

AfroPanamanian Newsletter



English opens doors. Read the Newsletter.

No.4 Vol. I

May 2010

Donation



Poetry

Controversy

Anecdotes

LOS AMIGOS :

Por la superación de la Etnia Negra

A group of friends decided to join forces to work on the rescue of values, customs and cultural traditions bequeathed to us through our ancestors. These have been displaced by others, thus losing a large part of our Black Heritage. We are evaluating all these forgotten traditions and values and highlighting figures as examples for future generations.



CREDITS

Editor : Sandra Patterson

Assistant: Ines V. Sealy

MEMBERS

**President
Anthony Cox**

**Treasurer
Fernando A. Goldson**

**Others
Ines V. Sealy
Sandra M. Patterson
Roberto L. Alleyne**

Cover Page: The stamp which appears on the cover was proposed to the Canal Zone Government by Mr. George W. Westerman (r.i.p.) accepted and used as a 10 cent postage stamp for years. Permission for its continuous use was given by his grandnephew, Cecil Reynolds

EDITORIAL

BLACK HERITAGE MONTH?

This month of May has Two important events pertaining to Blacks in Panama:

*After more than fifty years, as an ethnic group, Blacks will be considered in the upcoming **census**.*

On the other hand, from the year 2001 Black ethnic day is celebrated to enhance the contributions of this large group to the development of the nation.

Yet it's neither the number of people nor a day that really reflects the essence of an ethnic group, but their attitude towards their heritage.

A large amount of information can be derived from the data collected in the census, to be used for the betterment of all so be proud and reaffirm your Black ethnicity.

FEEDBACKS

We would really like to receive contributions of writings from our readers. The idea is for others to participate.

*This is so good I'm not missing that trip to Jamaica jaja thanks. Like the holiday poem. Samuel

*Congratulations on this publication, Inés. It is not an easy undertaking, so I commend you, Sandra, and the other members of your committee for your effort. Melva.

Thank you Melva. I will pass on your comments to the others. Ines

*Very nice piece – good to capture and record the things of the days gone by in Panama. We may not be here for too much longer to tell the stories and the way it was for us. We are slowly but surely losing our culture – que lastima.

Ines, keep up the good work.

Donna

***“Waapi Kill Phillip or Fulop”**. *A group in NY is debating about the meaning of this phrase. This is what they sent: As a matter of fact, we, (my Panamanian email group) had a huge discussion about the origins and meaning of “Waapi Kill Fillup”. Any suggestions?*

*Ines knew a fellow with the surname Fulop. But the expression is used to mean a **long long time ago**.*

*Example: This land was theirs “**from Wappy kill Fulop**”*

Another expression: Quashie – what is quashie?

*Sandy,
I applaud your efforts in publishing this Newsletter. Very informative for those of us with West Indian parentage. For example, I had heard the terminology "Mango Tree Lawyers" all of my life yet never understood how it came about. Mamma did try to explain one day yet not quite. The article was excellent.

As the daughters of Accountants, I feel you should require some kind of fee for the subscription. Just my humble opinion. :-)

Good work.

Love,
Nadya

*Good job, ines. Keep it up. The community needs more of this. Justavino

KEEP A YOUNG AND ACTIVE MIND

By Antonio Cox
20-4-10

When we get to a certain age, we feel the clock stops there. We are the ones who stop the clock. As Sparrow says: “Age is just a number”, if you say you cannot climb the hill, you aren't going to get to the top.

Why do we get sick at a young age? Being overweight by Forty pounds at Fifty is accelerating the clock of life, cigarettes and alcohol are silent killers. In our ignorance we say “We're going to die of something”, yes, we know that, but, “why push it?”

Alzheimer's; we can slow down the process of acquiring Alzheimer's by reading books with new information, read it over and over for it to stick in your mind. Talk about what you have been reading, connect it to the past, that will keep your memory updated, even though you are among old friends, new subjects, travel to new sites, check up on history and geography, not for academics but for knowledge and entertainment, it really helps in the long run.

