Smithsonian Global Sound®

The following is a digital version of the education kit, *Our Bahamian Heritage*, on exploring The Bahamas and Bahamian culture.

It was co-produced in 1995 by the Smithsonian Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage, the Ministry of Education and Training of the Bahamas, and the Embassy of the Commonwealth of the Bahamas.

The original kit came with a cassette tape and VHS video to supplement the material. The digital music files and video found on Smithsonian Global Sound, specifically at (www.smithsonianglobalsound.org/cultural_heritage_06.aspx) can also be used to supplement these lessons.



Table of Contents

Letter from Ambassador Donaldson....4
Introduction....5
Note to the Teacher....7

PRIMARY LEVEL

Crafts & Folk Art....9
Music....17
Storytelling....25
Foodways....33
Celebrations....41

SECONDARY LEVEL

The Peoples and Cultures of The Bahamas....49
Crafts & Folk Art....55
Music....67
Storytelling....77
Foodways....89
Celebrations....99
Exploring Your Own Communities....111

Appendix....117

Embassy of the Commonwealth of The Bahamas
2220 MASSACHUSETTS AVENUE, N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20008

October 16, 1995

Dear Teachers and Students:

As many of you know, the culture of The Bahamas was presented on the National Mall of the United States in Washington, D.C., during the Smithsonian Institution's annual Festival of American Folklife in 1994.

The hard work and perseverance of those involved in this project paid off in a magnificent way. Not only was the rich culture of our country presented to and enjoyed by the world, but, more importantly, Bahamians came to understand that we do in fact have a rich cultural tradition of which we can be justifiably proud.

Funds raised from the private sector have been used to produce these educational materials for use in Bahamian schools from the research and documentation generated by and for the Festival. The use of indigenous material will, no doubt, have a tremendous impact on the teaching of social sciences in The Bahamas. Our students will learn about themselves and be motivated to become involved in research to document and preserve our heritage.

The Embassy of the Commonwealth of The Bahamas in the United States is privileged to have been a catalyst in the staging of The Bahamas' participation in the Festival and in the production of these materials. I feel sure that you will enjoy using the materials and that the relevant authorities will commit to periodically updating them.

I also take this opportunity to personally thank the public service officers, the Smithsonian team, the Festival participants, the donors and all others who contributed in any way to the production of these educational materials for a job well done and to pay a special tribute to the Embassy's former Cultural Attaché, Mrs. Diane Dean, herself a teacher, whose dream of The Bahamas' participation in the Festival has culminated in the production of these materials.

Yours sincerely,

T. B. Donaldson

Timothy B. Donaldson
Ambassador

Introduction

In the summer of 1994, over two hundred Bahamians gathered on the National Mall of the United States in Washington, D.C., to participate in the Smithsonian Institution's 28th annual Festival of American Folklife.



Photo courtesy Smithsonian Institution

Junkanoo drummers in Washington, D.C.

The Festival brought together the finest of traditional culture in The Bahamas. Boatbuilders, straw workers, Junkanoo artists, Goombay musicians and traditional cooks demonstrated their work and shared their knowledge.

The Festival was held in Washington, but the research took place throughout The Bahamas. In late 1993, a team of twenty Bahamian researchers travelled to many of the Family Islands and also explored New Providence and Freeport to document traditions ranging from music to cooking. Through audio and video interviews, still photographs and written documentation, the researchers gathered information that not only served as a basis for the Festival programme, but became a permanent record of Bahamian traditions. Copies of the Festival research can be found at the Department of Archives in The Bahamas and at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C.

The success of the Festival encouraged the Bahamian research team to pursue a way to bring the enthusiasm back to The Bahamas and in particular to the Bahamian schools.



Photo courtesy Smithsonian Institution

Straw workers from Cat Island, Exuma and Acklins share their knowledge with Festival visitors.

The vision and dedication of Ambassador Timothy Donaldson brought their dreams to reality.

These materials introduce you to some of the people and traditions researched for the Festival. But the work has only begun. The goal of *Our Bahamian Heritage* is to encourage you to continue the documentation. There is an unavoidable urgency to the task. Although researchers met people of all ages, from teenagers to great-great-grandparents, the majority were older. Researchers interviewed only a fraction of the many Bahamian elders eager to pass on their knowledge to younger generations.

When Elaine Toote, Deputy Director of the Department of Archives of The Bahamas, interviewed Merriel Mable Cash of Green Turtle Cay, Abaco, she learned firsthand of the potential loss of traditions.

Mrs. Toote: I'm interested in finding out whether you have passed down any of your traditions to your children.

Mrs. Cash: I have one daughter that makes bread occasionally, but she doesn't do it all the time. In Marsh Harbor she can just go to the bakery and get a loaf of bread.

Mrs. Toote: Are they into preserving?

Mrs. Cash: I'm afraid not. They just get the jam from me, and they don't worry about how it gets made.

If no one pays attention to "how it gets made", eventually the recipe will be lost. *Our Bahamian Heritage* aims to help you understand the importance of how things "get made" and the importance of preserving the knowledge of Mrs. Cash and many others. *Our Bahamian Heritage* should encourage you and your students to continue the important work begun by the Festival researchers.

Note to the Teacher

Our Bahamian Heritage is for primary- and secondary-level students. Themes include: crafts, music, storytelling, foodways and celebrations. Each section follows a simple format:

- introduction for teacher with goals and objectives
- a short reading to give background on a particular tradition in The Bahamas
- profiles of various craftspeople, with quotations from the craftspeople
- questions and activities for students.

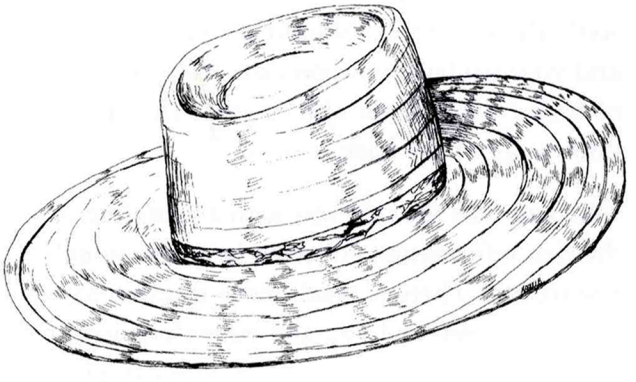
The secondary-level materials include two additional sections. "The People and Culture of The Bahamas", an article by Dr. Gail Saunders, offers students a short background on the rich cultural diversity of The Bahamas. The closing chapter, "Exploring Your Own Communities", offers students and teachers detailed information on how to interview resource people and document traditions in their own communities.

In the Appendix, you will find suggestions about how to bring resource persons to your classroom, a sample lesson plan, a glossary of key words, transcriptions of the songs on the accompanying cassette, and a bibliography on the history and culture of The Bahamas.

Our Bahamian Heritage is written for a student audience, but each section opens with an introduction for the teacher. The introduction provides teachers with an overview of the section to follow. After the introduction, each section includes reading passages, profiles, and questions and activities. These sections are written for students. They are meant to be photocopied and distributed among your students. The materials should serve as a blueprint for your own class research. As students collect stories and interviews, the three-ring binder format invites you to add new information to this notebook.

Classroom Use

Although each section can be used as a separate unit, linkages should be pursued between these materials and your existing classroom curriculum. These materials should enhance your current classroom curriculum rather than serve as an additional burden. For instance, Mrs. Mabel Williams's stories about growing up on San Salvador ("Primary and Secondary: Storytelling") can be used in a geography class to better understand the realities of living on a



Family Island. If you consider the details he provides regarding the size of his oven and the number of loaves he bakes per day, the profile of Vernon Malone, a baker on Abaco ("Secondary: Foodways"), can be used in a mathematics class as well as a home cookery or home economics class. These examples are only the beginning. We encourage you to pursue such linkages to ensure lasting and far-reaching results for these materials.

If used on its own, each section should take approximately three class periods to complete. This will vary according to class level and interest. Not all activities in each section need to be completed. Teachers should feel free to pick and choose according to their interests and those of their students.

In addition to the written components, these materials include audio and video cassettes, posters and background readings for teachers and interested students. The 30-minute video, "To Be a Bahamian", offers an introduction to the Festival for students and teachers.

Throughout these materials, you will be introduced to outstanding examples of traditional culture in The Bahamas: a coiled basket, a sacred hymn, a handmade wooden Abaco dinghy. These materials encourage you to examine the objects closely, but it is important to remember the person behind the craft as well. These materials should encourage you and your students to appreciate the intricacies of basket making but also to study the life and knowledge of the basket maker.

The materials provide you with a sampling of the rich information collected by professional researchers. There is much more research to be done, however, and you and your students can be a part of the process. In fact, you can play a major role.

Traditions at Your Fingertips

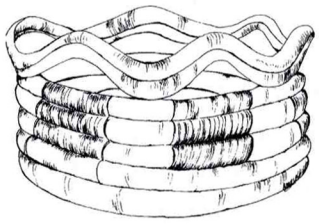
Throughout the Festival research, researchers commented on the creativity of many Bahamians. Osborne King is the lead Quadrille dancer for the Cat Island Mites, but he is also an expert on boatbuilding. Such versatility was central to the success of the Festival project, and it will lead to the success of the implementation of the educational materials.

These materials encourage students and teachers to do their own exploration and documentation. This does not mean that you have to organize an extensive field trip. In fact, you might not have to look beyond your own school. If you keep the concept of versatility in your mind, you might realize that the janitress's mother is known for her guava duff or that the brother of the geography teacher builds boats on the weekends. If you invite these people into your classroom and encourage your students to interview them and document their traditions and stories, you will realize that you do not have to go far to unearth traditional culture. In the Appendix, you will find a short guideline for such classroom presentations: "Using a Resource Person in Your Classroom". Once you recognize the versatility of your fellow Bahamians, the possibilities are endless.

At a recent teacher workshop Ed Moxey, the leader of Ed Moxey's Rake 'n Scrape, shared powerful words: "I believe that if this country is going to grow, we must become very serious about the preservation of things Bahamian." These educational materials are a start. As Ambassador Donaldson explains, these materials should motivate students and teachers "to become involved in research to document and preserve our heritage."

PRIMARY

Crafts & Folk Art



A coiled basket by Peggy Colebrooke from Red Bays, Andros

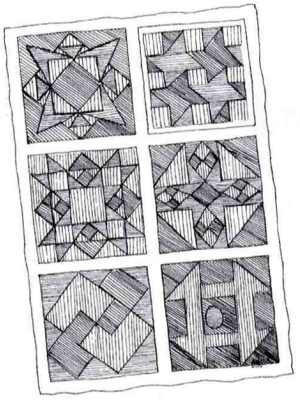
This section highlights traditional Bahamian crafts and folk art and the people behind these objects. The reading explains that crafts can be decorative or utilitarian; some are both. The short profiles introduce students to a straw worker (Wendy Kelly), a quilter (Cecile Dunnam) and a folk artist (Amos Ferguson). This section encourages students to learn and practise craftwork and to interview craftspeople in their communities. Students will find out how these people learned their skills and how they are passing on their expertise and knowledge to others.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this section students should be able to:

- **differentiate between utilitarian and decorative crafts.**
- **identify various types of straw and different plaiting patterns.**
- **complete a small piece of plait, using an established pattern or designing one of their own.**
- **plan and sew a friendship quilt as a class or as a school.**
- **identify other Bahamian crafts not included in these materials and plan a strategy to find artisans of these crafts.**
- **interview a craftsperson to discover how he or she learned his or her craft.**

Reading



There are many different craft and folk art traditions in The Bahamas. Straw work, painting, wood carving and quilting are only the beginning.

The different crafts use different materials: straw, wood, cloth and paint. Craftspeople and folk artists are very resourceful. Some even use fish scales in their work!

- **What crafts have you seen? Who does crafts in your family?**

In the profiles that follow, you will read about craftspeople like Wendy Kelly who makes straw items for everyday use, as well as Amos Ferguson, a folk artist who often paints Bahamian scenes. Paintings are made to look at, as are most wood carvings and shell sculptures, rather than to serve a specific purpose, like carrying beans from the field or covering a bed for warmth. However, crafts and folk art that serve a purpose, like straw work and quilting, can also be intricate in design and decoration.

- **Can you think of other examples of folk arts and crafts that are pleasing to look at and also serve a more practical purpose?**

Some crafts, like wood carving, can only be found on certain islands. Straw work can be found throughout The Bahamas. Straw work uses many different kinds of fibres: palm straw (including both the silver top and pond top), coconut leaves and sisal. Palm straw comes from several species of the palm tree, whose leaves (fronds) are harvested, dried and split into strips for plaiting (braiding). After the plait is completed, the strips are sewn together by hand or by machine.

- **Do you know how to plait? Does anyone in your family?**

Straw workers make hats and bags, which are popular among tourists. However, not all straw work is for the tourist market. Straw workers make special baskets to riddle grits or to carry crabs and farm vegetables. These kinds of baskets are for use at home. Straw workers are so inventive that they can usually make a special basket if you request one.

- **Can you think of a special basket you might need?**

Sometimes, crafts that have a specific use, like a quilt or a basket, are put on display for their beauty alone.

- **Have you ever seen a quilt hung on a wall instead of covering a bed?**

- **Have you seen baskets on display in a museum?**

Once you set your mind to it, you will find crafts throughout The Bahamas: in homes, in galleries and in museums.

Profiles II

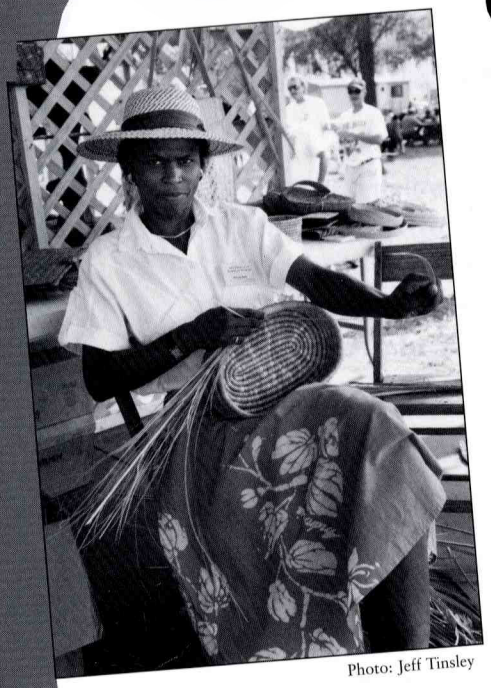


Photo: Jeff Tinsley

WENDY KELLY is a straw worker who lives and works in Nassau, but she grew up in Acklins.

"In Acklins, when we were growing up, we went to school, did our homework, house chores, and that's about it. My mother used to do a bit of straw work for household use. She would make grits baskets and different fanners, basically for personal use. So I got interested, and she would take me along with her to get the straw. Now, we live on the western side of the island and the straw was on the eastern side, so it took maybe two and a half to three hours to walk where the straw was. That involves walking over hills, walking on the beach for a while, so it was really hard work."[1]

- **Does Mrs. Kelly's childhood sound similar to your own life? Why or why not?**

- **Can you imagine walking so far? What things are important enough to make you walk two or three hours?**

Today, in addition to running her own business, X-STRAW-dinary Crafts, Mrs. Kelly teaches straw work to secondary-level students. Her classes are popular, but Mrs. Kelly does not think her students actually consider a career in straw work. She discusses why this is so:

"After I moved from Acklins in '83, when I was about fourteen, I figured I was too young to be doing straw work. I thought straw work was just for old people, and I guess that is what [the students are] thinking. They probably don't realize there is also money in it, and they could make a living."

[1] The written materials are based in large part on the transcriptions of narrative sessions that took place at the 1994 Festival of American Folklife. In certain cases, slight changes have been made in the transcriptions to ensure ease of educational use.

- **If you did not know that Mrs. Kelly was a basket maker, how might the name of her company serve as a clue?**

- **Do you think straw work is just for old people? What factors helped Mrs. Kelly to change her opinion?**

There are many other craft traditions in The Bahamas. In many Bahamian homes, women quilt, crochet and sew. Quilting comes in many different forms. Some quilts are called piece spreads. Piece spreads are made by sewing together scraps of fabric, often from old clothes. Piece spreads can be found in many of the Family Islands. Other quilts are made from matched fabrics. These designs use standard shapes such as triangles, squares and diamonds.



Photo: Gail Saunders

CECILE DUNNAM lives in Spanish Wells. She has been quilting for forty years.

"I got the tradition from my mother, and I've kept it up since. We always had quilts when we were growing up, and I've done the quilts for my children, and I'm still quilting now."

- **Do you know anyone who quilts?**

Mrs. Dunnam made ninety quilts in one year. She uses many different patterns:

"Some of the patterns that I use now are the sail boat, the three tulip, the fan, the butterfly, the Dresden plate, and our old traditional one was the crazy patch. You took any square that you had, and you just join 'til you get your spread the size you wanted."

Mrs. Dunnam loves to quilt. She often quilts all day and night. But she has not found many young people interested in her craft.

"I've been trying to get some of the young people to start it, but it seems like they're not too interested. My daughter can quilt, but I can't get her to be as enthused about it as I am."

- **Would you like to learn to quilt? How would you begin?**

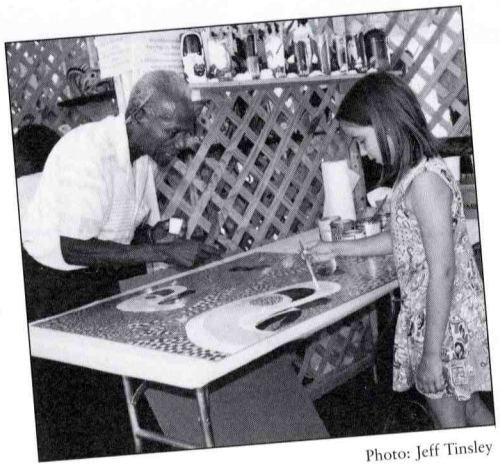


Photo: Jeff Tinsley

AMOS FERGUSON is a folk artist of international acclaim. He lives in Nassau. Mr. Ferguson explains how he first learned to paint:

"My first painting was house painting. I saw many paintings in homes that I painted. It focused on my mind that I have to paint pictures. I always travel with lots of paper in my pocket. Anything that I saw, I sketch it, write it down, until I reach home. When I reach home at night, I painted."

