

AfroPanamanian Newsletter



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No.2 Vol. III

February-March 2012

Donation

<http://www.jis.gov.jm/ja50/v2/video-2/>



Controversy

Anecdotes

Poetry

LOS AMIGOS :
Por la superación de la Etnia Negra

A group of friends, in Panama, 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.
“For Black history to be done right, we must do it ourselves.” *Edward Gaskin*

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

The editor is not responsible for the opinions expressed by our collaborators

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 issued in 1951 as a 10 cent postage stamp, used for years. Permission for its continuous use was given by his grandnephew, Cecil Reynolds.

Editorial

**International Women's
Day**

In this month of March we celebrate International Women's Day.

To that effect we chose to honor some of the most industrious West Indian descent dressmakers in the Area.

Some of them taught sewing: Mrs. May Drew, Mrs. Vida Barnabas... some did “**neat and fine**” work: Mrs. Lennan, some specialized in bridal wear: Lilia & Doris Wilson, all in all, they contributed to the best looks of our women when these women strutted down the road on Sundays and on special occasions.

We even had one who specialized in hats: Milly

--Kindness is the language the blind can see and the deaf can hear.

FEEDBACK (From January Newsletter 2012)

Hi Sandra and Ines,

It's always a pleasure to receive old and new information from home. Keep them coming. Excellent work, as usual.

CHA

The Newsletter is so informative! It could certainly serve as the basis for a book on our history, as one reader so rightly observes. Don't weary in well doing, and keep up the good work.

Dr. Marion C. Martin

PS: When and where will the bound version of the 2011 Newsletter be available?

MCM

To everyone: The bound version of the 2011 Newsletter is now available from Ines at (507)224-4177.

Copies of the 2010 bound version maybe obtained from Fernando at 6752-3261 or Roberto at 6480-4125.

Information pertaining to Jamaica's Jubilee was sent to Carmela, she is sharing it with us, maybe we could finally make that trip to Jamaica we had planned from the first issue of this Newsletter. Of the 10 packages, Ines likes Package 8 at the Altamont Court August 8-15.

Jamaica Celebrates 50 years Independence August 6 1962 – 2012

Hands Across Jamaica For Righteousness is inviting Jamaicans and their descendants abroad to come back to Jamaica for the 50th Jubilee to spend a week doing social work and acquainting themselves with the country, its beauty and culture.

Yvonne O. Coke, Author and Founder of Hands Across Jamaica For Righteousness states:

“I write to tell you that Jamaica is the place to be for Jubilee where we can give back to our Primary School, basic school, prep school or even high school in thanksgiving to God and our foreparents who gave so much to see us "come off to something." In the midst of all this soul satisfaction, we will be able to participate with our fellow Jamaicans in the kind of euphoria which is not possible anywhere else in the world because of the live coverage of the Olympic games coming to Jamaica on every corner. Truly a time of "Out Of Many One People."

Jamaica is the place to be for Jubilee! Take action to come in your tens, hundreds and thousands by any means possible. **Put yuh foot on the soil this Jubilee year and say to your posterity: "I was there."**

See you when you come!”

There are 10 packages, see them at: <http://www.leisurejamaica.com/handsjamaicajubilee2012/>

IMPORTANT NOTICE TO ALL DRIVERS IN PANAMA (received from Amalia Vega)

Traffic Safety of Panama, S. A. will be fining for 3 types of traffic violations:

- Running a red light
- Speeding
- Obstructing traffic

This company has a 10 year contract with the ATTT signed last August 8.

According to Article 241 of the Traffic Regulations, the fine for running a red light and speeding will be \$50, But, for passing a red light the fine will be \$100. These fines will be collected by the ATTT. Safety... will receive an undetermined percentage.

According to Manuel Salgado, Data Processing Chief at ATTT, cameras, which will be able to read the license plates will be installed at several intersections: Balboa Avenue, 50 St, San Miguelito, the Transístmian and Via España. This information will serve to notify the owner of the vehicle of the infraction. How? It has not been determined.

New Businesses in the Rio Abajo/Parque Lefevre area are making good.

By Ines V. Sealy

Should we or are we supporting them?

In February there was an e-mail circulating about the killings in Rio Abajo. Some mention was made of the Johnny B Bar outside 11th St. Parque Lefevre. We need to make a difference between *Rio Abajo* and *Parque Lefevre*. Johnny B is on *Parque* side of the *Via España*. Almost beside Johnny B is Barbita's (Dixon) Restaurant and Grill: good lentils soup, black beans and coconut rice, etc. The Villa is still there, "No problem".