THE UNTOLD STORY

Many of our ancestors had leased land in the Canal Zone. When the time came to stake their claim, they or their relatives were either negligent or they didn't have the money or something. **Tell us about them. Tell us about your experiences, both living in the Canal Zone and Panama City.**

Remembering

Lic. Sandra Patterson

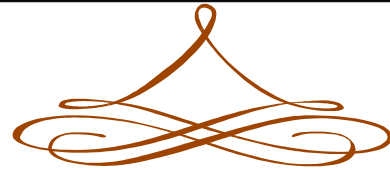
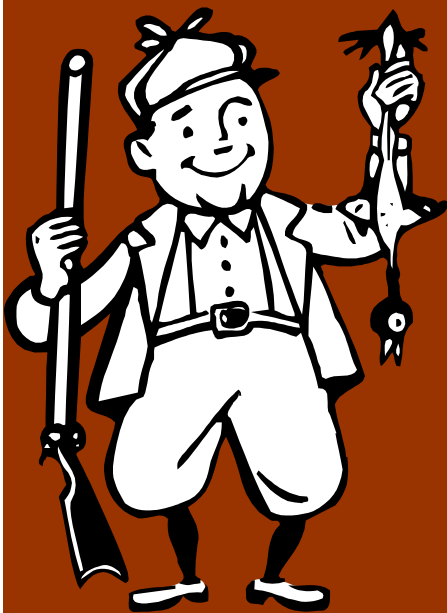
*Those days when there were no refrigerators but **ice boxes** and every morning we had to buy ice from the ice truck that came around.*

*Ice was sold in blocks according to the size you wanted. I remember prices from a **nickel** (five cents) up, yet some people would purchase a **ñap** (2 ½ cents) ice.*

*Gone are the days when in most homes there was a **PERFECTION** black and white, two or three burners kerosene stove standing in the kitchen. These stoves used kerosene as fuel. How much cooking and baking did they do?*

There were also refrigerators that used this petroleum derivative as fuel.

And no house went without a kerosene lamp, should there be a power failure or if they could not afford electricity, candles or the kerosene lamp was the alternative.



“Walk and sell people”*

by Ines V. Sealy

In the 1940's, coal, ground food, coconut, plantain, live chickens were sold in a cart, by walk and sell Black people. Some latins ventured from the interior to sell oranges, fresh milk and pears.

Having a piece of land in the outskirts, in which to grow something, West Indians raised and sold limes, pears, papaya, sour sap, guinep, chickens, ducks, rabbits, sheep and goats. They also grew okra, cane, guava, mangoes, jimbilin, nesberry, cacao, dashin, banana, these were given away or reaped by the children while playing.

The fences were built of barbed wire strung from branches of cashew, plum, almond or nancy plants used as posts, which in turn grew, into fruit-bearing trees. We went on mango, plum and other walks; to empty lots to harvest guinep, cashew, star apple, golden apple, stinking toe, etc.

How comes hog plums smell so good, taste so good but are full of worms? Nature or the scientists have given us a substitute: “passion fruit” Maracuya. Did you notice that it smells and tastes like hog plum?

*** The term Walk and sell people I heard on Miss Louise Bennet's record “Jamaican Labrish” (Auntie Rochie). It sounds amusing to me, therefore I repeat it.**

WHAT 15 CENTS COULD DO IN DAYS GONE BY

*By Ines V. Sealy from an interview with Mr.
William Nelson (R.I.P.)*

One of the popular calypsos in Panama talks about a young man who invited a young woman to eat in a restaurant when he only had 15 cents. He was thoroughly ill-treated.

But 15 cents in those days was enough to feed a family of 6: Mrs. Isabelle Downs, mother of William Nelson (R.I.P.), living in Colon in the 1940's on the Imperial building on 4th and Bolivar Streets fed six: herself, 3 nephews, Nelson and his brother with 15 cents. Here is how:

5 cents codfish

2 ½ cents yam

2 ½ cents yucca

2 ½ cents flour

2 ½ cents yampi

With these ingredients she prepared a Rundown and everyone was filled until suppertime when his sister would prepare some Bammie and Cocoa tea.