- **Where did Mr. Ferguson learn to paint? What kinds of skills have you learned in places other than school?**

Mr. Ferguson paints from what he calls visions. He says he paints what comes to him.

"I don't think of nothing to paint. It come to my mind. Because it was created from God, that's why it comes into me."

- **Mr. Ferguson says he "thinks of nothing" when he sits down to paint. What does Mr. Ferguson mean when he says his subjects "come" to his mind? Has something like this ever happened to you? When you draw a picture, do you plan out what you are going to draw?**

Mr. Ferguson sums up his opinion of many Bahamian artists.

"The artists of The Bahamas, when they go abroad, they change their style. They forget The Bahamas. They don't know they came from The Bahamas. They paint mountains, skyscrapers, railroad tracks. They want to see something new."

- **Do you think Mr. Ferguson approves of the artists that he describes who travel abroad and paint "mountains, skyscrapers, railroad tracks"? If you were an artist, what would you paint?**

Mr. Ferguson offers the following suggestion to future painters.

"When you're painting, paint from your heart, give God your heart."

- **What do you think he means by this? What does doing something "from your heart" mean? Have you heard anyone say this before?**




Activities




1. Design a Basket

Pretend Mrs. Kelly has offered to make you a basket of your choice.

- What will you use your basket for? A bag? A box to hold special things?
- Draw a picture of the basket you would like made especially for you.

2. How We Learn

Mrs. Kelly learned straw work from her mother.

- What have you learned from an older person?
- Write a list of the things you have learned from someone older than yourself.
- What have you taught to someone younger than yourself?

3. Plan a Business

Have you thought about owning your own business, like Mrs. Kelly?

- What kind of business would you own?
- Think of a name for your business and design a logo.

4. Quilting Patterns

Remember Mrs. Dunnam's list of quilt patterns.

- Pick one of the names, and draw a picture of a pattern to fit the name.
- Or make up a new pattern of your own. What is the name of your pattern?










Activities




5. Interview Activity: Learning Crafts

Interview someone you know who does craftwork.

- Where did he or she learn this craft?
- Does the person you interview consider his or her work to be art or crafts?
- Is the craftsperson passing his or her knowledge on to other people? Report your findings to your class.

6. Design a Quilt

As a class, make a friendship quilt. Each student should be responsible for making a square of the quilt. Possible patterns for your square include: national symbols of The Bahamas, indigenous plants, different straw baskets. Alternatively, classes might work together on a single square to make a quilt representative of your whole school.

7. Bahamian Painting

Look carefully at a reproduction of an Amos Ferguson painting. You can use the cover of this notebook or any other reproduction.

- List three elements that make his paintings particularly Bahamian.
- What colours does he like to use?
- Paint a picture of a Bahamian scene with which you are familiar.

You can see more of Mr. Ferguson's paintings at the Pompey Museum in Nassau.

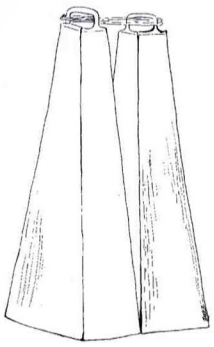






PRIMARY

Music



Cowbells contribute to the distinctive sound of Junkanoo.

This section reminds students that music can be heard in many different settings throughout The Bahamas, from churches to back yard picnics. An audio cassette of traditional Bahamian songs accompanies this section, to allow students and teachers to enjoy the different sounds of Bahamian music. This section encourages students not only to listen carefully but also to get up and move. Students will enjoy listening and dancing to the music on the cassette.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this section students should be able to:

- **explain the differences between sacred and secular music.**
- **practise some traditional dances.**
- **describe a programme/concert.**
- **describe a rake 'n scrape band and explain its origins in The Bahamas.**
- **make some music from materials at hand.**

Reading



You can hear music in many places in The Bahamas. In church, in school, from car radios on the street, music can be heard throughout the islands.

The different sounds reflect the many cultures that make up The Bahamas. If you listen closely, you can hear influences from Africa, the Caribbean, Europe and America.

- **What kinds of music have you heard? What kinds of music do you like?**

In The Bahamas there is both sacred and secular music. Sacred music is sung and played in churches. You can hear sacred music outside of church as well. Secular music is music that is not religious, like Junkanoo or Goombay music.

One form of Goombay music is called rake 'n scrape. Rake 'n scrape can often be heard in clubs and society halls. Goombay comes from the word "Gimbey", which means "big drum". The goatskin drum is the basis of Goombay music. A Goombay band consists of a drummer, an accordion player and someone who plays a carpenter's saw. This music is good for dancing. The Quadrille, Heel and Toe Polka, and Knocking the Conch Style are dances that are accompanied by rake 'n scrape rhythms.

- **Have you ever heard Goombay music? Where did you hear it? Does anyone you know play in a rake 'n scrape band?**

Goombay music has its roots in the 1800s, when newly arrived Africans, many of whom came as slaves, made music with the local materials they could find: carpenters' saws and wooden barrels. The accordion may have been borrowed from slave masters.

- **How do you think someone decided to make music from a saw?**

You can hear a wide range of music styles at a programme. Programmes showcase local musical and dramatic talent. Programmes are held in society halls, school rooms or church halls. The programme chairperson serves as a host for the evening's entertainment. Agnes Ferguson recalls the hard work that went into a programme:

"During the night we would catch a nice fire outside in the yard, and then we'll sing and practise for the performance."

- **Have you ever been to a programme?**

Profiles II

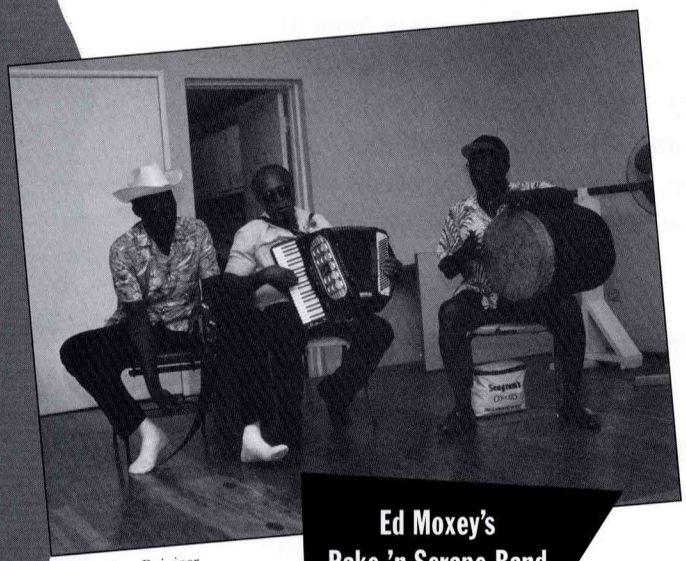


Photo: Pete Reiniger

Ed Moxey's Rake 'n Scrape Band

ED MOXEY plays the accordion in a rake 'n scrape band. Mr. Moxey was born in 1933 and says he has been making music since he was five years old.

"I started with a rock in a milk can and a grater that you use for grating coconuts. The basic instrument was some line strung up on a board with which we imitated the guitar."

- **What kind of music do you make? Can you make music from a soda bottle? What about coconut pods? How do the sounds differ?**

HUELON NEWBOLD plays the saw for Ed Moxey's rake 'n scrape band. He has been playing the saw for thirty-five years, since the age of ten. With so many years of experience, Mr. Newbold has a wealth of knowledge about the different sounds he can make from his saws. He has three different saws, and he prefers the saw with the finest teeth.



Photo: Richard Strauss

In The Bahamas, church is a good place to hear music and, more importantly, a good place to participate in music making. **PATRICIA BAZARD** explains:

"In church in The Bahamas, everybody takes part. If you can't sing, you hum. If you can't hum, you clap. If you can't clap, you stomp. And if you can't stomp, you just jump up and shake up yourself and have a good time. We don't have problems with stress. You go to church, and you get rid of it all."

- **What kind of music do you hear in church? Do you ever sing, clap or stomp along to the music?**

Music is central to many Bahamian celebrations that take place outside of church as well. Mrs. Bazard recalls a tradition that has recently been revived by the National Children's Choir:

"Many years ago there were special celebrations [of European origin] on the first of May, particularly in our Family Islands. They would have a big fair and in the middle of the fairgrounds you had a big pole that you had dances around. They would plait the Maypole and unplait the Maypole. Many times there was a big competition to see which settlement and which group could plait it the best."

- **Have you ever seen a Maypole dance? Who might be able to tell you more about this tradition?**

- **What kinds of dances do you know? Who might teach you more?**

Maypole plaiting is only one kind of activity that involves children. Some of the most inventive songs are written by children themselves, such as ring play songs. These songs are sometimes called "ditties", and they often accompany ring play games.

Here is a ring play song discovered during research into Bahamian musical traditions.

Blue Hill Water Dry [2]

Blue Hill water dry
No where to wash my clothes

I remember the Saturday night
Boil fish and johnny cake

Centipe knock tuh muh door last night
Take him for Johnny, slam him BAM!

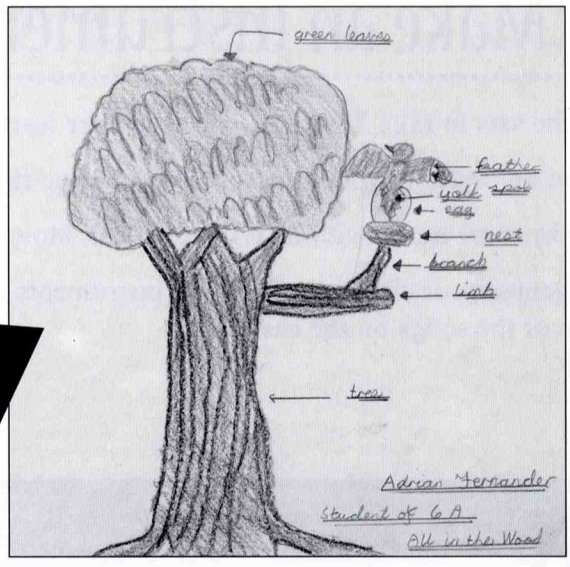
- **Do you know this song? What songs do you sing when you play? Keep your ears open for songs you may hear at home, on the playground or at church.**

Listen carefully to the cassette of music. As you listen, remember what you have learned about the differences between secular and sacred music.

Listening Questions

1. Listen to the Sons of Andros sing "Christian Automobile" (side A, #6). What is this song about? Do you think this is a sacred or a secular song?
2. Compare "Christian Automobile" (side A, #6) with "Let the Church Roll On" (side A, #3). What are some of the differences between these two songs?
3. Which songs are your favourites on the cassette? Which have you heard before?
4. Compare "Dry Bones" (side A, #1) with "Big Belly Man Polka" (side B, #5). How do these songs make you feel? What kind of movement would you make to accompany these songs?

[2] Blue Hill is an adaptation of the word "baillou", which is the name of a main street in Nassau.



Drawing by Adrian Fernander, Claridge Primary School




Activities




1. Planning a Programme

Organize a programme in your class. Pick one person to be the chairperson.

- Make sure you include a wide variety of talent. Possibilities include: dramatic monologues, poetry readings, songs, dances, short skits.
- Which songs will you include from the cassette?
- If the programme is a success, you might consider performing it for the whole school or even for your local community.

2. Song Collection

Collect a song from someone you know.

- Write down the words and record the song on a tape recorder if possible.
- Find out where the person learned the song and what historical background they know about the song.
- Can you find someone who can sing one of the songs on the cassette? How is the version you collect different from what you hear on the cassette?

3. Make an Instrument

Like the saw in rake 'n scrape, you can make instruments from some of the most unlikely things.

- Find an object in your classroom or at home that you think will make an interesting sound.
- Make some music with it. Will you hit it, blow into it, pluck it or shake it?
- Organize your class's newly found instruments into a band. Play your instruments to accompany one of the songs on the cassette.










Activities




4. Drawing a Song

Listen to "All in the Woods" (side B, #4).

- Draw a picture to represent the story told in this song.

5. Documentation Activity: Record a Ring Play

Listen to the ring play song "Went to the Bight" (side B, #3) on the cassette.

- Watch your friends and classmates on the playground or in your neighbourhood.
- Write down or, if possible, record some of the songs you hear sung as part of a ring play.
- Ask your parents, grandparents or other older persons about the ring plays they did as children. Record one of these if possible.
- How do the songs you and your friends sing differ from those of your parents and grandparents?

6. Learn to Dance

Select one of the Goombay songs on the cassette (side B, #1, 5, 8, 11).

- Find someone in your school who can teach you some traditional dance steps.
- When you have practised enough, consider performing the dance for your school.

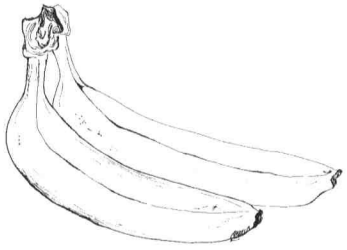






Foodways

This section encourages students to think about the origins of foods eaten in The Bahamas. Students will read recollections from different cooks about what it was like to grow up in the Family Islands. Students will compare what they read to what they have heard from their parents and/or older friends and relatives. Students should think about how the readings differ from their own experiences. This section also mentions bush medicine and its use of indigenous plants. Students will study what foods grow locally in The Bahamas. Recipes are included in the activities, but you can substitute a recipe of your own choosing.



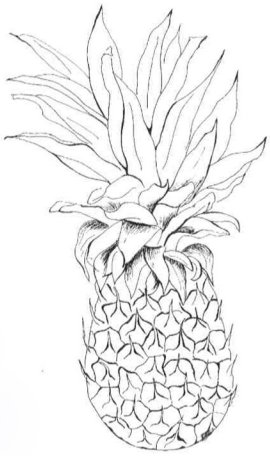
Bananas benefit from The Bahamas' subtropical growing season.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this section students should be able to:

- **make a booklet of Bahamian recipes.**
- **list fruits and vegetables that grow locally in The Bahamas and list some of the ways in which they can be prepared.**
- **discuss how and why recipes differ in different families.**
- **describe bush medicine and identify some bushes used in making bush tea.**

Reading



The foods that are eaten in The Bahamas come from the many backgrounds of the people who make up Bahamian history.

Settlers from the southern United States brought the tradition of eating grits.

- **Does your family eat grits? How is it prepared? With boiled grouper for breakfast? With crab or pigeon peas? List the different ways grits is prepared. What do you eat instead of grits?**

West Africans, most of whom came to The Bahamas as slaves and freed Africans between the 1600s and the 1800s, also influenced Bahamian foods from peas and rice to fritters and stew fish. Stew fish and stew chicken are made with a reduced or "short water" sauce of tomatoes, thyme, onions, sweet peppers and, sometimes, okra. These dishes are similar to dishes cooked and eaten in West African nations.

- **Does your family make stew fish, stew chicken or stew conch? Have you helped to prepare these dishes?**

Some Bahamian desserts, like banana bread and steamed duff with brandy sauce, show a British influence in the way in which they are cooked. But the ingredients used are native to subtropical regions such as The Bahamas.

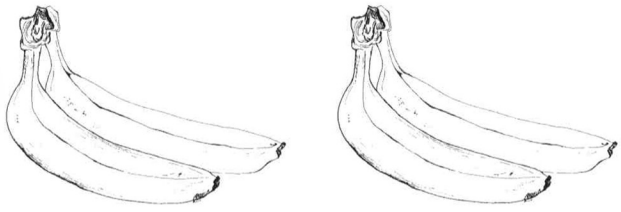
- **Do fruits and vegetables grow near your house?**

- **Do some fruits and vegetables only grow on certain islands?**

Although tourism has led to an increase in fast food restaurants, many cooks continue to prepare traditional Bahamian dishes like stew conch, johnny cake, souse, conch fritters and fricassee.

- **Which of these dishes have you tasted? Which are your favourites? Which are prepared in your family?**

- **Can you name some takeaways where Bahamian foods are prepared and sold?**



Profiles II

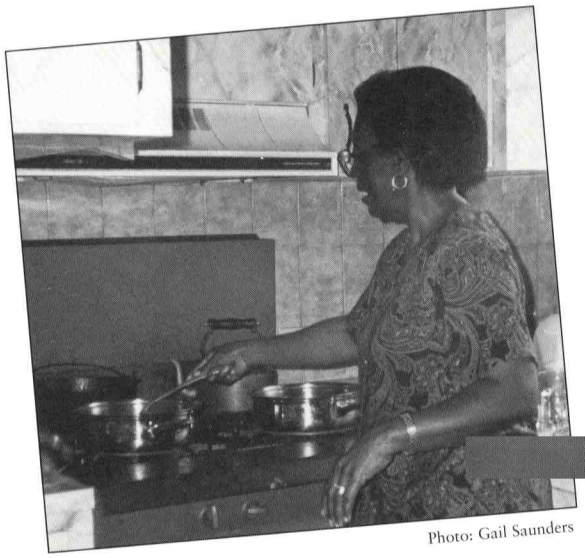


Photo: Gail Saunders

AGNES FERGUSON lives in Nassau, but she was born in Mangrove Cay, Andros, in 1935. Mrs. Ferguson grew up in her grandmother's house.

"I lived with my grandmother part of my childhood days, because my mother had to leave Andros to go to Nassau to look for a job. Things were very bad in all of the Out Islands. There was no work around. So most of the children lives with their grandparents while their parents went off to New Providence to work."

- **Why was there more work in Nassau than on Andros?**
- **Mrs. Ferguson speaks of the Out Islands. Have you heard this term before? What does it mean?**
- **Would Mrs. Ferguson's life have been different if she had moved to New Providence with her mother instead of staying with her grandparents? How?**

Mrs. Ferguson describes her chores.