Across from those businesses is the *Vereda Antillana* outside 13 and 14 Sts. *Rio Abajo* promoted by the *Rio Abajo* Representative (*Javier Ortega*), where West Indian food is sold everyday, prepared by our West Indian descendant chefs, and where latins from all walks of life sit in the open (no walls), from morning till night, to relish West Indian cooking.

If any of you remember the cooking which was served on weekends at La Boca Town or daily at Boston Palace, you can now get it everyday at Fanso's International Cuisine: That soft Oxtail, that Chupe, mmmm!. If you had eaten at Centolla's, then you can get that coconut rice and red peas, that stuffed or scoviched fish at Francis. There is also Gaby's, and others.

That I can remember there have been few if any killings happening out there.

In *Bella Vista*, 48 St, *Via Argentina*, *San Francisco* there is killing and robbery going on, yet noone warns us not to go there.

I agree with the guy who says Black man is always downgrading Black man. Now that a few Black people are being successful in business, they have begun to badmouth the area.

Games West Indian Children Played: Children, Children

Children, Children
Yes Mama
Where have you been to?
Grand Mama
What did she give you?
Bread and Cheese
Where is my share?
Up in the air

How can I reach it?
Climb on a chair
Suppose I fall?
I do not care.
Who teach you that manners?
The dog
Who is the dog?
You.

I WENT UP ON A HILDING BUILDING

Ah went up on a hilding building,
Ah saw a old lady cooking
Ah beg ar for some of she dinnah
she gave me a forward ansah...
she tell me must wine* like a lady (twice)
Ah started to wine like lady
just because ah can wine like a lady.

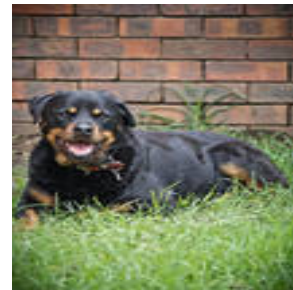
THERE'S A BROWN GIRL IN THE RING

There's a brown girl in the ring, tra-la-la-la-la
(repeat 3 times)
For she like sugar, and I like plum
Then you skip across the ocean, tra-la-la-la-la
(repeat 3 times)
For she like sugar, and I like plum
Then she wheel and take a partner,
tra-la-la-la-la (repeat 3 times)
For she like sugar, and I like plum
then she show me she motion* tra-la-la-la-la
(repeat 3 times)
For she like sugar, and I like plum

JOBALINDA

Cloth cheap a town Jobalinda
10 cent a yard Jobalinda
pick the one you like Jobalinda
bring ar come to judge Jobalinda
That's no one for you Jobalinda
Pick another one Jobalinda
Bring ar come to judge Jobalinda
That's the one for you Jobalinda
Swell piece a gal, Jobalinda
Licking piece a gal, Jobalinda
Hug ar let me see Jobalinda
Kiss ar let me see Jobalinda

B-I-N-G-O



A farmer dog was on the ground and Bingo
was his name
B-I-N-G-O, B-I-N-G-O, B-I-N-G-O and Bingo
was his name. And Bingo was his name.
B-I-N-G-O and Bingo was his name.

For your entertainment and pleasure **you just have to watch this beautiful dance:**
http://www.youtube.com/watch_popup?v=cWlhXzZT8dE&vq=largeS

West Indian Descendants in Spiritual Guidance in Panama

**Methodism is an offshoot of the Anglican church.
It was Officially Introduced to Panama in 1905.**

BRIEF HISTORY OF METHODISM IN THE PANAMA CIRCUIT

Methodism in the Panama Circuit developed to serve the spiritual needs of some of the thousands of West Indians attracted to Panama because of the construction of the Transatlantic Railroad and the Interoceanic Canal. The Panama Society, as it was then called, began as far back as 1882 in a rented room on 17th St. and Central Ave. by a group of ardent Methodists headed by William and Adina Pierce. These persons were enthusiastic and sincere in their beliefs and the group increased. Their appeal to the Jamaica Synod for a minister resulted in the appointment of the Rev. Thomas Geddes in 1884. At his coming the congregation became larger and in 1908 the cornerstone for the Wesley Church was laid.

Firmly established in Panama City, our Methodist ministry was extended to the other workers in the settlements of Empire, Paraiso, La Boca and Gamboa, along the banks of the Canal. In 1911, the cornerstone for the Paraiso Church was laid and it became the nucleus of the cultural and educational development of the community.