She supported the family by selling pastries on Saturdays: Bun, plantain tart, pumpkin tarts, etc.

Nelson remembers that a Jamaican teacher, Watson's School on 14th & Sta. Isabelle streets was a correctional school for West Indian boys. Another institution which helped West Indian boys to stay out of trouble was the Brigade under Capt. Dennis to which he belonged. *We could use several Watson's schools in Colon these days.*

Colon, do you remember any of this? Let us hear from you.

Back in the Days

By Antonio Cox
19-4-10

In my neighbourhood we were predominantly Black, from West Indian background. We would meet from 7:00 in the morning on Saturdays, then separate into our selected groups to go and play. There were some latins among us. They were forced to speak English, otherwise, they could not play with us. That was the rule.

Neighbours took care of their neighbour's children while they either went to work or shopping. They didn't have that greed for money like today. It was out of love, caring for each other's child like if it was theirs.

On Sundays we went to church or Sunday School. Each one had Two pairs of shoes: one for church and one for school. It was not a big deal to go barefoot.

We had more respect for our elders. If you did something wrong, you got a flogging. The phrase child abuse, never existed. Here we are today, can't even talk to our own kids. **Those days will never return.**



Mt. Hope Cemetery, a memory to the Builders

by Anthony McLean H.

Mt. Hope Cemetery, as we know it, for many years was called Monkey Hill, because of the large amount of monkeys swinging from tree to tree. It was established by the Panama Railroad Company in 1853, One Hundred and Fifty-Seven years ago, for the workers who were dying off like ants during the construction of the railroad. Later it was used to bury the thousands of workers, estimated at 30,000, that died during the French Canal effort and later sold to the North Americans in 1904, where they buried many of the 6,000 workers that died during the construction of the Canal.

(to be continued)

OUR AFROPANAMANIAN MEDALLISTS:

Some interviews by Cecil Reynolds

LILIA WILSON: Representing Panama, she held the high jumping record (4' 9") from 1938, for many years, until this record was broken in Colombia by a Jamaican (4' 10") in 1946. She also carried the torch partway in the 1970 Olympics here in Panama.

MARCOS WILSON: began to participate in track & field (racing the 100 and 200 meters) at the Juan Demostenes Arosemena Olympic Stadium in 1947. He was selected as a member of the athletics team which represented Panama in the Pre-Bolivarian games in Quito and Guayaquil (Ecuador) in 1950, then again in 1951 he was chosen to represent Panama in the III Bolivarian games in Caracas, Venezuela obtaining a gold medal in 4 x 400 mts. and a silver medal in the 4 x 100 mts.

OSCAR LAYNE: "Won two gold medals and a silver, (1,000 metres for speed, 1,000 metres against the clock, and a second place in the 62 mile race), becoming the first Panamanian to obtain a gold medal in international bicycling." (translation from Cecil Reynolds's interview in Anthony McLean's A WEST INDIAN PANAMANIAN BIOGRAFIC HISTORIC-CHRONOLOGY)

JUAN PHILLIPS, was a participant of track and field, running the Four hundred, Eight hundred and One mile races in the `50s.

ARTURO AGARD: Basketball player representing Panama in Bolivarian games in Barranquilla in 1961, Pan-American games in Winnipeg, Canada in 1967, his team obtaining the bronze medal. Classified for the 1968 Olympiads in Mexico arriving 10th, but showing spunk in the games.

In 1963 "ironman" is honoured to have been selected to play with the Harlem Globetrotters on a South American tour, winning all but one of the 53 games; and in 1970 Panama's selection beat Cuba in the Central American and Caribbean games gaining the gold medal.

LLOYD LABEACH: This runner, up until last year was the only Olympic medallist (bronze) in Panama. He won it in the 200 metre dash in London in 1948. He made the world record for the 100 meters in the `30s, the games were postponed because of World War II.