"We had to go to look for wood to make our bread in an oven, which is a dutch oven. Then you have to boil your peas to cook your food. In those days, we had peas soup and dumpling, we had crab and grits, we had conch and grits, and we had coconut jimmy."

- **Have you heard of, or eaten, some of the foods Mrs. Ferguson talks about?**
- **Have you seen a dutch oven? Whom might you ask to find out what it is?**

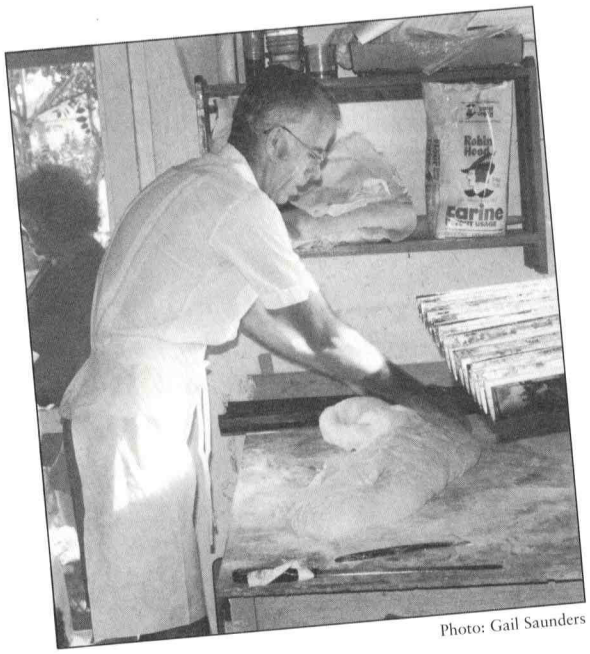
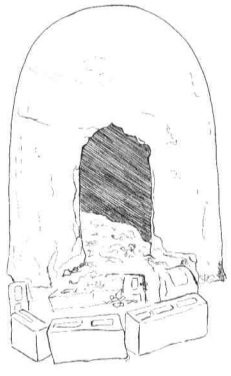


Photo: Gail Saunders

VERNON MALONE was born in Hope Town, Abaco, in 1937. He owns and operates the Upper Crust Bakery in Hope Town. Mr. Malone says he has been baking for as long as he can remember. Growing up in a house with six boys, there were plenty of tasks to be completed around the home. All the family baking was done in a rock oven. One of his chores was to fire up this oven.

- **Have you ever seen a rock oven?**


drum oven


rock oven

- **What chores do you do at home?**

Mr. Malone has fond memories of the food he ate when he was growing up.

"Saturdays was always a fish stew for lunch. Saturday night was fried fish and sweet coconut bread. In those days, you had dinner in the middle of the day and supper at night."

- **When do you eat your main meal of the day? What name do you use—dinner or supper?**

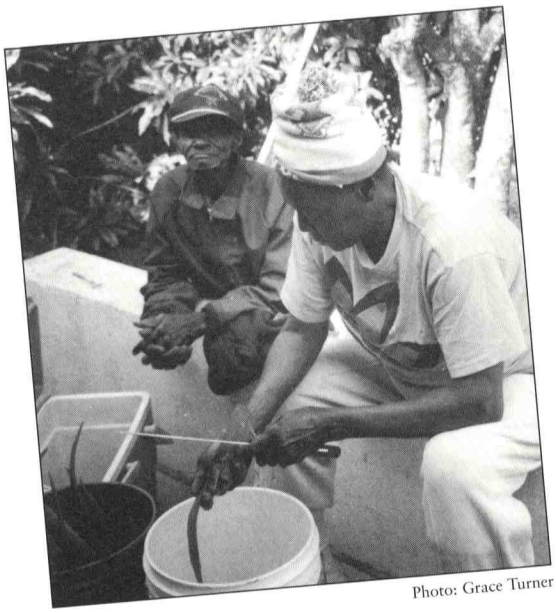


Photo: Grace Turner

DAISY NOTTAGE practises bush medicine in Behring Point, Andros. Bush medicine is a practice that uses local plants to cure illnesses. Ms. Nottage described how she learned her skills.

"I learn this when I was eight years old. A midwife used to take me with her to get the bush."

- **Do you know anyone who practises bush medicine?**

Ms. Nottage explains that different plants have different uses. Cancer Bush and Life Leaf are two of the bushes she uses regularly. Ms. Nottage is renowned for her special tonic, which she calls her "21 Gun Salute". She explains what she does after she cooks up a batch:

"Then I be the first one to drink it. I can tell you what is lacking because I know the taste of it."

- **How does Ms. Nottage check to see if her tonic is correct? Have you ever tried any bush medicine? Would you taste Ms. Nottage's "21 Gun Salute"?**




Activities




1. Recipe Research

Recipes can often teach you more than how to cook. Recipes provide clues to better understand a culture. The following recipes are for traditional Bahamian dishes. Have you tasted either of these? Does anyone in your family cook something like this?

Peas 'n Rice with Coconut Milk and Crabs

1 onion, chopped
1 stick celery, chopped
½ green pepper, chopped
2 ripe tomatoes, chopped
3 tablespoons oil
2 cups rice
2 tablespoons tomato paste
2 cups coconut milk (made from 1 coconut)
4 crabs
1 cup pigeon peas
dash of thyme
2 hot peppers
1 teaspoon salt

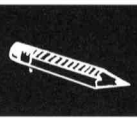
Boil peas in water until tender. Wash and clean crabs. Open crabs, remove fat and place in a small bowl. Put crab bodies in another bowl. Break open coconut, remove meat and grate. Mix grated coconut with 2 cups of warm water for 3 minutes. Squeeze coconut in a cotton cloth and save milk. Fry onions, celery and green pepper in heated oil for 3-4 minutes. Add tomatoes and let fry for an additional 3 minutes. Add tomato paste, crab fat and crab bodies. Fry for 3 minutes. Add salt, hot peppers and thyme. Add pigeon peas and water from the peas. Add coconut milk. Bring to a boil and add rice. Cover and simmer 30-40 minutes until water is absorbed. Serves 6-8.

by Queenie Butler
Nassau, New Providence










Activities




Coconut Cakes

4 cups coconut, grated
3 to 6 cups sugar
1 tablespoon grated ginger
1 whole orange peel, dried (or fresh)

Grate coconut into long shreds. Boil with the orange peel and grated ginger for about 20 to 30 minutes. After coconut is boiled, add sugar and boil until it leaves the sides of the skillet. Then place tablespoon-sized lumps on a greased cookie sheet and let dry until the lumps are hard.

by Mrs. Edna Turner
Nassau, New Providence

Look carefully at the ingredients in the recipes.

- Can you find all of the ingredients on your island of The Bahamas?
- Make a list of ingredients that you can gather or grow. Does your family gather or grow any of these?

If possible, try making the coconut cakes as a class, or try making another simple recipe like johnny cake.

2. Home Away From Home

Imagine that you have moved away from The Bahamas.

- Which dishes do you miss most from home?
- Can you make these dishes if you are not in The Bahamas? What ingredients might be particularly difficult to find?
- Write a short essay about the Bahamian food you miss most when you move away.










Activities




3. Recipe Research

As a class, divide into groups. Each group should pick a dish to research. This might be one of your favourite foods. Each member of the group should collect a recipe for the dish from a family member or someone else you know who is a good cook.

- Bring all the recipes into class and compare versions.
- How do the recipes differ?
- What do the differences tell you about the cook who makes the dish?

4. Interview Activity: What We Eat

Pick a person who is older than you. Interview the person about what he or she eats.

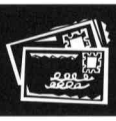
- Has the person's diet changed since his or her childhood?
- Does this person eat food that sounds similar to the food Vernon Malone recalls?
- How is this different from what you eat?
- Report your findings to your class.

5. Recipe Booklet

Make a recipe booklet. This can be done in groups or as a class.

- Include your favourite recipe, and write a short paragraph to explain your choice.
- Draw a picture of the dish so people will be tempted to try your recipe.




PRIMARY

Celebrations



St. Matthew's Church, New Providence

This section discusses the range of celebrations in The Bahamas. Students will compare smaller community celebrations to large-scale national holidays. Two Family Islanders share their recollections of Christmas traditions and a wedding in Family Island communities. Students will learn about the work and planning which go into a successful celebration.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this section students should be able to:

- **compare and contrast celebrations that take place in individual communities and those that take place throughout The Bahamas.**
- **role-play a celebration as a class.**
- **complete a drawing for a costume, either for Junkanoo or a programme.**
- **provide examples of a religious celebration and a secular holiday.**

Reading

Celebrations take place throughout the year in The Bahamas. Many celebrations coincide with national holidays like Independence Day or Boxing Day.



Christ Church Cathedral, Nassau, New Providence

Some communities have their own celebrations as well, like Fox Hill Day in New Providence, the Pineapple Festival in Eleuthera or conch cracking in Grand Bahama. Some celebrations take place in church, like Easter, while others occur on the street, like Junkanoo.

- **What church celebrations have you participated in? What celebrations have you joined that are not associated with church?**

Some celebrations coincide with special events like the Exuma Regatta. These kinds of celebrations — Easter, Junkanoo and the Regatta — happen every year around the same time. Junkanoo is a public celebration that many Bahamians trace to their African ancestry. Junkanoo has evolved from processions of small, costumed groups in local communities to a national parade on Bay Street in Nassau. Junkanoo has become so popular it is now celebrated in other islands besides New Providence. Groups compete for the best music, costumes and presentation.

All celebrations, from Junkanoo to the Pineapple Festival, involve much preparation and planning for the costumes, food and music.

- **Have you participated in any of the celebrations mentioned above? Did you help in the preparations? What did you do?**

Other celebrations do not follow such set patterns. These are personal celebrations, celebrations that mark important family events. They include christenings, baptisms, weddings, special street processions and funerals with "wake and settin' up" ceremonies. Although there are certain traditions that many families share, like singing a particular song at a wedding reception, each family has its own way of marking these more personal occasions.

Christmas traditions also vary in different families. At some Christmas parties, children are given individual bags filled with flour cake, homemade candy and balloons. In the next section Mrs. Lulamae Gray shares childhood memories of Christmas on Acklins.

- **Have you ever attended a family baptism, wedding or funeral? What took place at this celebration? What was your role?**

- **What celebration traditions do you know?**

Profiles

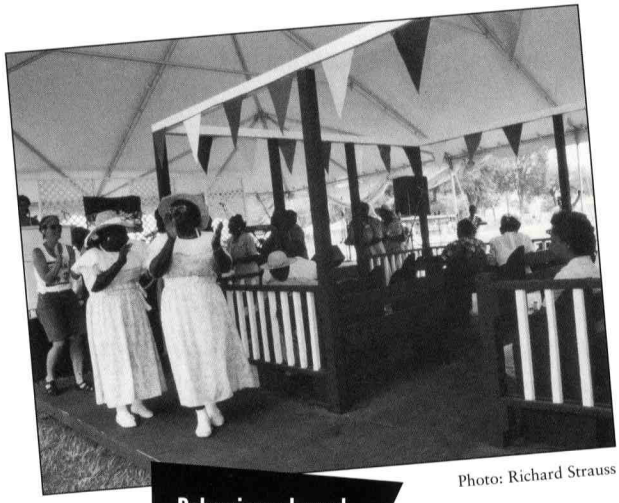


Photo: Richard Strauss

Bahamians showed Festival visitors how to "rush".

LULAMAE GRAY grew up on Acklins. She recalls what happened at Christmas.

"At Christmas time we normally have church functions. Because there were not that many folks living in the Family Islands, all the folks from the rest of the settlements would be transported to that particular settlement where the programme was being held. Every church on that particular island would render an item."

When Mrs. Gray speaks about rendering an "item", she means that each church presented a short performance like a song, a dramatic skit or a poem.

"Then they would give a collection. The persons in the audience would contribute depending on how they felt the item was rendered."

- **Audience members only offer money for items, or performances, of particular quality. You have to give a good performance if you want to help raise money. What would you perform for the Christmas programme?**

"After doing that, we go into a society hall. This is a building that is next to the church that is used for activities other than the divine worship. They would get into this society hall, and they would use the drums and saws and guitars, and they would play a lot of the religious songs. You would get into groups, and we just move around, and they refer to it as "rushin'". That was one of the activities during Christmas time."

- **Have you ever seen people "rush"? "Rushin'" originated in the celebrations that took place during Christmas time and New Year's. The word "rushin'" refers to the practice of rushing out the old year and bringing in the new.**

- **Have you been in a society hall? Were you there for a celebration or a programme?**

- **What do you do for Christmas?**

Mrs. Gray recalls receiving gifts from family overseas:

"We had presents that the families would send, those who lived in New Providence, they would send gifts home to the Family Islands. I had an uncle that lived in the United States, in Minnesota, and every Christmas he normally sent my grandmother a huge box with fruitcakes and candies and all sorts of Christmas goods, so we would share those along with the native goods that we made there, like the benne cakes and coconut cakes. We would all divide them among the neighbours, and everybody had a nice time."

- **Do you have any relatives who live in the United States or another part of the world? What do they send home?**



Mr. and Mrs. Emerson Roberto honeymoon in Fresh Creek, Andros.

Photo: Grace Turner

AGNES FERGUSON lives in Nassau, but she grew up on Andros. Here Mrs. Ferguson recalls a wedding:

"When I was a child, one of my cousins was getting married. It was at a church, a Baptist church. Everybody got dressed up. First they make all these cakes, they call it pound cake, but bake it in a dutch oven. And some nice coconut tart. The family would make a nice big wedding cake, decorate it with coconut."

• Have you ever been to a wedding? Did you eat any of the food Mrs. Ferguson describes?

"We had a large hall. We didn't have no big wedding reception. So they would decorate the large hall and put out all these tables. The family would kill a nice, big hog. They would have the hog meat for the lunch, and also the goat and some nice fried fish. After church everybody would have a nice big luncheon, a big celebration."

• Which would you eat: the hog, the goat or the fish?

• Do you think weddings have changed from what Mrs. Ferguson describes? How?

"Everybody enjoyed themselves. We had gin and coconut water, although I was too young to drink gin. The children would have coconut water, and we would have some milked iced tea. What we called iced tea would be bush tea, 'cause we didn't have no tea like cocoa and Lipton in those days."

• Have you ever tried bush tea? What about coconut water?




Activities




1. Wedding Dramatization

Pretend you are planning a wedding for an older sister or brother.

- Role-play the wedding.
- What food do you plan to serve?
- How is this wedding different from what Mrs. Ferguson describes?

2. Analyze a Holiday

What is your favourite holiday? What makes it so?

- Are there special foods?
- Do you see relatives you have not seen in a long time?
- Write a list of what makes this holiday so important to you.

3. Design a Costume

Pretend that you are at Mrs. Gray's Christmas programme or that you are planning for this year's Junkanoo parade. At the programme your item earned the largest collection. Your costume was part of what made you so successful.

- Draw a picture of what you wore at the programme or what you plan to wear for this year's Junkanoo festivities.










Activities




4. Send a Bahamian Package

Mrs. Gray remembers receiving packages from the United States. But her uncle may have been homesick for particular items from The Bahamas.

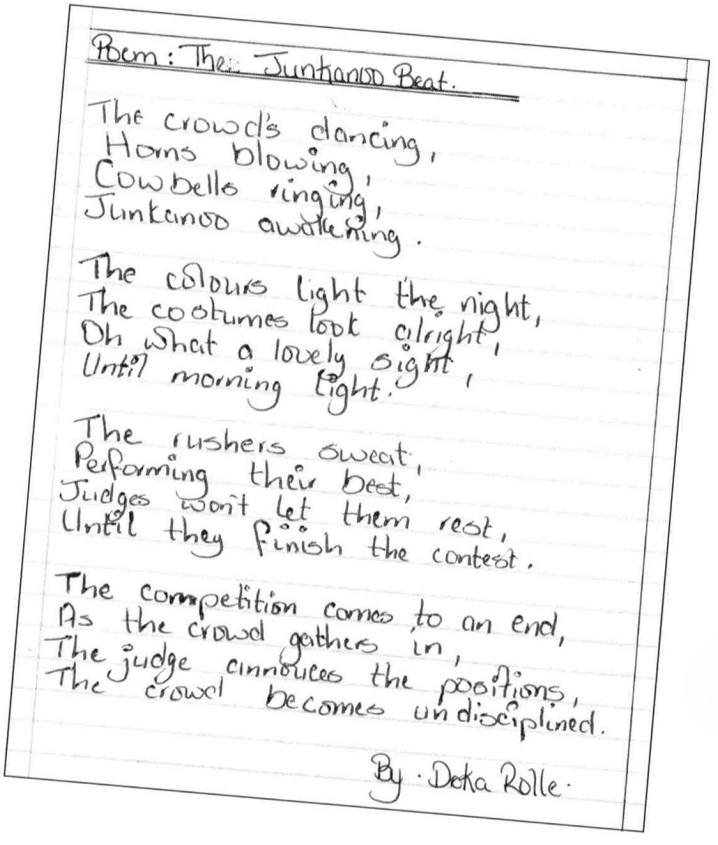
- Pretend that you are sending a package to her uncle. What would you include in the package?

5. Describe Junkanoo

Write a letter to a pen pal in the United States, inviting her to come to Junkanoo.

- How would you describe Junkanoo to someone who has never seen it before?

Poem by Deka Rolle, L.W. Young School



Poem: The Junkanoo Beat.

The crowd's dancing,
Horns blowing,
Cowbells ringing,
Junkanoo awakening.

The colours light the night,
The costumes look alright,
Oh what a lovely sight,
Until morning light.

The rushers sweat,
Performing their best,
Judges won't let them rest,
Until they finish the contest.

The competition comes to an end,
As the crowd gathers in,
The judge announces the positions,
The crowd becomes undisciplined.

By: Deka Rolle.