In 1914, another flourishing congregation was opened in the township of La Boca. However, by Treaty commitment, the town-site of La Boca ceased to exist and the La Boca Methodist Church closed at the end of 1956. The majority of the membership found homes in Rio Abajo, Chanis, and Juan Diaz areas.

The lot at 13th St. Rio Abajo was purchased in September 1962, the congregation of 122 persons who had been meeting in the home of Mr. and Mrs. William Howell at 11th St. Parque Lefevre marched to their new church.

REV. DR. EPHRAIM S. J. ALPHONSE

Rev. Alphonse, who came to the City from his prolific work with the Valiente Indians in Bocas del Toro, was born in Bocas del Toro, Republic of Panama to John Alphonse of Martinique, B.W. and Carlothia Reid, a native of Bluefields, Nicaragua.



He pioneered work among the Ngabe Amerindians in the Republic of Panama upon request from the Methodist Minister Rev. Mortimer Clifford Surgeon. He was able to reduce the Ngabe Language to writing and wrote the first grammar and vocabulary text in Guaymi, Spanish and English. He also translated the four Gospels into the Valiente language.

Rev. Alphonse did Scripture translation for the American Bible Society in 1928 and 1929.

He was a strong proponent of the evangelical witness of the Methodist Church. He also composed and compiled a hymn book and catechism for the Ngabe Indians.

**THE RT. REV. LEMUEL BARNETT
SHIRLEY**

*Excerpts from the
Thanksgiving Celebration for his life*

**The Rt. Rev. Lemuel Barnett Shirley was
born in the City of Colon, on July 23, 1916.**

Bishop Shirley the La Boca Normal Training School, after graduation he then went to the Bishop Payne Divinity School (now merged with the Virginia Theological Seminary), where he pursued studies in preparation for ordination to the Sacred Ministry.

He was ordained Deacon on August 3, 1941, at St. George's Church, Gatun, to the Priesthood on the Feast of Saint Mark, April 25, 1942, at St. Paul's Church. Both ordinations were by the late Bishop Harry Beal, under whose guidance Bishop Shirley had prepared for the Holy Orders.

As 4th Diocesan Bishop of the Diocese of Panama, Bishop Shirley has the distinct honor of being the first Panamanian ordained to the Ministry in the Episcopal Church, the first Black, and is also the first Panamanian to be elected to the Episcopate.

At the Provincial Synod held in November 1975, Bishop Shirley was elected President of the Ninth Province of the Episcopal Church; in addition to his responsibilities and ministry as Diocesan Bishop of Panama, he also had overall responsibility for the Episcopal Church in the Ninth Province, which covers the three dioceses in Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Colombia, Ecuador, Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico, as well the Republic of Panama. He held this position for six years.

He received the Order of Vasco Nuñez de Balboa with the rank of "Gran Oficial" and the Gold Panama Canal Honorary Public Service Award.

After his retirement in 1984 he continued to serve the Diocese in many different ways specially as Bishop-in-residence at St. Alban's Church Paraiso.

Bishop Shirley will always be remembered for his unique and outstanding contribution to this community

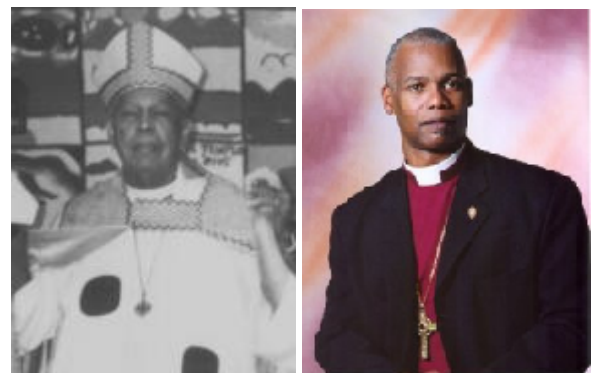
Of the seven Bishops of the Episcopal Church of Panama, 4 have been Panamanians, and, of West Indian descent. Also, there are other West Indian Descent Bishops emerging from this Diocese, presiding in other countries and several of them congregated here on August 19, 2000 for the consecration of one of the youngest Bishops of the Episcopate.

**The Rt. Rev. Julio Ernesto Murray
Thompson. 2000-**

Born on December 19, 1958 in the City of Panama, Republic of Panama of Panamanian parents of West Indian descent: Clarence A. Murray and Pearl W. Thompson Murray. He is married to Ana Lorena Copeland, they have 2 children: Jewell J. Murray C. and Jean Luke Murray C.