Besides other wonderful things in his lifetime, during his teens, **CIRILO McSWEEN** became very popular in track and field, breaking the National 400 meter Olympic record 1952 in Helsinki, Finland. He represented Panama in the Central American and Caribbean games besides participating in the Panamanian team which attended the World Olympics.



OLDEN DAYS SAYINGS:

“Out of sight, out of mind”. What is not seen can be forgotten or ignored.

“Opportunity only knocks once”.

“All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy” There must be some entertainment in life.

“The grass always looks greener on the other shore of the river”. This is like covetousness.

“Everything you see, you want”

“Don’t put all your eggs in the same basket”.

“Hell and powder house”. **“Cass cass”.** Plenty trouble.

“Birds of a feather flock together”. **“Show me your company and I’ll tell you who you are.”** Try to keep good company.

“Strike the iron while it’s hot.” Grasp the opportunity when it shows up.

“Common sense beats education.”

“Fair exchange is no robbery.”

“niap” 2 ½ cent Panamanian coin

“quaty” 1 ¼ cent Panamanian coin

“Chip on your shoulder”. Always ready for a fight.

“Toe the line”. Follow the rules.

ODDS & ENDS

Barbadian literacy is the highest in America.

The British came to Barbados in 1627 and used slave labor to work the sugar plantations that produced world-class rum. From 1834, when slavery was abolished, through the 20th century, the island’s economy was dependent on sugar, rum, and molasses production. After Barbados won independence from the UK in 1966, tourism and manufacturing gradually surpassed the sugar industry in economic prominence.

... Bajans, like Jamaicans, don’t believe in mortgages. If they want to own a home, first they buy land. When they have more funds, they build a foundation. Later they’ll add walls, then a roof, and when they can afford it, they’ll finish the home and move in—owing no debt. *by Dwight Brown NNPA Travel Writer*

Have a taste of organ music by Lucho Azcarraga (remember him)

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rL3f_zNlwMA&NR=1

Everyone is invited to English services at Hossanna church in La Cresta on Sunday evenings at 6:00. Pastor Robert Robinson presiding.

U.S. Embassy Scholarship program.

Scholarship Programs at the U.S. Embassy for young people, focused on offering young **Panamanians** more opportunities to learn English, attend universities in the U.S. and participate in exchange programs. Some scholarships offer courses in Panama in order to make the student more competitive in obtaining U.S., Panamanian Government and Fulbright scholarships. For further information access: <http://spanish.panama.usembassy.gov/becas.html> or write to: pancultural@state.gov.

OPPORTUNITIES:

THE INTERNATIONAL WRITING PROGRAM (IWP) OF THE UNIVERSITY OF IOWA, U.S.A.

The principal design of the IWP program is threefold:

- to introduce talented individuals to American life;
- to enable these individuals to take part in American university life;
- and to provide writers with time, in a setting congenial to their efforts, for the production of literary work.

In 2008, Iowa City was officially recognized as a UNESCO 'City of Literature,' the first such designation to be granted to an American city. The distinction engages Iowa City, and the University of Iowa, with a worldwide network of artists and cultural leaders. It is a relationship that will give rise, over the years, to exciting new projects and collaborations across borders.

The 43rd consecutive session of the IWP is TENTATIVELY scheduled to take place August 28 - November 16, 2010. Where funding is available, visiting scholars and writers are welcome to complete the entire semester in residence at the University of Iowa.

How to Nominate a Writer / Criteria for Selection:

<http://iwp.uiowa.edu/about/nominate.html>

For more information:

- Visit the IWP website <http://iwp.uiowa.edu/about/program.html>
- Contact the U.S. Embassy of Panama: <http://panama.usembassy.gov/contact.html>

Honoring to Maestra Elna Payne
Tea & Programme \$25.00

May 9, 2010

Tickets 233-1627 / 392-4261 / 226-0955

oooo000oooo

Census May 16, 2010

Census May 16, 2010