Introduction

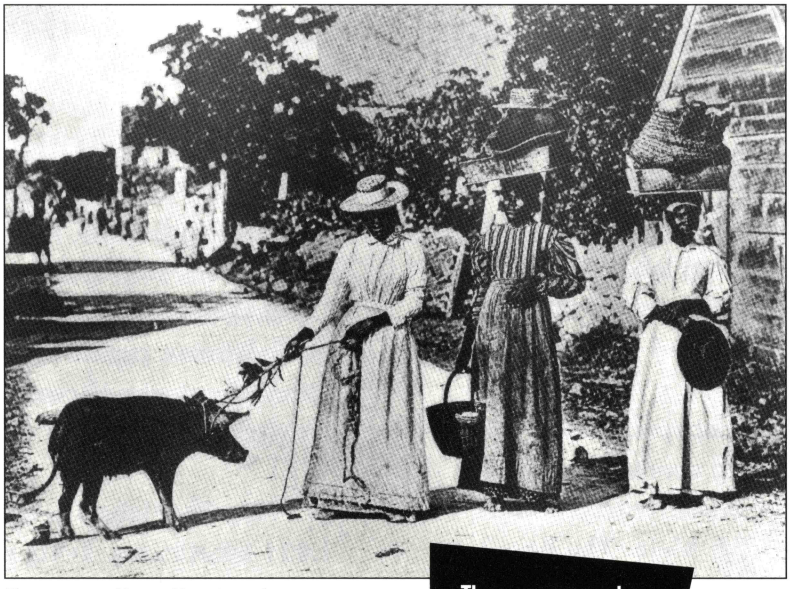


Photo courtesy *Nassau Magazine* and Department of Archives, The Bahamas

Three women go to market in the early 20th century.

As the introduction to *Our Bahamian Heritage* explains, the Secondary Level component begins with a short article by Dr. Gail Saunders. "The Peoples and Cultures of The Bahamas" introduces the secondary-level student to the diverse cultural heritage of The Bahamas. This article should remind secondary-level students to seek historical connections throughout their research and documentation of contemporary cultural traditions in The Bahamas.

Reading

Excerpts from

The Peoples and Cultures of The Bahamas

by Gail Saunders

It is believed that the first inhabitants of the Bahama Islands were the Lucayans, Arawak-speaking Amerindians, whom Columbus met on his epic voyage and landfall in 1492.

The Early Peopling of the Islands

By 1509 or so, the Lucayans had been killed off by diseases and enforced labour both in the gold mines of Cuba and Hispaniola and in the pearl fisheries of Cubagua and Margarita.

The Bahamas remained depopulated for the next hundred years. Spain claimed the islands but neglected them for much more profitable enterprises on the Spanish Main. The British formally annexed The Bahamas in 1629, but did not make a permanent settlement at that time.

In 1648, a group of about seventy "Independents" arrived at Eleuthera from Bermuda and England, seeking religious freedom. Life was extremely harsh, but they lived from the resources of the land and sea. Many of the early Puritan "Adventurers" (as they were called) left, but some pioneers, including the Adderley, Albury, Bethell, Davis, Sands and Saunders families, stayed in The Bahamas.

By the end of the 17th century, there were settlers on Current Island, Cupid's Cay (Governor's Harbour), Harbour Island and St. George's Cay (Spanish Wells). Sometime around 1666, Sayles Island, or New Providence, was settled and soon had several hundred inhabitants. New Providence's sheltered harbour attracted many people. Charlestown, later renamed Nassau, became the Bahamian capital and its main street, Bay Street, the center of commercial and political activity.

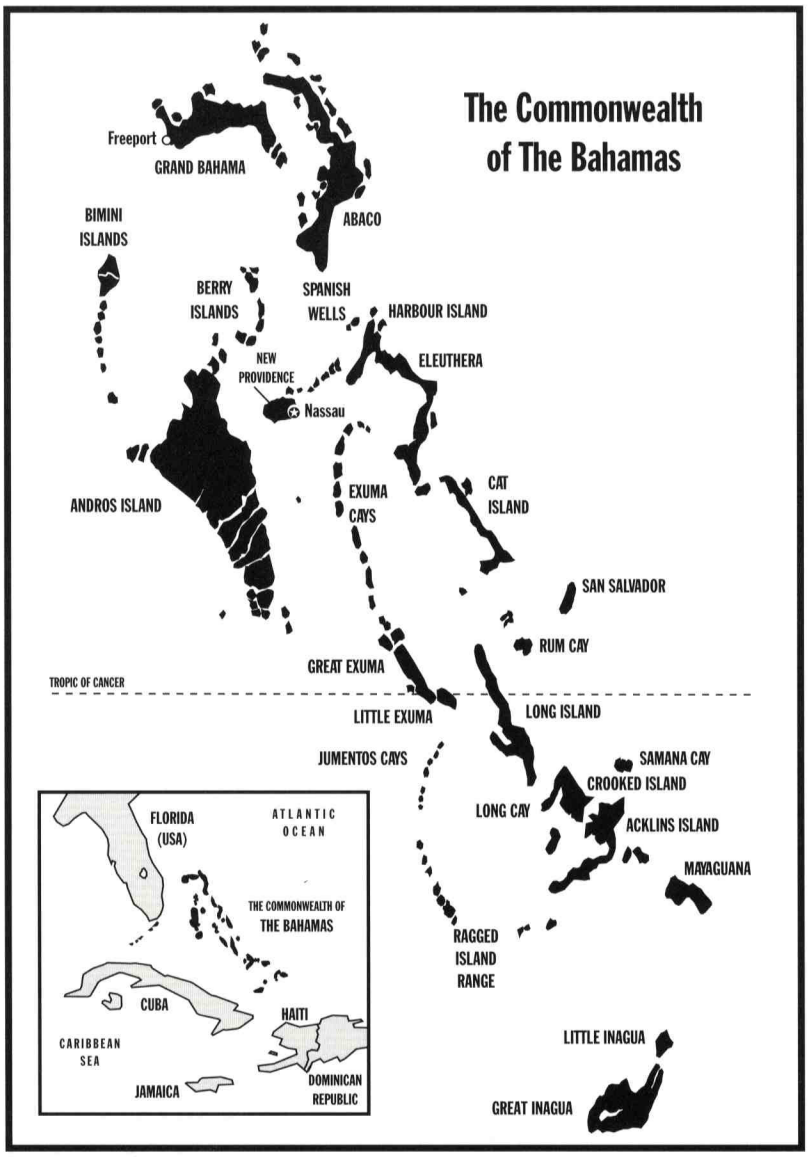
In 1721, The Bahamas had approximately 1,031 inhabitants, living mainly on New Providence (480 Whites and 233 Blacks), Harbour Island (124 Whites and 5 Blacks) and Eleuthera (150 Whites and 34 Blacks). Not much is known about the substantial number of Blacks on New Providence. Most were slaves, but some were free.[5]

The Loyalists and Their Slaves

By 1773 the population of The Bahamas had grown to 4,000, with an almost equal ratio of Whites and Blacks living mainly on New Providence. In the space of two years, between

[5]Gail Saunders, *Bahamian Loyalists and Their Slaves* (London: Macmillan Caribbean, 1983); *Slavery in The Bahamas* (Nassau: Nassau Guardian, 1985); "Life in New Providence in the Early Eighteenth Century", *Journal of The Bahamas Historical Society,* October 1990.

1783 and 1785, the population of The Bahamas doubled with arrivals from the recently independent United States of America. Known as Loyalists, because they wished to remain British subjects, the majority of these colonists came from the American South. They settled in New Providence and the Out Islands, many of which had had no permanent settlement before. The Blacks they brought with them, mostly creole slaves (born in the Americas), tipped the population balance, putting Blacks in the majority, where they have remained and now comprise eighty-five percent of the Bahamian population. The creole society which evolved during the Loyalist era reflected strong influences from Europe, America and Africa.



Liberated Africans

After the abolition of the British slave trade in 1807, many African slaves were liberated by British naval patrols. Between 1808 and 1860, about 6,000 were settled in The Bahamas, mainly at New Providence. Although many lived in the town of Nassau, in the 1830s there were at least eight free Black villages or settlements elsewhere. For at least a hundred years after Emancipation, these villages retained strong African characteristics and an identity of their own.

African Bahamians learned to fend for themselves after Emancipation. Despite a depressed economy, they survived with thrifty habits and through the custom of the asue. A system of financing with roots in West Africa (Eneas 1976:17), the asue is still popular in The Bahamas today. Ex-slaves and Liberated Africans also formed Friendly Societies to provide "by mutual assistance, for periods of sickness, old age and burial expenses" (Johnson 1991:183). Until the latter part of the 19th century, these Friendly Societies operated as pressure groups on the White power structure as well. In the 20th century, other affiliated societies mobilized the Black community on political issues. Both the Friendly Societies and affiliated lodges are still important for many Bahamians today.

Liberated Africans also gave added vigour to other cultural forms and practices with African roots including bush medicine, Obeah, marketing, Bahamian Creole, John Canoe (Junkanoo) music, and dances such as Jumping Dance, Ring Play and Fire Dance.

Later Migrations

During the late 19th and early 20th centuries, demands for labour encouraged the immigration of significant groups of "trading minorities" (Johnson 1991:125-48) including Chinese, Greek, Lebanese and skilled labourers from the West Indies. The first Greeks who arrived in the late 19th century engaged in the sponge trade, and by 1925 the Greek community "was firmly established in the Bahamas" (Johnson 1991:130). The Lebanese, who also arrived in the late 19th century, were peddlers and later successful shopkeepers. A small number of Jews also began retail businesses. Chinese immigrants established restaurants, although many worked in other capacities. The descendants of the original immigrants have branched out into professional areas such as law, medicine and architecture.

In the 1920s, the "immigrant groups occupied an intermediate position in Bahamian society" (Johnson 1991:136). At least until the 1950s they were seen as a threat to the local mercantile elite and remained on the margins of society. Although there are distinct Greek, Lebanese and Chinese communities in The Bahamas today, some members of these groups have intermarried with Bahamians.

West Indian labourers migrated to The Bahamas, many via Cuba, during the prosperous Prohibition years. Better educated than local Creoles, these immigrants and their descendants played a large role in sensitizing Bahamians to political movements in the Caribbean.

Haitians make up the largest minority in The Bahamas. They began migrating in the 1950s because of sociopolitical unrest and economic hardships in Haiti; as conditions in Haiti have deteriorated in recent times, the number of Haitians in The Bahamas, many of them entering illegally, has increased. Most Haitian men work in gardening and farming, and many Haitian women work as housekeepers and cooks. Following the African custom, quite a few have set up small retail businesses. Numerous Haitian Bahamians also are employed in the Royal Bahamas Police Force and the Defence Force; others are lawyers and teachers.

There is friction between the Creole Bahamian and Haitian populations, arising from Bahamians' resentment of the competition by Haitian women in retail trade and the demands that Haitians put on health services and the educational system.

Many children born of Haitian parents have become Bahamianised to a large extent. More research is needed, but, although they usually live in all-Haitian communities, some Haitians seem to desire to distance themselves from their Haitian roots and culture. Some have converted from Roman Catholicism to Baptist and other nonconformist denominations.

Conclusion

The society of The Bahamas has been mostly influenced by Africa and Britain and more recently by America and the Caribbean. As Winston Saunders wrote in 1989:

Culture in The Bahamas today is an amalgam of our British heritage, our African heritage and the effects of our closeness to North America. Our language is English, our Parliament follows the judicial procedure set down in England.... Our courts follow the

English system.... Marry the above with the practice of obeah, the girating movements of the ring-play, the pulsating rhythm of Junkanoo and the goat-skin drum, the hand-clapping jumpers, the use of bush medicine, the songs and the drinking of a wake and the consequent outpouring of public grief at the death of a loved one, our African-inspired neighbourhood banking system called asue, and you almost have a Bahamian. The final touches comes in the form of the American Jerri curl, the American Afro, American television, American and Japanese technology, the American system of higher education and its graduate degrees, hamburgers and hot dogs, Coca Cola, the Chevrolet ... the satellite dish. Frivolous though some of these things may seem, they fuse to form a representative catalogue of our cultural heritage and the patterns that dictate our reaction to any given situation (W. Saunders 1989: 243).

Indeed, despite the powerful influence of North America, The Bahamas continues to forge a cultural identity of its own.

Questions

1. What forms of trade were used to support the Bahamian economy in the early 18th century?
2. Why did the population of The Bahamas increase dramatically between 1783 and 1785?
3. What are some of the physical signs of the influence of the migration of Loyalists to The Bahamas? What evidence can you see of the influence of Africans in Bahamian society today?
4. What led to the increase in immigration to The Bahamas in the late 19th century? Where did these new immigrants come from?

Activities

1. Island Research

Dr. Saunders's article examines the patterns of migration to The Bahamas. Now it is your turn.

- Conduct a survey of your island or your community to determine the origin of the residents. How do the different origins affect your community or island today?

2. Asue Research

Dr. Saunders refers to the asue custom in her article.

- Where did the concept of asue come from? Where in The Bahamas can you find it practised today? Where can you learn more about asue? Write a short essay explaining the asue system as it exists today in The Bahamas.

3. What Is an "Amalgam"?

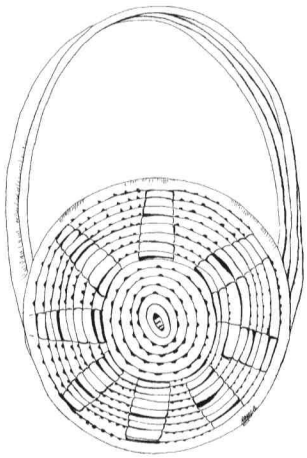
In her article Dr. Saunders quotes Mr. Saunders, who writes, "Culture in The Bahamas today is an amalgam".

- What is an "amalgam"? If you are not sure, use a dictionary for a proper definition.
- Pick an example of a Bahamian practice that illustrates Mr. Saunders's statement. Write a short essay explaining your choice.
- Can you think of an aspect of Bahamian culture that is not an amalgam?

SECONDARY

Crafts & Folk Art

This section introduces the secondary-level student to crafts in The Bahamas. The reading passage focuses on Bahamian straw work from its origins to its resurgence today. The profiles introduce students to a number of different boatbuilders, some of whom are more optimistic than others about the preservation of their craft. Students will compare the different ways in which the boatbuilders learned their craft. Students also meet a quilter, Maria Chisnell. Mrs. Chisnell has been sewing since she was a young girl, but she did not learn quilting until her late twenties. Mrs. Chisnell serves to remind students and teachers that it is never too late to learn a new craft.



This basket, called a Kissimouku, is from Current Island.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this section students should be able to:

- **identify the different occupational roles in straw work and boatbuilding.**
- **identify the local materials used in straw work in The Bahamas.**
- **discuss the difficulties and the benefits of sustaining traditional crafts in a tourist market.**
- **explain craft apprenticeships and know how to obtain one.**
- **discuss the differences between imported crafts and those indigenous to The Bahamas.**

Excerpts from

Straw Work: A Case Study of Continuity & Change

by Kim Outten and Grace Turner

The changes that have occurred in the Bahamian straw industry have affected the products created—traditional styles are now used for modern items, for example—and the ways in which the products are sold.

Historical Background

Ever since the arrival of enslaved Africans, straw articles have been made in The Bahamas. Evidence of the sources and practice of Bahamian straw work comes from plantation statistics, historical documents, archaeological research and the survival of traditional weaving styles to the present.

Many of the African slaves in The Bahamas came from the Carolinas with their Loyalist masters during the period 1783-89. Leland Ferguson documents that crafts of the slave population of the Carolinas included basketry and coiled fanners (fanners are round, shallow baskets still used to "riddle" or clean and separate whole or ground grains). These kinds of straw work persist not only in The Bahamas but in South Carolina and the Gullah Islands, notably St. Helena Island, as well.

Other straw styles also have African roots. One contemporary coiled weaving style has been traced to the arrival of the Black Seminoles, who settled in Red Bays, Andros, between 1817 and 1821. The "knot work" found on Current Island, Eleuthera and in southern Long Island was brought by other African settlers.

Marketing of straw work began early. The wife of George Phenny, governor of The Bahamas from 1721 to 1728, was involved in the wholesale export of locally made straw goods from Nassau to Bermuda. An 1860s issue of Frank Leslie's *London Illustrated News* shows a scene of the portico of the Royal Victoria Hotel in Nassau, where local vendors sold straw work to guests.

Working the Raw Materials into Straw Goods

Throughout The Bahamas the raw materials used in all types of straw crafts are palm leaves and sisal. The palms include the silver top, the pond top or sabal palmetto and the coconut palm, which is popular in southern Andros. Because it is not very durable, straw from the pond top is used for soft hats, linings and larger, hamper-type domestic baskets rather than by the commercial straw industry. Silk sisal grows wild in The Bahamas. A commercial variety used today was introduced from the Yucatan in 1845.

Plaiting has been the foundation of the straw industry in The Bahamas. Plaiting is done throughout The Bahamas and on particular islands—including Long Island, Cat Island, Eleuthera, Exuma and Ragged Island—it remains a major source of income for many women and some men. The plaiter weaves the straw using from three to fifteen strings. The plait is sold in balls, in lengths of twelve to fifteen fathoms. A fathom, still used as a measurement because of its practicality, is simply the distance between outstretched arms.

A division of labour between the plaiter and the basket maker has endured since the days of slavery. A plaiter may only plait, but a basket maker, in addition to plaiting, uses any of the basic techniques—stitching the plait, knot work or coiling—to produce finished products. Today, utilitarian straw items are used throughout The Bahamas. They include field baskets, horse baskets, knapsacks, goat rope, kitchen floor mats and fanners for riddling (winnowing) grits and cleaning pigeon peas. The straw is tightly woven, and the articles are hand-stitched using the silver top as thread for durability.

