed the road leading to 9 Mile is in desperate need of repair, once inside the 30-foot tall purple gates of 9 Mile, it's quite the Rastafarian paradise. Clean, well maintained, organized and can rival any of the aforementioned resort towns with its presentation.

Until her death in March 2008, Marley's mother Cedelia Booker Marley would often be seen walking up and down the street doing such normal things such as shopping for groceries; indeed an indication of the level of safety within 9 Mile.

Although Bob Marley is the most famous person to come from 9 Mile, many others with equal notoriety were born in St. Ann Parish. Black Nationalist and Author Marcus Garvey, as well as Reggae musicians Burning Spear and Floyd Lloyd are among them.

Despite the town's tiny size, it is one of the most famous tourist destinations in Jamaica, the Caribbean and as well the world.