

Afro Panamanian Newsletter



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Poetry

Controversy

Anecdotes

EDITORIAL

CENSUS

By **Sandra Patterson**

This coming May we not only will be celebrating Black ethnic Heritage in Panama, but we will also be counted. It's a procedure that takes place every ten years in most countries.

This census makes a great difference for Black Panamanians because there will be two (2) questions about our Black background that should be proudly answered. By learning where, who and how many we are, is a way to have a better view of our contributions to the development of this country.

Most census activity will take place on Sunday May 16th between 8am. and 5pm

Remember, have your **cédula** at hand and be sure not to leave home before you've been counted.

CENSUS MAY 16
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SAY IT LOUD
SAY IT LOUD
I'M BLACK & PROUD
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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.

**LOS AMIGOS :
Por la superación de la Etnia Negra**

WHO ARE WE?

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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, that have been displaced by others, thus losing a large part of our Black Heritage.

The main reasons of the influx of Blacks to the Panamanian territory were colonization construction of the Panama Railroad and the Interoceanic Canal construction's two periods. They came from different backgrounds bringing along to this Panamanian land cultural patterns permeated outside their homeland or by the influence of several masters, that are barely being provided with opportunities to flourish.

Panamanian Black ethnicity has contributed to the building up and development of this country, not only through its vigorous workforce but in disciplines such as teaching, sport, music but unfortunately their contributions have been sidestepped denying them their place in Panamanian history.

Los Amigos: por la superación de la etnia negra are evaluating all these forgotten traditions and values and highlighting figures as examples for future generations.

WHAT'S IN OUR FUTURE?

HOMAGE TO ELMA

Over 50 years of service in the Parque Lefevre community. Service that has extended its tentacles worldwide. This service has been in the formation of young minds in the way they should go, making of them useful persons to the world at large.

Thousands of children have passed through the hands of maestra Elma Murrell de Payne, receiving the base of an education which has served them in later years to become professionals here, there, and everywhere.

Many are the anecdotes that can be told of Maestra Elma. Many are the results that can be mentioned or seen of her influence on her students. Now from their fifties down, they can look back and say “she gave me a good base” , “I learned a lot from her” .

Some of these anecdotes we would like to hear and see in black and white, so that, we are requesting ex-students to send us your anecdotes. We will publish them in future numbers of this Newsletter.

Los Amigos – “por la superación de la Etnia Negra” will be honouring Maestra Elma on the evening of **May 9** at the Salon Centenario of the El Panama Hotel. Bear this date in mind, prepare to accompany us, and, watch for more information in future numbers of the Afro Panamanian Newsletters or check with Ines Sealy at 221-4276, or inesvs21@yahoo.com or Fernando Goldson at 6752-3261

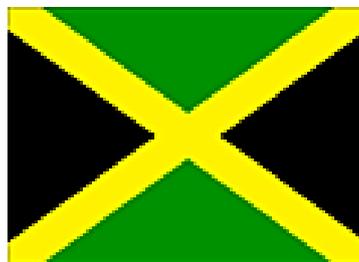


Jamaica, here we come

How would you like to participate in Jamaica's independence celebrations? Well, get your luggage ready, prepare to spend a week in Jamaica at the beginning of **August 2010**. Ask us about it, or, look forward to more information in future numbers of the Afro Panamanian Newsletter. Jamaica gained its independence from England on August 6, 1962. www.Jamaicans.com states:

“Join Jamaicans all over the globe and show your support for Jamaica on our Independence Day (August 6th) by wearing clothing/shoes with the colours of the Jamaican flag, Green, Black and Gold (Yellow). We are aiming for people all over the world to wear Green, Black and Yellow for this celebration every year.

Jamaica has influenced the world with our food, music and culture. Join millions of people all over the world in this symbolic celebration and let them know it is Jamaica Independence Day.



Each colour in the flag is symbolic: the black stands for hardship, the green for both hope and the fertile land, and the gold for wealth and sunshine. (Original)”

The flag's original symbolism is “Hardships there are, but the Land is green and the Sun shineth.”

“New Symbolism as of 1996 - Hardships there are but the land is green and the sun shineth” is the symbolism of the Flag.

Black symbolizes the strength and creativity of the Jamaican people ; Gold, for natural wealth and beauty of sunlight; and Green stands for hope and agricultural resources. Spread the word and don't forget to wear Yuh Colours on August 6th, Jamaica's Independence Day.”

HOLIDAYS IN PANAMA

by: Ines V. Sealy

There was a time when,
holidays in Panama had no end.
The Canal Zone took their action
being under US jurisdiction
celebrating US holidays only.

Then came the Remon-Eisenhower Treaty,
to change the way they paid duty.
Panama's holidays they also had to celebrate
so, working on the Zone, we, could anticipate
more days off than our counterparts.

Washington's birthday in February
and Carnival Tuesday a day of revelry.
Good Friday and Easter celebrated by both
in March or April on oath.
Almost each month had a day to fete.