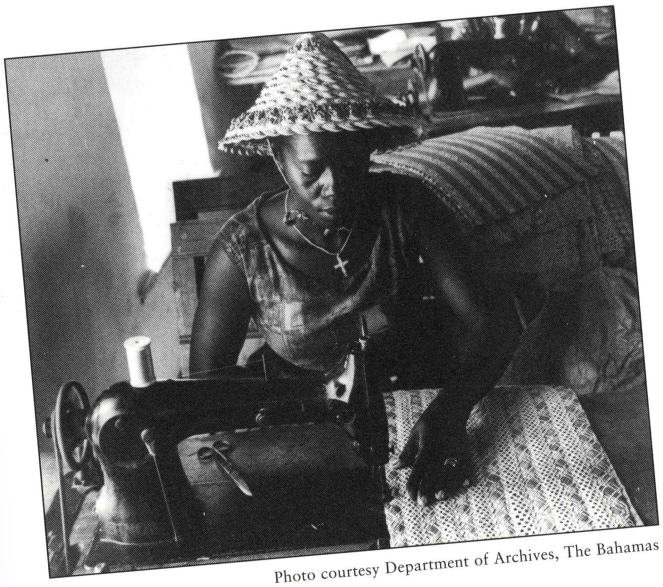


Photo courtesy Department of Archives, The Bahamas

A worker in Ivy Simms' straw factory in Long Island sews together strips of plait, circa 1950-60.

A range of styles and techniques have developed on various islands. Straw workers of Andros use the fanner weaving technique almost exclusively. The north and central parts of Andros have generated different methods of working with the straw. In the north the straw is peeled (separated), and only the soft, outer layer is used to wrap the coils. The straw is sewn tightly with a heavy-duty, stainless-steel needle. In central Andros, however, the straw is not peeled, and any narrow metal object (such as an ice pick) can serve as a needle.

Long Island is known for the Ivy Simms style of straw work, named for the seamstress who patterned it in the 1940s. Miss Simms, who was born in 1913, began using decorative plait to make handbags in creative new patterns which she designed and hired local women to sew. Traditionally, decorative plait was used only on hats. Miss Simms pioneered the technique of using the plain straw plait as a base onto which the delicate, open-weave, decorative plaits were stitched. This technique was, and continues to be, used for hats, bags and tourist items like placemats.

Another outstanding straw design is a knotted, open-weave pattern used for shoulder bags, covered picnic baskets and hats. The community best known for this weaving technique is Current Island off north Eleuthera. The workers suffered a setback in 1993 when Hurricane Andrew destroyed the palm trees which produce the straw.

The Challenges to Straw Crafts Today

The growth in the Bahamian tourism industry over the past forty years has posed challenges to the straw-work industry.

Over five hundred vendors rent stalls in the Nassau straw market. Many others operate in Freeport. In recent years, a substantial number

of people left the Family Islands to become straw vendors in Nassau and Freeport. With tourists to serve and an increase in vendors, the supply of straw plait from the Family Islands became insufficient. Although they knew how to plait as well as stitch and decorate bags with raffia and shells, the straw workers had turned their attention to selling straw items instead. To fill the gap between supply and demand, vendors began to import more and more straw goods from Asia and Jamaica. Vendors would join an asue (an African borrowing system) and buy thousands of dollars' worth of merchandise from Florida wholesalers. Some vendors decorate foreign goods with raffia to "Bahamianise" them. In their search for the tourist dollar, vendors have had to rely on their marketing skills, rather than their production techniques.

Conclusion

The most encouraging result of the popularity of Bahamian straw work among foreign visitors is a greater appreciation for this long-standing tradition among Bahamians themselves. Bahamian straw work had been cast aside as not being "refined" enough, as a reminder of harsh economic times, when there were no alternatives to articles made of straw. After seeing straw products in a fresh, new light, more and more Bahamians are coming to realize and accept the true value and artistic refinement of this craft.

Questions

1. What are some of the different ways straw work has arrived in The Bahamas?
2. What sources can be used to learn about the early forms of straw work in The Bahamas? What sources would you use to learn about straw work today?
3. What are some of the different styles and techniques of straw work? What styles have you seen?
4. What local materials are used in straw work?

Activities

1. Occupational Diagram

What are the different occupational roles involved with straw work?

- Draw a diagram that outlines the different steps involved in making and selling a basket.
- How many people might be involved? What is the largest number of people? What is the least?

2. Tourism and Straw

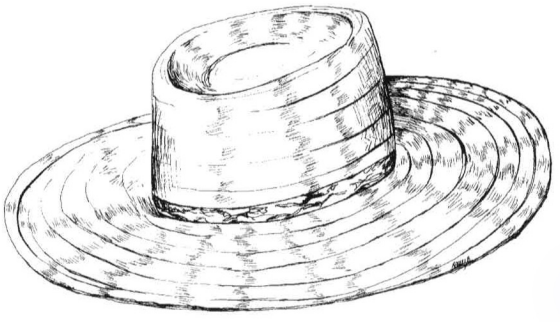
How has tourism affected the straw trade?

- Are some of the changes positive, while others are harmful to the tradition?

3. Straw Study

Bring in a basket from home.

- Examine the different styles of baskets from the members of the class.
- Can you distinguish between Bahamian straw work and imported straw work?



Profiles II

Living in an archipelago, Bahamians have relied on water travel for centuries. In fact, research revealed that many of the designs used by today's boatbuilders are similar to those used by their forefathers over two hundred years ago. As you read the accounts from the different boatbuilders, think about the similarities and differences in their stories.



Photo: Jeff Tinsley

BERTIS KNOWLES lives on Long Island. He comes from a family of boatbuilders.

"My father was a seaman and a boatbuilder. He designed a boat according to what kind of seas you go through. Before I left school, say at fourteen, I started work with him. He mostly sent me for timber. So I'll go to a tree and see if the outline of the piece I need can fit on the wood, and then I will cut it for him. I used to be more or less second to him, and I would be until he died, and then I stepped into his shoes."

- **What does Mr. Knowles mean when he says he "used to be ... second" to his father? Have you been in a similar situation?**

Like his father, Mr. Knowles is a renowned boatbuilder. Many of their boats have won first place in races and regattas throughout The Bahamas. Mr. Knowles has always aimed high. His goal is "to compete and build the best". Despite his success, Mr. Knowles says:

"[I]n the boatbuilding industry, we don't have much business, so we do other work. We farm, and I operate tractors. We hope that in the future we will get more business and maybe get a good shipyard so we can produce more and train our young people, because the trade is dying out."

- **What are some of the possible reasons for Mr. Knowles not having much business?**

EVERETTE HART, a local government official and a rich source for the history of boatbuilding in The Bahamas, offers an explanation for the changes in the boatbuilding industry.

"Boats are not being built for work purposes anymore. Everybody is building boats now for racing purposes. So when you look at the completed product, they're far different than what you would have seen twenty years ago."

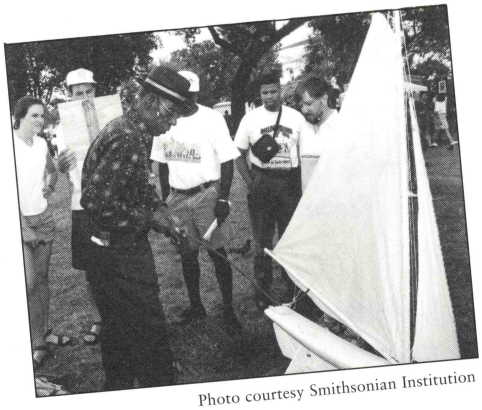


Photo courtesy Smithsonian Institution

In 1990, **KINGSTON BROWN** was elected to the Boatbuilders Hall of Fame in recognition of his lifetime achievement in boatbuilding. Mr. Brown has worked as a boatbuilder, a construction worker and a fisherman. He lives in Cargill Creek, Andros. He remembers that it was not easy learning his craft.

"I went from place to place and see people building boats. They pushed me aside and said, 'Little boy, get away from here.' I didn't know what I was looking for, but something was growing within me from a child to a man, and I get into boatbuilding."

- **Why do you think the older boatbuilders did not want Mr. Brown to hang around? Have you ever encountered this problem?**

Mr. Brown persevered despite the lack of older role models. Finally he received guidance through a dream.

"Before I build my first boat, my grandfather come to me in a dream on a white beach. He told me about this boat and marked this boat out for me and told me I must do exactly this and that's what I have done. So the teaching I had was really from above."

- **What does Mr. Brown mean when he describes his teaching coming "from above"?**

- **Have you ever learned anything from a dream?**



Photo courtesy Smithsonian Institution

JOSEPH ALBURY lives in Man O' War Cay, Abaco. Like Mr. Knowles, Mr. Albury comes from a boatbuilding family. Both his father and his grandfather were boatbuilders. Even his ancestors in America were boatbuilders, and that was over 200 years ago.

• How do your parents and grandparents earn a living? How does this differ from what you hope to do in your life? Are there any similarities?

When Mr. Albury was growing up, there were at least twelve boatbuilding sheds in Man O' War Cay alone. Mr. Albury recalls that the government of The Bahamas bought fishing boats that were made by his family. Boatbuilding was a feasible industry. Mr. Albury learned to build boats by watching other boatbuilders at work.

"You seen everything they were doing. You seen the work being done. You seen them getting the timber, you seen them chopping the wood. There was no power, no electricity, so all was done by hand."

Mr. Albury uses many native woods in his boatbuilding. He finds most of the wood locally on the island of Abaco.

"I go in the forest and cut the wood. Mostly roots. You get the roots underground to get the natural crook."

Mr. Albury views some of the changes in the boatbuilding industry as improvements:

"It's a lot different now building boats than it was years ago. We have a lot of power tools, and the material is much better."

Despite their success, neither Mr. Albury nor his brother Hartley has found anyone to take over their work. Mr. Albury explained why:

"Everybody knows you don't make any money boatbuilding. You just do it because you like to do it."

• What kinds of things do you do "just ... because you like to"?

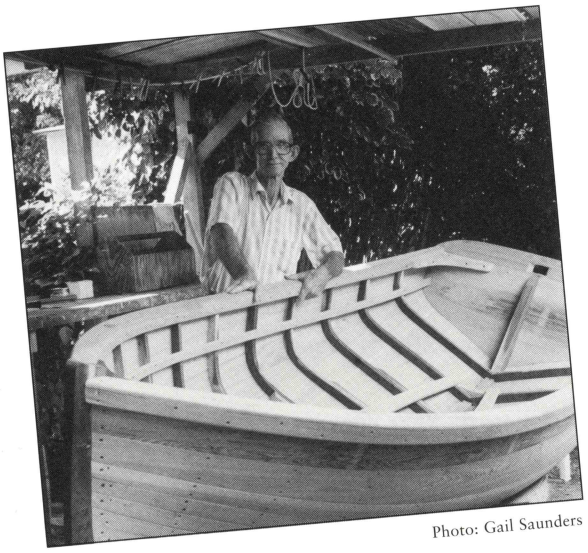


Photo: Gail Saunders

WINER MALONE also lives on Abaco. He was born in Hope Town in 1929. He has built boats for over forty years, always by hand alone. He has never used any power tools.

"I learned most of it myself. I never worked with anyone else. Never had the opportunity to watch anyone else do very much of it, so I learned it the hard way. I saw my uncle do some, but not very much. My first boat I built when I was about eighteen. There was no way of reading up on anything, not to learn how to do."

Mr. Malone is not optimistic about the future of boatbuilding and the survival of the tradition. Frankly, he says, "[T]here's no interest in the tradition." Mr. Malone mentioned Mr. Joe Albury, whom he describes as the only other boatbuilder on Abaco today.

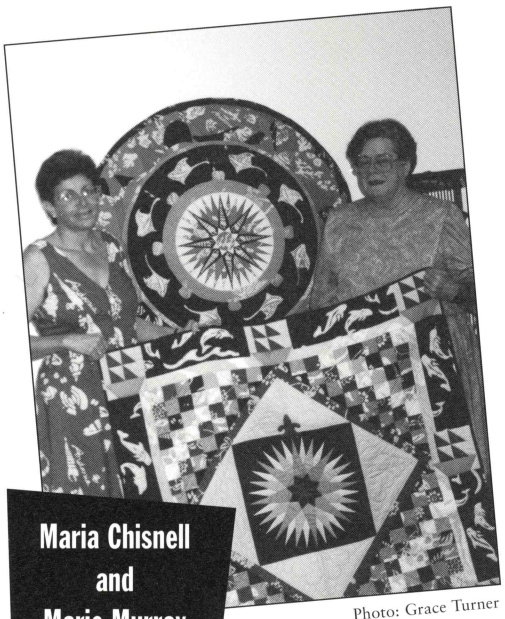
"When he stops building and when I quit building, I guess that'll be the end of it."

- **Did each boatbuilder learn to build boats in the same manner? How did Mr. Malone learn? Have you ever learned something in this way?**

- **Mr. Malone says he did not have an opportunity to read about "how to do" boatbuilding. Instead, he learned on his own, by trial and error. Do you think it would be easy to write down something that both Mr. Knowles and Mr. Albury learned by watching?**

- **How has the boatbuilding industry changed from what Mr. Albury described as a young man? What are some of the reasons for this change?**

Like boatbuilding, quilting has persisted for centuries in The Bahamas. There are many different styles of quilting. Piece spread quilting involves sewing together bits of scrap fabric. This technique evolved out of necessity, to make use of scrap materials and old clothes. The islands of Abaco, Eleuthera and New Providence are focal points for another kind of quilting.



Maria Chisnell and Marie Murray

Photo: Grace Turner

MARIA CHISNELL is a quilter from New Providence. Although she has practised sewing for over thirty years, she took up quilting more recently.

"I started quilt making about fourteen years ago, when I attached myself to the last quilter that I knew in Nassau. She and I have been quilting ever since. I've travelled the islands trying to find old quilters who can teach me a little bit here and there."

Mrs. Chisnell took up quilting although there had been no quilting tradition in her family. She explains that there were other traditions:

"A sewing tradition and embroidery, but not quilting as such. But my daughter now has her own tradition."

Mrs. Chisnell attached herself to **MARIE MURRAY,** an older quilter, who learned to quilt from her mother. Mrs. Murray claims that she cannot remember a time in her life when she was not quilting. Mrs. Murray combines traditional techniques with contemporary designs. Although she refuses to use a sewing machine, she does not hesitate to use modern fabrics like Androsia and current themes like Junkanoo in her quilts. Both Mrs. Murray and Mrs. Chisnell teach quilting in New Providence. Mrs. Chisnell thinks quilting, often practised as a group through quilting bees, has a particular appeal for women.

"We felt that Bahamian women needed a place where they could go and escape from life and learn some of the things their grandmothers could do. Life seems to be so busy now we had forgotten how to take time to do these things. A lot of people are stimulated by the memory of their grandmothers quilting, and maybe that nostalgia has driven them to want to make one as well. I think women in particular in The Bahamas are looking for creative outlets, and they're certainly finding it through artwork, and quilt making is one of those forms of art."

- **How did Mrs. Chisnell learn to quilt? Could you do the same thing? What skill(s) would you like to learn?**

- **How does Mrs. Murray combine traditional methods with contemporary styles?**




Activities




1. Learning a Craft

As she explained, Mrs. Chisnell apprenticed herself to a more experienced quilter to learn the craft. Likewise, to master the art of boatbuilding both Mr. Albury and Mr. Knowles worked as apprentices to their fathers. You can do this, too. Apprenticeships offer hands-on experience which you cannot learn in a book.

- What would you like to learn that you cannot find in your school curriculum?
- Write a letter to a local artisan explaining your proposal. (The artisan may be a real person, but he or she can be imaginary as well.) Specify how much time you think you can spend with the artisan each week and for how many weeks you want to work. You might add a couple of sentences about why you are drawn to his or her craft.
- If you want to send the letter, you need to address it to a real person. How might you go about finding such a person? Whom might you ask? A local museum might help or someone who knows the community well, such as your local minister.

2. New Traditions

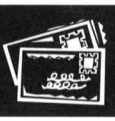
By bringing quilting to her family, Mrs. Chisnell says her daughter "now has" a tradition.

- Do traditions have to be as old as your grandparents, or can a new tradition spring up, as Mrs. Chisnell suggests?
- Write a short essay on what traditions you would like to bring to, or revive in, your family.

3. Analyzing Words

- What does Mrs. Chisnell mean when she says Bahamian women need a creative outlet to "escape from life"? Do you agree or disagree?
- List some of the things you do when you need to escape.




4. Make a Model Boat

Begin your design on paper. If you have carpentry skills or if a woodworking teacher can assist you, try to build the boat. Even if you do not follow through with building the boat, write a list of the tools and materials you will need.

- Would you use local wood?
- What are some of the benefits of using local wood?
- What are some of the potential problems?

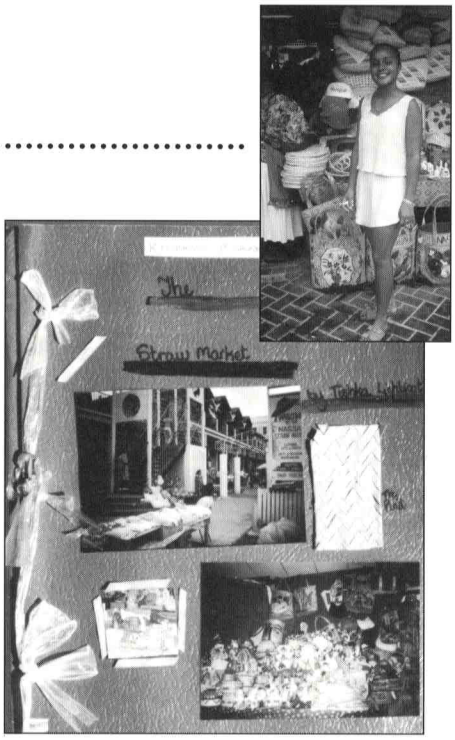
5. Straw Scrapbook

The short reading offers a survey of straw work in The Bahamas.

- Make a scrapbook of different straw plaits to accompany the article.

