

Surge of Creative Energy Made Up Jamaican Cultural Revolution

Weather Watch

After seeing the enormous category 4 damage done by Hurricane Katrina on the U.S. Gulf Coast, and the shocking human suffering in its aftermath, we in the Caribbean can only begin to seriously wonder what could be in store for our region during the month of September, the most active month for storms. Our hearts go out to all the U.S. residents on the southern Gulf Coast, who had to endure all the loss and the destruction wreaked by this hurricane.

Down in Jamaica

The economic ripples from Katrina have already begun to extend worldwide. In Jamaica, for instance, we saw another hike in gasoline prices (after a brief price drop). In addition to this, there was an increase in the price of chicken and warnings of upcoming increases to beef. Animal feeds for the island come mostly from



by Ralston Blair

Island to Island



Mississippi.

Jamaicans with relatives working on the U.S. Hotel Program in the affected states felt some sense of relief that all those workers were safe and successfully evacuated before the hurricane struck.

The Jamaican Labor Party, Tuesday, September 6, mounted peaceful demonstrations around the island in hopes of forcing the ruling People's National Party to grant reductions on widespread price increases. Many are waiting to see if the action will bring about the intended results.

A number of entertainment activities are scheduled for this month. These include the upcoming concert by vintage R&B great, Ben E. King. This will be at The Morgan's Harbor Hotel and Marina, and will feature Marcia Griffiths, Ken Boothe, and Ernie Smith. The Miss Jamaica World Beauty Contest's Grand Coronation Show will be staged Sunday, September 11, at the Jamaica Pegasus Hotel.

The Jamaican Artistic and Cultural Revolution

In the 1930s and 1940s, Jamaica experienced a powerful surge of creative energy

coming out of the social upheavals of the past. Animated by these creative forces, Jamaicans brought into being a literature, and art movement, and widespread activities in sports and athletics which all comprised a burgeoning and distinctive culture.

The extraordinary achievements in athletics and in diverse cultural movements, including Rastafarianism and the women's movement, brought about a strong sense of nationhood. One such story inspired the pride and confidence in all Jamaicans, at the time. This was in 1930, when young George Headley completed his fourth century in four tests in the English sport of cricket. This achievement set the tone for what was to become a dominant West Indian influence on the sport for years to come. The famous West Indian tour in England in 1950, with two of the world's great spin bowlers, Alfred Valentine and Sonny Ramadhin, and three of the world's great batsmen, Everton Weeks, Frank Worrell, and Clyde Walcott, further demonstrated that West Indian cricket had achieved world levels.

By 1950, Herb McKenley had also announced the entry of Jamaica into world athletics. In 1947 McKenley set the first time-measured world record by a Jamaican, or any other English-speaking West Indian, for that matter. He also set another world record for the quarter mile in 1948 at 48 seconds flat, running 45.9 (the metric equivalent 400 meters),

feats that had been set down as impossible barriers by experts in the sport years before. In the same year, he was beaten for the Olympic 400 meters title by his countryman, Arthur Wint. The two gave Jamaica the first ever triumph in the entire history of the Olympic games over athletes from the United States in a male sprint event. Another pacesetter in athletics was Keith Gardner, gold medalist in the hurdles in the Commonwealth Games of 1954 and 1958. These triumphs, coming as they did in this period of national awakening, were of profound importance. By winning instant worldwide recognition in competition with people of all races and cultures, they lifted Jamaica's self-esteem, opened the eyes of Jamaicans to the potential of all Jamaican youth, and shattered many inferiority myths.

Through the foresight of former British governor Sir Anthony Musgrave, who saw that Jamaica had the institutional underpinnings for nurturing a cultural revolution, the Institute of Jamaica and the National Gallery were established for the encouragement of literature, science, and art. Thereafter, Frank Cundall almost single-handedly built the West India Reference Library into one of the finest collections of its kind in the Americas. In more recent times, Bernard Lewis built up the Natural History Museum with its priceless collection of Jamaica's fauna and flora. In the 50 years between the founding of the institute and the revolution of the 1930s, the institute was the only agency in Jamaica dedicated to studying and preserving the country's political and natural history and encouraging an interest in indigenous Jamaica.

In the 1930s the institute became both the catalyst and activator for Jamaica's expanding art movement. Soon, groups of Jamaican sculptors, painters, and poets were busy portraying the historical experience of the people. Out of this came world-renowned names

such as Edna Manley, Albert Huie, Jon Dunkley, Ralph Campbell, Henry Daley, Carl Abrahams, David Pottinger, Mallica "Kapo" Reynolds, and Cecil Baugh.

Alongside the artists of this period moved the poets and novelists, such as George Campbell, Vic Raid, Roger Mais, John Hearne, and Andrew Salkey. West Indian literature was soon recognized as a significant contribution to world literature.

The range of artistic achievement was wide. It brought together the educated middle class and the working class, all meeting as Jamaicans and all driven by the urge to portray the land and the Jamaican experience.

Place Profile: Kingston

Our capital city is Kingston.

Kingston was founded in 1692, when survivors of the Port Royal earthquake resettled across the harbor. It became Jamaica's capital in 1872 and is today considered the island's cultural center. Although an earthquake and a fire destroyed most of the city in 1907, it was immediately rebuilt.

The town and surrounding districts are well supplied with good hotels and the wharfside crafts center is a shopper's mecca. North of downtown is the 74-acre National Heroes Park, where Jamaican leaders Alexander Bustamante, Norman Manley, and Marcus Garvey are buried. West of the city, you will find Caymanas Park, which offers horse racing on Wednesdays, Saturdays, and holidays. Hellshire Beach, 14 miles southwest of Kingston, has the 200,000-year-old Two Sisters Cave with its rare Arawak Indian petroglyphs. Nearby is Fort Clarence Beach, a seaside recreational complex. Both beaches are popular with the locals on weekends. High above the city, at 7,402 feet, is the breathtaking span of lush mountain ranges called Blue Mountain Peak, renowned for the premium coffee of the same name. Nearly 4,000 feet above the sea, on the southern slope of the Blue Mountains, is where the military camp for the Jamaica Defense Force is found at Newcastle. This mountainous region is popular for hiking.

56 Hope Road, in the heart of the city, is the location for the Bob Marley Museum. It was the late reggae singer's for-

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