Memorial day at the end of May
June had Father's day with no duty to pay
but, July 4th was a big holiday
with much celebration and fireworks on display.
Even the French got in Bastille Day,

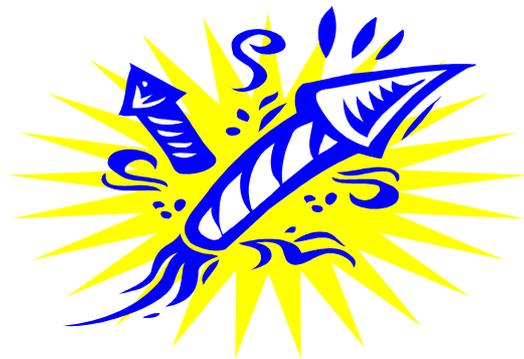
1914 the Canal opened in August,
so, an annual celebration was a must
but then Panama had also inaugurated,
its old city by Henry Morgan dilapidated;
both on the 15th! how could we, ourselves split?

The first week in September,
Labor day was to remember
the dead in Chicago's Haymarket;
long weekend, Friday to Monday, mark it

Halloween with trick or treat in October made no hit,
but November was the month when holidays were it:
from the first to the fifth in Panama, a whole week;
marching the tenth in Panama was not for the meek.
The Zone had its Veteran's and Thanksgiving Days
while Panama celebrated their Four Independence
shouts.

This is the month to go on vacation:
holiday pay is yours because it's their obligation,
Watching parades either in bed or in the sun
can be entertaining, instructive and fun,
Back to work you are refreshed
after 11 months of having been stressed.

In December, Panama's Mother's are feted,
being an official holiday, the Zone is affected
nevertheless, that whole month is preparation
for the Christmas and New Year's celebration,
...A hectic season of shopping and feasting.



Ah! what a year,
a good year?... a bad year?
Now comes the time for resolutions.

November 2009

WHERE ARE WE... FROM WHEN WE ARE BURIED TO THE LAST DAY?

Where do we go when we die? The Bible tells us what will happen on resurrection day, but in between, where do we go?

He said:

John xiv. ...I go to prepare a place for you.

And if I go and prepare a place for you. I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.

John v, 28-29 Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice,

And shall come forth: they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life: and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.

Where do we go? Into the grave,

John vi 40 ...I will raise them up on the last day.

In parables he explained what the last day will be like:

Matt. xiii. 37 ...He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man;

The field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one;

The enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels.

The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity;

42 And shall cast them into a furnace of fire; there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.

Then Again,

Matt. xiii. states ...the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind:

Which, when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away.

So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just,

50 And shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.

Mark viii 38 ...when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.

Matt xxv 31- When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory:

And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats:

And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.

Mark xiv 62 ...and ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven

....and there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.

Are we angels?

NOTHING I HAD, NOTHING I HAVE

Author: Antonio Cox

He was a good man, who nothing lacked,
admired by all,
greetings and benedictions called.

Got sick one day, and everything lost,
all except faith, lacking to most,
born with nothing, I'll die with nothing, he thought.

But he slowly recovered,
acquired the double he had gathered,
shared it with those, who by his side abode
when he, everything owed.



HAITI

Time to be United

By Sandra Patterson



On a job assignment I visited Port au Prince in 1993. Left Panama on a Sunday afternoon to return the following Wednesday that didn't come as soon as I wanted it. I tell you, not for one second did I take out the camera I had in my purse.

As an experienced traveler, not many things that I see in other countries affect or cause an impact on me, but from my arrival at the neglected terminal, to eyes and faces filled with despair, hands stretched out, begging, poverty surrounding everywhere even outside the presidential palace, garbage piled up along the center of (I don't recall the name) -*Central Ave.*- as high as 4 feet, lack of hygiene at every turn, very poor health controls I was in shock. Believe me it's not a trip I like to talk about.

Haiti has been in need of help for more years than I can remember, yet we all look away and turn our backs towards her. Why is it that after being the first black country in the world to gain independence and not only being example for all Latin American countries but helped them to an independent status, it became the poorest of all? For what reasons all countries in America have turned away from this country and show no interest? Can their be so much ungratefulness?

Today Haiti needs more help than ever, not a cosmetic one. It needs to be totally redone from levels and points. The best way to do it is for all Blacks to get together and work *united* to restore her past glory, otherwise, as a country, Haiti is bound to disappear.

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Do you speak English?

By F.A. Goldson

Have you ever wondered what happened to our culture here in Panama? I have.

I'm very concerned with what's going on with my people (Black folks), particularly those of West Indian or Caribbean descent. I would like to focus on the youths, especially those who are not making any effort to speak English.

In my travels throughout the City, I have encountered many Black youths. I make it a point to greet them in English, they respond in Spanish. There are occasions when I am able to engage them in some small talk. My usual question is: "do you speak English?" The answer, for the most part, is No.

Why not? I ask. "I don't like to." (That is very alarming) "I am ashamed to", or, "I have no one to teach me".

Now, we are aware of the situation. I believe we have a responsibility to assist with the --"each one, teach one" --. It is very effective. It works. Our youths are losing the greatest battle they will encounter economically.

I'm calling on all churches, fraternal organizations and all social and civic groups to get involved **today**.