Your scrapbook might include:

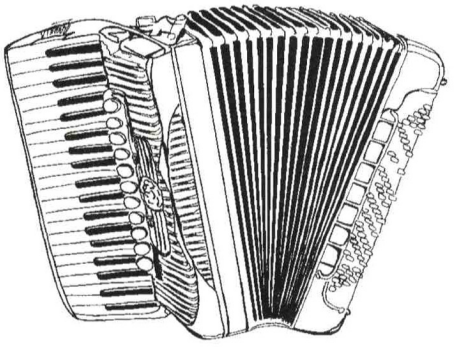
- different plaits you collect on a trip to a straw market;
- different plaits you make yourself;
- drawings or photographs of different plaiting styles.



Documentation project by Tishka Lightfoot, R.M. Bailey High School

Music

This section introduces the secondary-level student to the many forms of Bahamian music. The short reading provides an overview of Bahamian music. The profiles remind students of the important role family plays in many musical traditions in The Bahamas. Much of this section relies on careful listening to the accompanying cassette of traditional music, both sacred and secular. Activities encourage students to hone their listening skills.



Accordions are a central sound in rake 'n scrape.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this section students should be able to:

- **differentiate between sacred and secular music.**
- **recall the origins of the Quadrille and Heel and Toe Polka.**
- **discuss the origins of Bahamian music: from a rake 'n scrape band to sacred hymns.**
- **sing or recite the words of a traditional Bahamian song.**
- **practise the Quadrille and/or Heel and Toe Polka.**

Excerpts from

Bahamas Musical Survey

by Kayla Olubumni Lockhart Edwards

The Bahamas can be described as the islands where stories are more often sung than spoken — "islands of song".

While conducting research on Cat Island in preparation for the Festival [of American Folklife in Washington, D.C.], I asked a group of farmers waiting for a business meeting to sing a typical anthem. Without hesitation two of the ladies raised a rousing song, and seventy-three-year-old Mr. Donald Newbold became the featured bass with a voice of honeyed thunder that left us in total amazement at the depth of his vocal range and richness.

Sacred Music

Bahamian sacred music is the islands' most outstanding cultural expression. Anthems are religious hymns that closely resemble the American ante-bellum slave songs brought to The Bahamas during the Loyalist period. Favourite characters in anthems are Moses, Noah and Elijah from the Old Testament, and King Jesus, King Peter and Mary Magdalene; inevitably, the anti-hero is Satan. The most common themes are faith, optimism, patience, weariness and fighting. An example of an anthem is "Do You Live By Prayer?"

Do You Live By Prayer?

Do you live by prayer?
Do you live by prayer?
O yes, I do live by prayer.

Remember me.
Remember me.
O yes, remember me.

Have you passed here before?
Have you passed here before?
O yes, I have passed here before.

I'll bid farewell
To every fear
An' wipe my weepin' eyes.

Then I can smile
At Satan's rage
To see a burnin' world.

Rhyming Songs (spiritual and secular) present an animated storyteller with back-up chorus. The rhymer tells the story — sad, happy, provocative — in up to twelve rhythmic verses, and the chorus echoes the same refrain after each verse, usually singing in three-part harmony. Many times the rhymer will spontaneously create verses as he or she goes along. The texts are based on biblical themes, fantasies or real-life happenings. "Run, Come See

Jerusalem", for instance, recounts the sinking of three small boats off the coast of Andros Island during the 1929 hurricane.

Run, Come See Jerusalem

It was nineteen hundred and twenty-nine.
Run come see, run come see —
It was nineteen hundred and twenty-nine.
Run, come see Jerusalem.

Now John Brown, he was the captain.
Run come see, run come see —
Now John Brown, he was the captain.
Run, come see Jerusalem.

Now it was de Ethel, Myrtle and Praetoria.
Run come see, run come see —
It was de Ethel, Myrtle and Praetoria.
Run, come see Jerusalem.

O de big sea build up in the northwest.
Run come see, run come see —
O de big sea build up in the northwest.
Run, come see Jerusalem.

When the first sea hit the Praetoria,
Run come see, run come see —
When the first sea hit the Praetoria,
Run, come see Jerusalem —

Now there was thirty-three lost souls on the ocean.
Run come see, run come see —
Yes, there was thirty-three poor lost souls on the ocean.
Run, come see Jerusalem.

It is now common to hear contemporary African-American gospel and European classical harmonies emanating from churches throughout the Commonwealth. In about ninety percent of these denominations congregational singing is accompanied by hand clapping, rhythmic percussion, spiritual dancing and spirit possession. In Baptist, Church of God (called the Jumper Church) and other Pentecostal services possession usually occurs during the singing and clapping section of the service. In the Baptist and Jumper churches "rushin'" often accompanies the singing of anthems and spiritual songs, but dancing is not allowed.

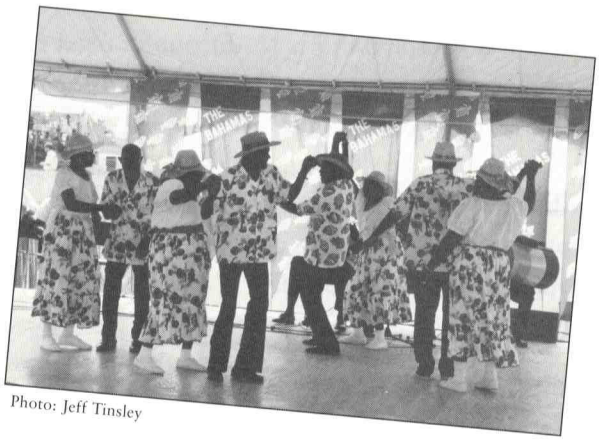


Photo: Jeff Tinsley

Members of the Cat Island Mites perform traditional dances like the Quadrille and the Heel and Toe Polka.

Secular Music

Historically, secular music in The Bahamas has been called Goombay music. Bahamian secular music relies on the goatskin drum to create its rhythmic base. Stories of everyday occurrences become popular songs telling of lovers' infidelity, the Bahamian's many wiles and schemes and the beauty of the environment. They often contain proverbial instructions, e.g., "Never interfere with man and wife, never understand/No matter who is wrong or who is right Hey!/Jus' offer sympathy".

These same songs are played instrumentally by rake 'n scrape bands. The rake 'n scrape band hails back to the 1800s, when Africans who were brought to The Bahamas sought to make music on whatever was available to them. The carpenter's saw was a tool used daily, pork barrels made a suitable keg over which to stretch the skin of a goat or sheep to make a drum, and the concertina might have been a gift from their colonial masters. The music of

the rake 'n scrape band is traditionally used to accompany the Bahamian Quadrille and the Heel and Toe Polka dances.

Traditional children's ring play games have accompanied "ditties", which are found throughout the Caribbean.

Blue Hill Water Dry [6]

Blue Hill water dry
No where to wash my clothes

I remember the Saturday night
Boil fish and johnny cake

Centipe knock tuh muh door last night
Take him for Johnny, slam him BAM!

Ceremonial songs like "Soley Married" are still sung at weddings in New Providence and the Family Islands. The name of the girl being married at the time can be substituted for Soley.

Music in The Bahamas is changing. Pan-Caribbean reggae, soca and salsa are heard in clubs and hotels. American pop and world music are widely recognized. But at the same time there is a revival of traditional sounds. The National Youth Choir has added folk songs to its repertoire. Many modern Bahamian musicians like Funky D, Phil Stubbs and King Eric combine the traditional sounds of rake 'n scrape with more contemporary rhythms. The song and music of the people, that which conjures up the soul of The Bahamas at home and at work, in worship and in play, will always endure.

Questions

1. What is sacred music? What is secular music? What are some of the differences between the two?
2. What songs do you know that tell a story about an historical event? What songs do you know that tell a story from the Bible?
3. How did rake 'n scrape originate? Where might you hear rake 'n scrape today?
4. What does "rushin'" mean? Where could you go to see "rushin'"?
5. What is the origin of the word "goombay"? Have you ever heard the word used? Where and when?

Activities

1. Write a Rhymer

As Mrs. Edwards's article explains, rhyming songs are often about real-life events. Pick an event of significance in your life, and write a rhyming song to document the event. Often it helps to examine another song, like "Run Come See Jerusalem", as a model for your own project.

- Do certain sections of the song repeat?
- Does this give you an idea of how to write your own song?

2. Music Research

Music has always played a central role in Bahamian life. Some of the best known Bahamians have been musicians, including Timothy Gibson, Clement Bethel and Joseph Spence. Write a short essay comparing these three musicians. You may need to visit your library for resource material.

- What did these three musicians have in common? How did they differ?
- What signs of their influence can be found in Bahamian music today?

[6] Blue Hill is an adaptation of the word "baillou", which is the name of a main street in Nassau.

Profiles II

Listening to the audio cassette of music introduces you to the different kinds of traditional music you can find in The Bahamas today. Much of this music has been passed through families.

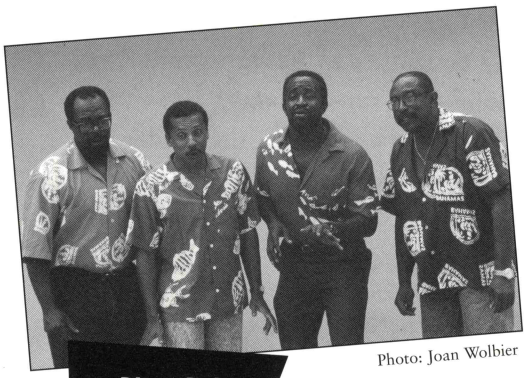


Photo: Joan Wolbier

Dicey Doh

The leader of Dicey Doh, **K.C. STRACHAN**, recalls the formation of his group:

"Dicey Doh singers was formed back in 1978. We did a programme, and somebody asked us to do an a capella song like my father does. My father has a group similar to this, and I grew up hearing this type of singing. So the guys decided we gonna try one of these songs."

Other members of Dicey Doh also grew up with music from an early age. **GARLAND DEAN** explains:

"I started in the 60s at the church choir, at the Church of God of Prophecy, met these guys in '78, and I keep on rolling."

DWAYNE CURTIS concurs:

"I've been involved with music for most of my life, with choral singing since about '63."

- **Where did the members of Dicey Doh begin singing?**

Many of the members of Dicey Doh have been singing together since its formation. However, new voices continue to join the group. **EDDIE BETHEL** is one:

"I have been in music all of my life. My father was a musician. I grew up admiring the Dicey Doh singers and always wanting to be a part of them, humming along the tunes with them. Now finally I'm here."

- **What musical groups do you admire? Why? Are you a member of a musical group?**

People often ask where the name "Dicey Doh" came from. **TEX TURNQUEST** explains:

"In the church during certain times when it's just getting hot, the bass line just takes off and does his own thing and goes into all sorts of improvisation. Everybody says, well, he is doing the dicey doh. So that's where the name comes from."

- **Have you ever witnessed this kind of improvisation? Does it have to take place in church?**

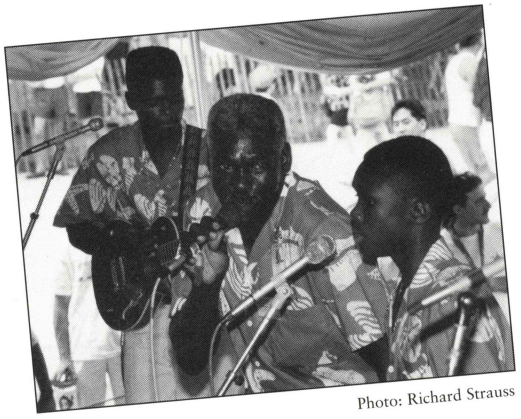


Photo: Richard Strauss

Family continues to be important in Bahamian music today. **HARRINGTON FRAZIER SR.**, the leader of Zippy Frazier and the Sons of Andros, described the rigourous practice routine he demands of his children:

"Sometime I stayed up at nights until three, four o'clock in the morning, and my wife sometime wake up and said, 'What happened to you? Are you crazy? Why don't you let my children go to bed?' But because of my stickability we have come this far."



Photo: Richard Strauss

Music is a major part of church services in The Bahamas. **PATRICIA BAZARD**, the director of the National Children's Choir, describes the diversity of sounds at a Bahamian church service.

"You will find in our services a number of outside influences within the same service. You will find European influence where we will sing hymns. American influence where the choir will sing a Negro spiritual or a Black gospel song. And you

will find the Bahamian flavour where we sing one of our old anthems or one of our rhyming spirituals — all a part of the same worship experience."

In church, music can also have a more practical use, such as raising church funds. Mrs. Bazard recounts a Dollar March.

"Usually this was done on New Year's Eve and for special occasions when they wanted to raise funds. You would just rush around, march around the church to the music, and they would sing and play. When they are raising funds, they put a little hat at the table. Every time you pass the plate, you have to put some money in. When your money run out, you have to sit down. And that was a good way of finding out who had the most money in the settlement, 'cause that would be the last person to leave the line. What a lot of people did was that, if you have ten dollars, you changed it up in coins, in twenty-five-cent pieces, and you could march all night, 'cause every time you pass, you drop in something. Well, nowadays they don't ask for twenty-five-cent pieces, you have what we call a dollar march, so every time you pass, you have to drop a dollar."

- **Have you ever been to a Dollar March? Did you participate? Do you think this is a good way to raise funds in church?**

- **Does "rushin'" only occur in church? Where else might you see "rushin'"? For what kinds of occasions?**

Before beginning the activities, make sure you listen carefully to the audio cassette of music.

Listening Questions

1. What are your favourite songs on the cassette? Why?
2. Listen carefully to "Watermelon Is Spoilin'" (side B, #1). What instruments can you hear? What instrument(s) can you hear in the song "Went to the Bight" (side B, #3)?
3. Which songs make you want to dance? Do you know how to dance the Quadrille? What about the Heel and Toe Polka? Who might teach you?




Activities




1. Listening at Church

Bring a pencil and paper the next time you go to church.

- Think back to what Mrs. Bazard says about the different musical influences in a Bahamian church service.
- Write a list of the different sounds you hear.
- What does this tell you about the people who make up a church congregation in The Bahamas?

2. Analyzing Words

Read over Mr. Frazier's comments on practising music with his family.

- What does he mean by "stickability"? Does such "stickability" seem like a benefit or not?
- Do you have any such "stickability"? About what? Write a short essay about something you have "stuck with" until you have mastered it.

3. Reading Songs

Examine the verses from the following two songs:

Sloop John B

Stopped by the John B sail
See how the main sail set
Sent for captain ashore
Let me go home, I want to go home.
(side B, #7)










Activities




When I Get Inside

When I get inside, when I get inside
All my troubles will be over
When I get inside again.
(side A, #2)

What differences do you notice between the words in these two verses?

- Draw a picture to illustrate each verse.
- Which drawing was more difficult?
- What does this tell you about the two songs?

4. Comparison between Sacred & Secular Songs

Listen to "Dry Bones" (side A, #1) and "Girl, If I Write You" (side B, #2).

- Write a short essay explaining how you can tell that one song is sacred and one is secular.

5. Learn to Dance

Find someone at your school or in your family who can teach you how to dance the Quadrille or the Heel and Toe Polka.

- With a Goombay song from the audio cassette as musical accompaniment (side B, #1, 5, 8, 11), show off your new steps during Cultural Day at your school.







SECONDARY

Storytelling

This section introduces the secondary-level student to Bahamian storytelling, with a focus on island survival. Tracey Thompson's article explains how Bahamians have subsisted for centuries from the resources of the land and the sea. The stories on the accompanying cassette range from traditional tales of B'Bouki and B'Rabbi to the more personal recollections of Mrs. Mabel Williams, who describes growing up in San Salvador and enduring hard times and hurricanes.

By closely examining the stories, students will learn that stories are not merely a means of entertainment but a viable way to learn about culture and history. The stories on the cassette should also encourage students to record their own stories as well as those told by friends and family members. An extensive description of how to successfully record stories and interviews, "Exploring Your Own Communities", can be found in the Appendix as well as a sample lesson plan for this section.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this section students should be able to:

- **identify what makes the stories on the cassette particularly Bahamian.**
- **identify differences between the techniques of the three storytellers.**
- **distinguish between fiction and non-fiction stories, using the stories on the cassette as examples.**
- **list reasons for preserving oral traditions like storytelling.**
- **collect stories from family members and friends.**

Excerpts from

Shootin' Pigeon and Ducks and Wild Hog Huntin': Traditional Lifestyles on Land and Sea

by Tracey Thompson

Hard work, resourcefulness and self-reliance mark the ways in which Bahamians traditionally have fed and sheltered themselves on this Land of Rocks.

Hard Times

I heard a joke repeated in Inagua: that the mosquitoes were so large you heard their bones crack if you smashed them. There as elsewhere, mosquitoes hatch after each rainfall, complicating the hard, harsh work of clearing and cultivating difficult land by hand. People took "smoke pots" — ceramic or metal pots holding burning coconut or green leaves whose smoke dispersed the mosquitoes — when they went to work in the fields. Thrushes, blackbirds and worms offered a greater challenge by eating the corn. Often the volume of produce harvested from the fields ran out before the next year's crop was ready to be reaped. In such meagre periods or if the crop failed for lack of rain, people would go in the bush and catch crabs, eat hearts of palm or go onto the water to catch fish and collect conch, waiting for the mailboat to bring supplies from Nassau.

In an era before advance weather warnings, storms and hurricanes caught people off guard. On land, houses collapsed and fields flooded. At sea, people drowned as they fished or sponged in boats offshore.

These "hard times" live on in the imagination of islanders. Blackfoot Rock juts out into the sea not far from the settlement of North Victoria Hill in San Salvador. Marcia Kemp, a forty-year-old inhabitant of that settlement, intimated how deep an impression the poverty of material resources left on her community.

"As a child growing up in North Victoria Hill ... when you [would] have your meals or anything, they would say not to waste it. You cannot waste your food, because, you know, 'You children don't know what hard time is. Hard time is gonna come again.' And they would say this so often, as a child I thought hard time was someone who was coming. He had visited before, so ... you were to expect hard time to come again. And in my mind's eye I used to see him coming around Blackfoot Rock."