He studied at the National Institute of Panama, the University of Panama, Institute of Specialized Techniques in Panama; Latin American Biblical Seminar, National University of Heredia and the Latin American Biblical University in Costa Rica. He also studied at the Bossey Institute in Geneva.

He has gone from assistant at the Cathedral of St. Luke's in Ancon ('88-90), through the churches of: San Isidro Labrador and St. Mary's the Virgin in Arraijan ('88-90): to St. Michael, Archangel in Guabito; Transfiguration, Changuinola; St. George's, Almirante in the Province of Bocas del Toro (northwest of the Republic of Panama) (90-97); he then returned to be Rector of Christ-Church-by-the-Sea, Colon (1997). And, from the end of 1997 he has been the Canon of the Cathedral of St. Luke's.



*Here we are presenting the first and the last up to
now.*

BRIEF HISTORY OF THE UNITED GOSPEL CHURCH

In a Convention at Salem, July 4, 1961, the United Gospel Church was founded through the amalgamation of Bethel and Salem as ordained by God through the leadership of Pastor Waldaba H. Stewart and his wife Ruby, daughter of Rev. Sealey of the Red Tank Church.

Elected to guide the body, under the Holy Spirit, were the General Council and the Administrative Committee, consisting of Waldaba H. Stewart as General Superintendent, Leonora Haddo, General Secretary; the late Ruby Stewart, Young People Secretary; Leon Belle, Missionary Secretary; Cleophas C. Clarke, Minister of Christian Education; the late Marcus Parris, Auditor; Pearl Estwick and Edna Waisome, Trustees. Later Ida Cumberbatch and Millicent Neblett of Salem and the late Carlota Chambers and Leonora Roberts of Bethel were added as delegates.

The Torrijos-Carter period brought a transition period. The migration of many English saints and the language barrier have affected the body considerably. Services have gone bilingual with all our Sunday Schools in Spanish.

In addition to the preaching and teaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the U.G.C. Has been engaged in the ministry to the poor and needy "Salem Soup Kitchen", track distribution, Radio Broadcasts, printing and distribution of the Herald and Ministry to the sick and shut-in.

The mission in Parque Lefevre has secured a lot of land and constructed a church on it and is now under the leadership of Mauricio I. Brown.

Rev. Mauricio I. Brown Foster received Jesus as Lord and Saviour at the age of 8 while reading a tract. Was baptized at the age of 16. Called to the ministry in 1992, he was ordained as a deacon and then an elder. In 1994, he entered the Assemblies of God Bible Institute and one year later became the first local pastor at Ebenezer Church in Parque Lefevre.

Two years later in 1997, obtained the title of Minister of the Word at the top of his class and became the group's representative.

That same year, after the death of Elder Cleophas

Clarke, he was appointed General Superintendent of the United Gospel Church. His Church has made several local missionary trips, as far as Veraguas and Kuna Yala.

Since 1995, he preaches over radio HOXO & Stereo Vida, and in the last several years has been heard on the radio program "Lifeline".

On different occasions he has also appeared on the Christian T.V. channel 29 in Panama.

Mauricio grew up, studied and was tutored spiritually in the Bethel Mission in Parque Lefevre.

Rev. WALDABA HAMILTON STEWART

Excerpted from Earl Newland's Article in LA REPUBLICA Monday, April 10, 1978

Waldaba came to Panama in 1926 to his eldest sister Mrs. Lillian Griffiths. Soon after his arrival he obtained a job with the Commissary Division, remaining there until 1929. He studied under the tutorship of S. K. Walters and successfully passed the examination then given for prospective teachers on the Canal Zone. He also studied with private tutor T. S. Johnston. Besides in-service training with the Schools Division, Stewart also attended the La Boca Normal School Extension, The La Boca College and completed a correspondence course from the American School, Chicago, Ill.

... He began weighing two careers. In 1929 he began teaching his first class at the La Boca School. In the 26 years he spent as a teacher he taught many grades and subjects and even served as Assistant Principal at the Red Tank School. As Art teacher, he fostered community art contests, dramatic presentations and plays. In sports he served as assistant and then director of sports from 1930-1941 as these activities became part of the school curriculum.

He initiated planting palm trees to decorate the community of La Boca when he lived there.

He had two brothers here in Panama: Justin, who worked for the Panama Canal, and Aubrey, who was one of the first Black professors in the Panamanian Public School system (he taught at the National Institute).