Resourcefulness, Self-Reliance and Versatility

Medical science offers an example of the self-reliance of islanders. Men and women had extensive knowledge of the curative qualities of plant and marine life. Fever bush. Cough

bush. Midwife bush. Catnip for worms. Pond bush for diabetes. Almond leaf tea for high blood pressure. Spoonwood and guava for gripe. Guinea hen bush for headache. Tamarind leaf for the eyes.

Self-reliance is also seen in the versatility of skills of islanders. Trained in upholstery, engine repair and navigation, and formerly involved in the furniture and dry cleaning businesses, today Leon Turnquest does masonry, carpentry and plumbing, manages his own hotel and occasionally fishes, farms and hunts. Such versatility comes as no surprise. Islanders had no choice but to do for themselves. Field and marine produce sold to Nassau brought little in exchange. Steady paid labor was hard to come by outside Nassau and cash was rare, so purchasing the services of specialized tradesmen was not feasible.

Labour Migration and Shrinking Communities

Over the years, the harshness of living on land and sea and the scant opportunities for education and wage labour have pushed islanders from their homes in pursuit of schooling and work in Nassau or Freeport or to rural communities where projects of varying duration — manufacturing salt in Inagua, building military facilities on several of the islands — offer permanent or short-term employment. Islanders have left in large numbers as well for the United States. Since World War II, "The Contract" or "The Project" funnelled Bahamians to the mainland. Created in 1943 by the governments of the United States and The Bahamas, "The Contract" programme enabled thousands of Bahamians to work in farming industries located across the United States. Some of them came home. Many others never did.

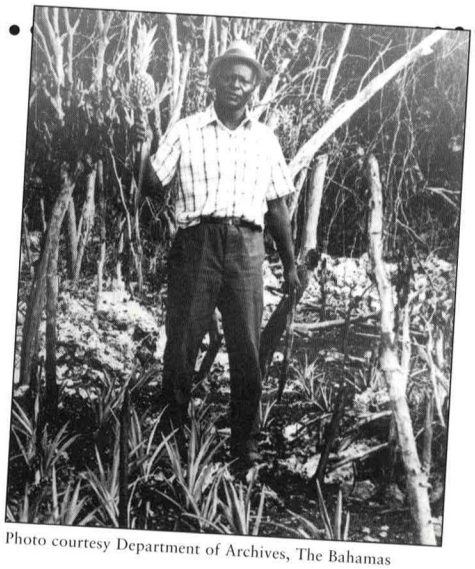


Photo courtesy Department of Archives, The Bahamas

Constable Wilson farmed pineapple for many years in Eleuthera.

The marks of this emigration show on the landscapes of some island communities and appear in the stories of their inhabitants. Consider Inagua. Today, that island has one settlement: Matthew Town. An old map shows place names ringing the island. Dog Head Bluff. Lantern Head. Mount Misery. Minott Tent. Oree Bay. Northeast Point. Some of those communities once had year-round residents. In Northeast Point, people farmed for several weeks or months each year; today no one farms there. Consider San Salvador. George Storr, eighty years old, and his wife Viola, seventy-five, are what remain of the settlement of Pigeon Creek. Thomas Hanna, an elderly gentleman, and James Rolle, eighty-seven years old, are what remain of Fortune Hill. Bernie Storr, fifty-four years old, his mother and his family are what remain of Polly Hill.

Vulnerable Technologies

However, Bahamians seem to be returning to the islands. In San Salvador, the construction and operation of a Club Med resort has nearly doubled that island's population. Throughout the archipelago, imported technologies and

material prosperity have created the possibility of living on the islands without having to do the hard and time-consuming manual work entailed in traditional living. So from stone, lime and leaf thatch to concrete block and cement; from outside kitchen and fire hearth to indoor kitchen and gas stove; from corning fish and meat to freezing them; from killing worms with fire hearth to spraying fields with pesticide; from smoke pot to Off; from lighting torchwood to lighting kerosene lamps to turning on generators; from hauling water in buckets to water mains; from cutting wood to buying diesel fuel; from flour-bag clothes to modern wardrobes; from homemade grass mattresses to store-bought ones; from hand tools to electric drills: island lifestyles are undergoing rapid, if geographically uneven, transformation. The genius for utilizing the resources given by land and sea, if it will survive an international market economy, will need conscientious conservation with all deliberate speed.

Questions

1. What does Marcia Kemp mean when she says, "Hard time is gonna come again"? Explain why she thought hard time was an actual person. Do you know people who have endured hard times? What examples can you share?
2. Ms. Thompson writes of the "versatility" of islanders. What are some of the examples? What does she mean when she writes, "Islanders had no choice but to take care of themselves"? Why did they not have a "choice"? Thinking back to Dr. Saunders's article, how are the experiences of Ms. Thompson's "islanders" similar to the lives of the early peoples on the islands?
3. Ms. Thompson writes of the "curative qualities of plant and marine life." Why is this knowledge particularly important for many Family Islanders?
4. What was "The Contract"? Do you know anyone who might have been involved? How might you find out more about this subject?
5. Ms. Thompson mentions abandoned settlements that used to have year-round residents. What happened to these people? What drew them away from their homes?
6. Read Ms. Thompson's final sentence carefully. What are some of the reasons to preserve what Ms. Thompson refers to as that "genius for utilizing the resources given by land and sea"? Why not replace a smoke pot with Off to get rid of insects? What is your opinion? What does Ms. Thompson mean by "conscientious conservation"?

Activities

1. Conservation Poster

- Design a poster advocating a conservation practice. You might use one mentioned in Ms. Thompson's article or pick one that affects your own life.

2. Thinking About Ecotourism

Ecotourism combines conservation efforts with business opportunities. In recent years, ecotourism has been promoted in The Bahamas.

- What examples of ecotourism have you seen?
- Where could you go to learn more?

Profiles

As Tracey Thompson explains in her article, islanders have survived off the land for centuries.

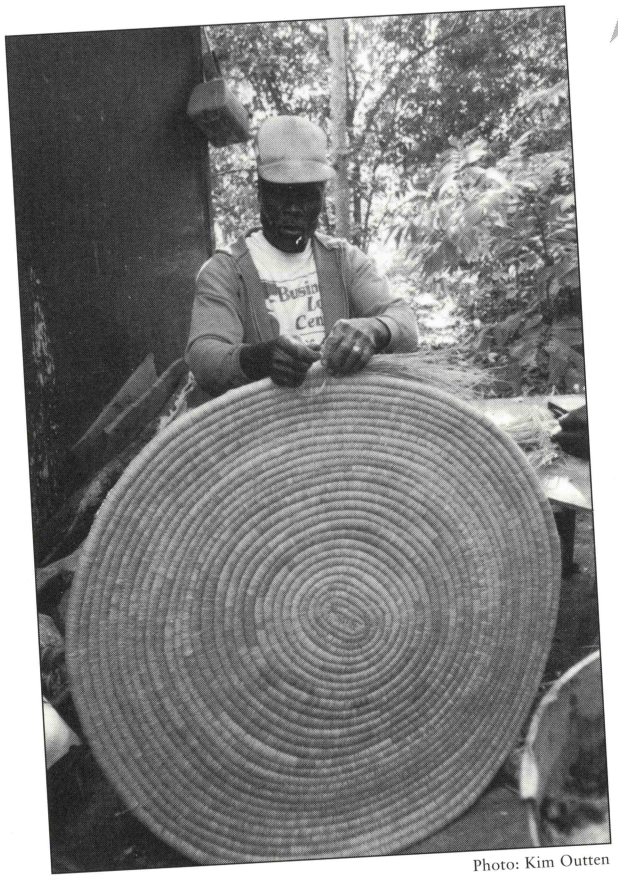


Photo: Kim Outten

WILLIAM "SCRAP IRON" COLEBROOKE from Red Bays, Andros, is a master basket maker. His baskets are tight enough to carry water, and some are large enough to hold a person. In addition to making baskets, Mr. Colebrooke has extensive knowledge of survival.

"There's plenty of things you could survive on in the bush. Cabbage, it's not like the cabbage in the garden. It's the cabbage you can pull off the tree. You chop it off, and you can eat it. That's survival. If you have a pot, you could catch crab. If you have a line, you could go to a creek, and you could catch bone fish. All the roots that's in the ground. If you got nails, you can punch a grater."

- **What kinds of dangers might you encounter in the bush?**
- **How do you think Mr. Colebrooke learned about "survival"?**



Photo: Nick Parrella

MABEL WILLIAMS knows about survival as well. She has many stories of island life. Mrs. Williams was born in 1923 in United Estates, San Salvador. She spent twenty years of her life working as a maid in Nassau, but she returned to San Salvador in the 1970s. Nowadays, she farms and often lectures on Bahamian history and culture. Many people want to hear her stories of growing up during "hard times". On the audio cassette you can hear Mrs. Williams describe her experiences. She prefaces her tales in this way:

"It may sound like a story, but it's a true story, because I went through all of this when I was a child. In those days we call it hard times. Nowadays they call it depression."

- **Mrs. Williams is an experienced storyteller, and she is careful to distinguish between terms. She differentiates between a "story" and a "true story", one from her own experience. According to Mrs. Williams, what is the difference between these two terms?**

Like Mr. Colebrooke, Mrs. Williams knows about survival. Living on an isolated island meant relying on bush teas for many medical problems. Times have changed, however, as Mrs. Williams realizes.

"The younger generation don't believe in those kind of things, because they have not grown up into it from young. They want Ovaltine and stuff like that. If you don't get into it from small, it's hard for you to adopt into when you get old. We had it because that's all we had to drink. We didn't have no other tea but bush tea, and so that's all we use."

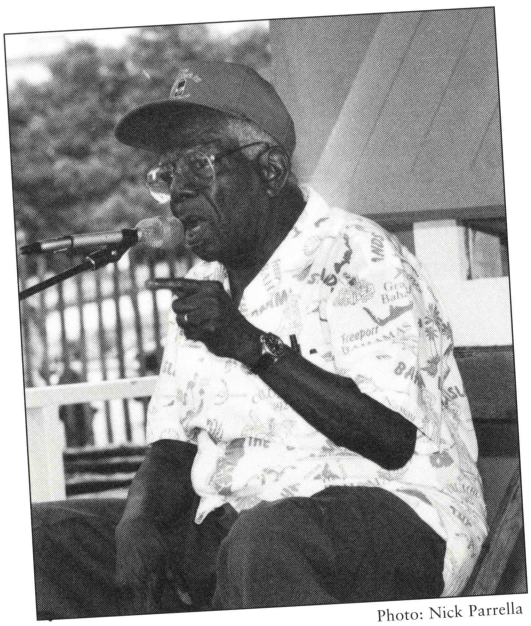


Photo: Nick Parrella

CLEVELAND ENEAS grew up in Bain Town, Nassau. He is well known for his book, *Bain Town,* about the history of that community. After high school in The Bahamas Dr. Eneas went to Tuskegee Institute in Alabama, where he studied violin, printing and biology. Following Tuskegee, Dr. Eneas earned a degree in Dental Surgery from Meharry Medical College. Eventually he returned to Nassau and established a dental practice. Dr. Eneas no longer practises dentistry, but his son has taken over his practice.

Although he spent much of his adult life as a dentist, Dr. Eneas has always been a strong advocate of storytelling.

"Now these stories we use to keep children entertained. Children never get tired of listening to B'Bouki and B'Rabbi stories. A lot of us have lost a lot of our stories, but now we are beginning to regenerate them and write them down to keep telling people. We don't want them to lose these stories as part of our culture, the storytelling."

- **Did you hear stories when you were growing up? What were they about?**

- **What methods does Dr. Eneas suggest to preserve stories? Can you think of any other methods?**

Dr. Eneas describes the kind of stories he tells:

"A lot of these stories are common to every country. The theme is common to every country, but every country adds its own flavour to its story."

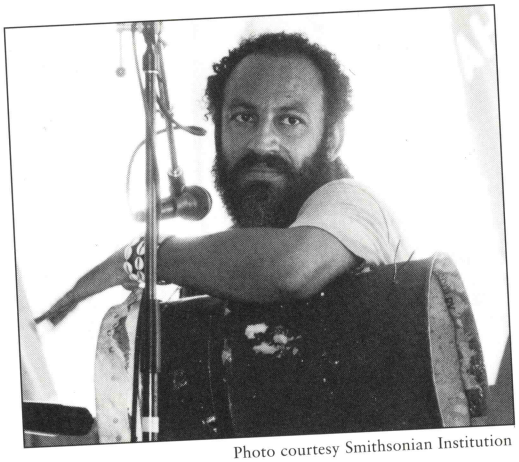


Photo courtesy Smithsonian Institution

Although he is a generation younger than Dr. Eneas, **DEREK BURROWS**, a professional storyteller and musician, recalls that storytelling was an important part of his childhood as well.

"Growing up in The Bahamas was a wonderful thing, because we got to hear stories. We didn't have television. We didn't have radio on the islands, but we had storytellers. I always say to people, everybody got a story to tell. All you gotta do is remember the images of the story in your mind. You don't gotta remember the words, just the images, and then you can tell a story."

- **As you listen to the stories on the cassette, think about Mr. Burrows's advice: "[R]emember the images ... in your mind."**

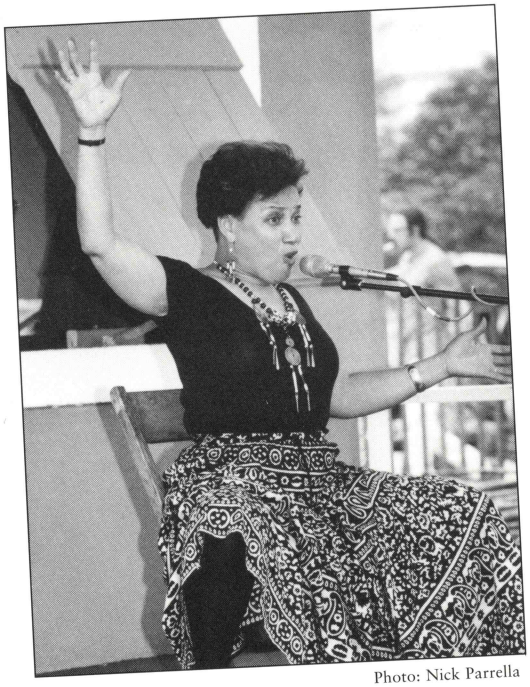


Photo: Nick Parrella

Like Mr. Burrows, **KAYLA EDWARDS** is part of a younger generation of storytellers. People like Mr. Burrows and Mrs. Edwards work hard to preserve storytelling for future generations of Bahamians.

"Every time I heard the older people tell a story, I would make it my story. That's how life is, you know, you make other people's stories your story."

Mrs. Edwards has fond memories of her childhood on Ragged Island.

"Ragged Island is three miles long and one mile wide. There were three hundred people. We knew everybody. All the neighbours shared with each other. We get up early in the morning. Every child has their chores to go for wood or go for salt. We've got salt flats in Ragged Island. And so each child had a basket, and your basket was made according to your size. If you were the tiniest one, you had the tiniest basket, and if you were the oldest child, you had the bushel basket. You had to tote your load of salt from the salt flats down to the landing area, where it was loaded on the sloops to be transported to Nassau. Coming to Nassau for me when I was about eleven or twelve to attend high school was a major transition."

- **Why was the move to Nassau such a change for Mrs. Edwards?**

Mrs. Edwards explains that much of her knowledge has come from the elders in her community and in particular from her mother. Mrs. Edwards describes her mother's influence:

"She's seventy-seven years old, and usually when I travel I take her with me, because she is my greatest archivist. Whenever I want to know something, I will go back and say, 'Mom, what about so and so?' And she can always tell me."

- **What have you learned from someone older than you?**

As a storyteller, Mrs. Edwards pays close attention to language. She offers her definition of Bahamian language:

"Bahamian dialect is a combination of many African languages and the English language. Each Family Island has its own special way of speaking our native language—Bahamianese."

As you listen to the audio cassette, play close attention to the different styles of speech you hear.

Listening Questions

1. Listen to the stories on the cassette. Which stories do you like the best? What attracts you to them?
2. Are these stories particularly Bahamian? What makes them so? What would it be like to listen to these stories if you were not from The Bahamas?
3. Think about some of the stories you have heard recently. Are most of the stories you hear about actual events that happened to someone? If not, where do the stories come from?




Activities




1. Analyzing Stories

What does Dr. Eneas mean when he writes that each country "adds its own flavour" to a story?

- How do you add flavour to a story?
- What parallels can you draw between Dr. Eneas's words and Mrs. Edwards's statement about making "other people's stories your story"?

2. Reviving Stories

Dr. Eneas says we do not want "to lose these stories".

- What can you do to help? Think of several ways to stop this loss.
- List the ways your class can work to revive stories.

3. Comparing Storytellers

List some of the differences and similarities between Mabel Williams and Cleveland Eneas.

- How do their different backgrounds affect their knowledge and their storytelling?

4. Create an Ending

Mrs. Williams says her story is "true", but that does not mean that she does not change certain parts each time she tells the story. Some stories are part true and part made up.

- What would happen if Mrs. Williams's hurricane story had a different ending?
- What if her mother's house had been destroyed?
- What if they had not reached Hannah Scott's house?
- Pick an aspect of Mrs. Williams's story, and write a different ending.







5. Sending Stories Overseas

Pretend that you have a pen pal in India. You want to give her a good understanding of The Bahamas, and you decide to send her a cassette of stories. You can only include four of the stories on the storytelling cassette.

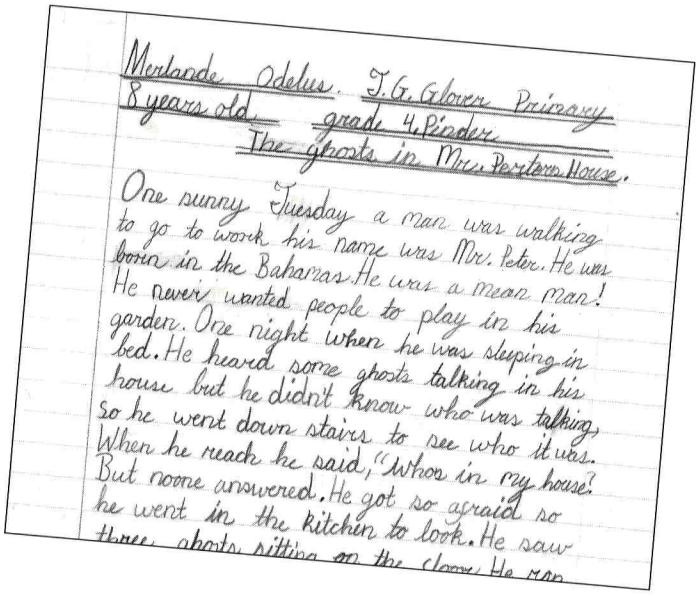
- Which stories would you include?
- Write a short paragraph about each story you chose, explaining why the story represents something uniquely Bahamian.
- Do you think you need to add another story of your own? What would your story be about?

6. Story Collection

Collect a story from someone you consider a good storyteller. If possible, record the story on cassette.

- Ask the person to tell you a little about his or her background.
- Write an introduction to the story that explains the significance of this story to the person.

Story by
Merlande Odelus,
T.G. Glover Primary School



Merlande Odelus. T.G. Glover Primary
8 years old. grade 4. Pinder
The ghosts in Mrs. Peeters House.

One sunny Tuesday a man was walking to go to work his name was Mr. Peter. He was born in the Bahamas. He was a mean man! He never wanted people to play in his garden. One night when he was sleping in bed. He heard some ghosts talking in his house but he didn't know who was talking so he went down stairs to see who it was. When he reach he said, "Whos in my house? But noone answered. He got so afraid so he went in the kitchen to look. He saw three ghosts sitting on the cloor. He ran




Activities




7. How Stories Change

What stories do you know? Record or write down a story you heard as you grew up.

- If possible, collect the same story from a classmate or someone in your family.
- What are the similarities and differences between the versions?

8. Words versus Images

Think back to Mr. Burrows's advice on listening to stories. Write a short essay explaining the difference between a word and an image. Why is it easier to remember images rather than words? Now pick an image from one of the stories on the cassette, and draw the image.

- How did you decide what to include in your drawing? What elements did you leave out?

9. Dramatize a Story

Choose a story (either from the cassette or from your own research), and turn the story into a play.

- Act out the play for your class. Consider performing your play at a community function.

10. Stories As Historical Source Material

Listen to Mrs. Williams's hurricane story. Stories can be a rich source of historical information.

- What can you learn from her story about the architecture and building materials of houses on San Salvador in the 1940s? What other historical information is contained in this story?
- What additional sources other than books can provide you with historical information? What might you learn from careful examination of a handcrafted boat or a straw basket?

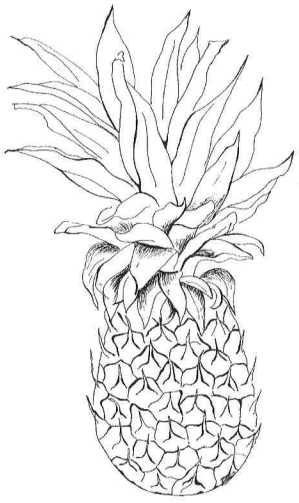






SECONDARY

Foodways



Pineapple is a key crop in Eleuthera.

This section introduces the secondary-level student to the origins of Bahamian foods and the work involved in running a food business. The short reading passage outlines some of the foodways traditions in The Bahamas and discusses the differences between urban and rural food practices. In the profiles students meet two people engaged in commercial food enterprises: Vernon Malone, who owns a bakery, and Merle Williams, who owns a restaurant with her two daughters. The activities encourage students to use recipes as cultural clues and not only as cooking instructions.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this section students should be able to:

- **prepare a Bahamian dish and discuss what makes this dish Bahamian.**
- **suggest feasible ways to increase the demand for locally grown produce.**
- **discuss the ways in which recipes evolve and the factors in these changes.**
- **discuss the impact of tourism on the Bahamian diet.**

Bahamian Foodways

by Gail Saunders

Like The Bahamas itself, Bahamian foodways reveal a diverse blend of cultures. Examining what people eat helps to understand better our cultures and our communities.

Outside Influences and Availability of Food

The major influences on Bahamian cooking have come from Africa, England, America and the West Indies. Caribbean cuisines have much in common, but grits is a staple of the diet only in The Bahamas and has been presumed to come from the American South. Some dishes, like guava duff, combine indigenous fruit with imported techniques: duff is steamed like an English pudding. Peas, beans and okra soup probably are of African origin. Curry, cod-fish and ackee, and roti came from the West Indies.

Historically, Bahamians have cooked what was available. The sea yielded much protein in the form of fish, conch, crawfish and turtle. The paucity of arable soil made for difficult growing conditions, but farmers have persevered for centuries. Crops grown include corn, peas, sweet potato, pumpkin, cabbage, cassava and yam. The land also yields crabs, coconuts and a variety of indigenous fruits such as coco-plums, sea-grapes, soursop, sugar apple, guavas, hog plums, tamarinds, pigeon plums and scarlet plums. These were, and continue to be, used to make preserves.

Rural versus Urban Patterns

In rural areas in the Family Islands and in New Providence (Fox Hill, Adelaide, some parts of Grant's Town) growing and cooking indigenous vegetables and fruits have persisted well into the 20th century. In the Family Islands, especially in the 1930s and 1940s, native grits was ground from corn. Corn flour was also ground and used for bread. Besides fish and conch, which were readily available in the sea, chickens, hogs and goats were raised. After the large animals were slaughtered, pieces were shared around the community. As Mabel Williams from San Salvador explains, "[I]n those days we used to share."

For decades, Family Islanders have depended upon mailboats to transport their produce to be sold in markets or delivered to family members in Nassau. On the return trip, mailboats bring supplies like kerosene, lumber and mail to the Family Islands. Delays in service mean that Family Islanders often have to make do with what they can grow, raise or catch locally.

Historically, the Nassau Market was very important to many Bahamians. Some grew vegetables in their garden plots and harvested them to sell door to door or at home-made stalls in the streets. Many of these market women were of Yoruba descent. Market women from Grant's Town, Bain Town and Fox Hill would balance large wooden trays or baskets of vegetables on their heads, calling out their wares as they walked. Produce from the more distant settlements of Adelaide and Gambier was usually brought to the Nassau Market on a donkey cart once or twice a week.

The tradition of market women walking through the streets has disappeared, but fresh food can be purchased from vendors who set up stalls, often near bus stops, and sell vegetables and fruits that are in season: pigeon peas, okra, pumpkins, thyme, yams, mangoes, sugar cane, bananas, papayas, hog plums, ju-ju, soursop, sugar apples and guineps. Often, they sell hand-ground island grits, bottled tomatoes and land crabs as well. Other vendors sell conch and crawfish, and clean and fillet fresh fish such as grouper, snapper, jack, goggle eyes and mutton fish. Some fish vendors prepare conch salad and scorched conch.

Up until the early 20th century, the principal foods for the urban population consisted of corn, grits and fish. Today, many Bahamians eat imported foods, but in rural areas, such as Cat Island and Andros, indigenous foods remain more common.

Commercialization of Cooking

Despite the increase in imported foods, traditional dishes such as peas and rice, okra soup, conch fritters, steam conch, stew conch and cabbage slaw can still be found throughout The Bahamas. In many cases such food will be cooked for sale, by persons like Mrs. Wealthy Gomez and restaurants like Casuarinas and Traveller's Rest. The food is often produced on a small scale, perhaps even in a home kitchen with a restaurant-sized stove. Although cooked for commercial purposes, this food retains its traditional form. Despite the rapid increase in tourism, which has led to a prevalence of fast food establishments in New Providence and beyond, traditional cooking, both in the home and in restaurants, persists in The Bahamas today.

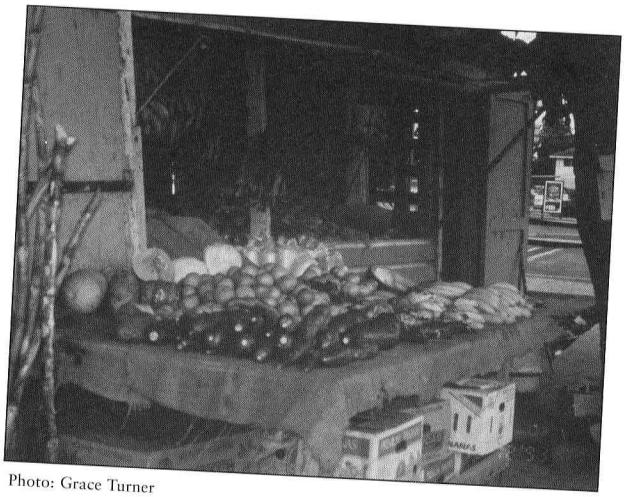


Photo: Grace Turner

A typical vendor's stall sells bananas, yams, oranges and pumpkins. Fruits and vegetables are grown on small farms throughout the islands.

Questions

1. What influences can you find in Bahamian cooking?
2. What led to the increase in imported foods?
3. How has tourism affected food in The Bahamas?
4. Are native foods more common in the Family Islands? Why?

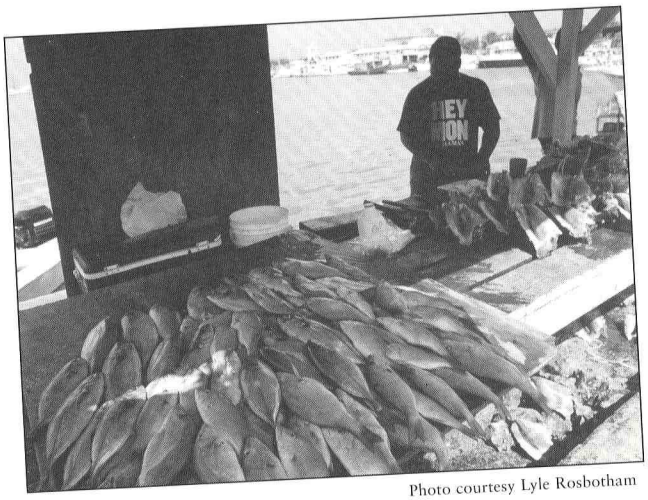


Photo courtesy Lyle Rosbotham

This fisherman sells goggle eyes, a favourite fish that is fried during the Easter season.

Activities

1. Learning at the Supermarket

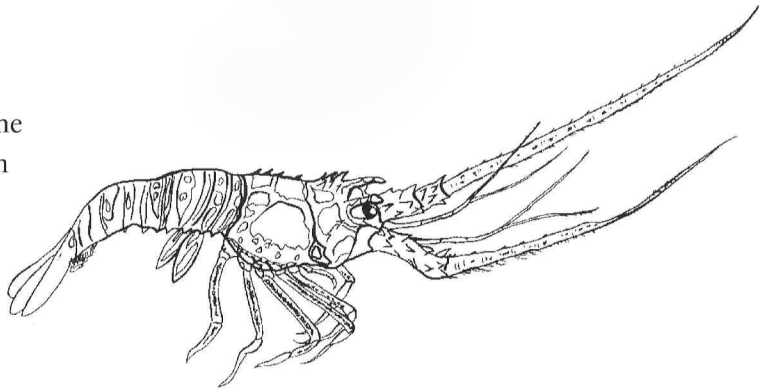
Today, as new immigrant communities continue to make a home in The Bahamas, evidence of these new neighbours can be found in restaurants and even in the supermarket.

- Have you been to restaurants that serve non-Bahamian food? If so, what are some of your favourite types of non-Bahamian food?
- Go to a supermarket and find three items that you do not associate with Bahamian food. Possibilities might be: soy sauce, tortillas, chutney. Keep a list of your findings. Share your findings with your class to discover the diversity of The Bahamas. If possible, bring in samples to taste.

2. Vendor Visit

Visit an area where vendors set up and sell fresh produce as described in Dr. Saunders's article.

- List all of the goods you find there.
- Which were gathered from the sea? Which were grown in a garden?
- Is all the produce local? What items were imported?
- Ask the vendor how he or she decides what to sell.



Profiles II

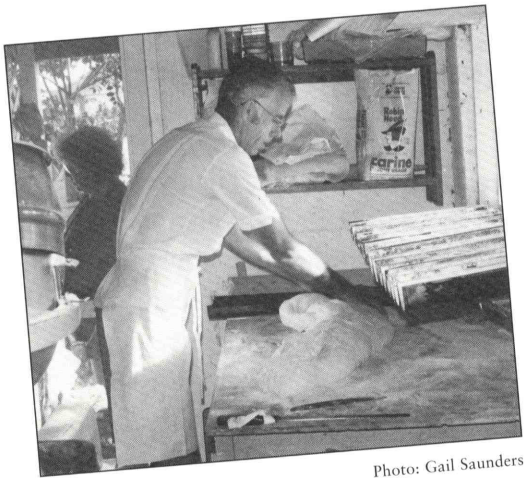


Photo: Gail Saunders

VERNON MALONE owns and operates the Upper Crust Bakery in Hope Town, Abaco. He was born and raised on Abaco. Having lived there for over 50 years, Mr. Malone has witnessed the signs of increasing tourism. Tourism has been a boon to his business, but some results have been painful:

"When I was a child, turtles were so plentiful that it seemed like they were never endangered of ever being extinct. Fishing was the same thing. But now people go out fishing and come back and not catch any fish. Conch are almost gone."

According to Mr. Malone, when he was a boy he could go a hundred feet from his house and find conch. Today you have to put on diving gear and go out in a boat.

- **What will happen if conch disappear completely?**

- **Have you ever heard similar stories about what life was like in earlier times? Who told these stories to you? In your opinion, does it seem that life was better or worse in earlier times?**

In his bakery Mr. Malone makes many Bahamian specialties, like coconut pie and Bahamian white bread. He has also adapted his products for the increasing tourist market. In recent years, he has started making muffins, which sell well among Americans.

- **What Bahamian specialties have you tasted? What are your favourites?**

In addition to bread, Mr. Malone makes wedding cakes. Many of his orders come from beyond Hope Town, and he has to deliver them by boat. A four-tiered wedding cake is not easy to transport, especially over unpredictable seas. As a precaution, when delivering wedding cakes, Mr. Malone often keeps the cake layers separate until he arrives at his destination. He carries a bowl of frosting, which he calls his "make up kit", in case any accidents occur in the delivery. If he agrees to make a cake, he wants to be sure his cake is fit for a wedding.

Mr. Malone is adamant about high quality, and he follows strict rules.

"The important part in making good Bahamian bread is to get good, hard, wheat flour. I find the Canadian flours are the best flours for making the genuine Bahamian bread. American flours are too refined."

Mr. Malone imports more than flour.

"Everything is imported. The only thing we use here that is not imported is the fresh limes and coconuts. Everything else is imported."

- **What do you think of Mr. Malone's dependence on foreign goods? Can you think of any alternatives?**

On busy days, Mr. Malone says he makes several hundred loaves of bread. His oven holds twenty-two loaves. He estimates that it takes twenty-five minutes for Bahamian bread to bake. That makes for a long day of baking. Mr. Malone allows five hours from start to finish to make Bahamian bread. There are many steps: mixing, kneading, letting the dough rise and, finally, baking. He warns against rushing the time. Such care and attention to his product mean long hours, and Mr. Malone has yet to find a successor for his job. He says his son could bake bread if he had to, but it is not his chosen profession. As Mr. Malone explains, running a bakery is a lot of work for very little money.

- **Think back to the words of boatbuilder Mr. Joe Albury, who says, "[Y]ou don't make any money boatbuilding. You just do it because you like to do it." How is Mr. Malone's search for a successor similar to the comments of Mr. Albury? What are some of the reasons to continue in these professions?**

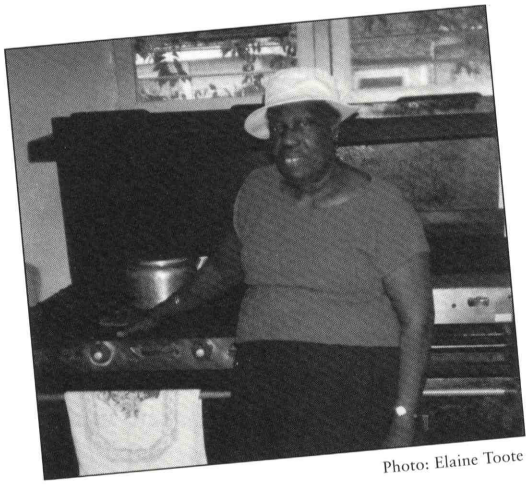


Photo: Elaine Toote

MERLE WILLIAMS, or Mother Merle, as she is known, also lives on Abaco. She operates her own restaurant in Dundas Town. She used to serve three meals a day, but now she only serves dinner. After all, as she says, "[I]t's only me and the children to do the work." Mother Merle learned much of what she cooks today from her own mother.

"My mother was a good cook. She taught me a lot of what I know. But then, through working I pick up a lot. I never been to no school to learn how to cook. I just watch, and I'm easy to catch on, so that's how I learned what I know today."

- **Do you cook? How did you learn? Is this different from how Mother Merle learned to cook?**

She learned the basics from her mother, but Mother Merle says she has improved some of her mother's recipes. Mother Merle uses lard or shortening to make her johnny cake soft. She recalls that her mother used cooked sweet potato to achieve the same softness.

Today, Mother Merle's two daughters work with her. One manages the restaurant and the other is in the kitchen, cooking on the hot stove. One of Mother Merle's daughters explained that the years of hard work affect her mother's cooking today. Sometimes she comes home to find her mother cooking a huge pot of food. She has to ask her mother, "Who are you cooking for?" Mother Merle admits, "I just can't cook a little bit." Her daughter explains:

"She's used to the old way. My grandmother, her mother, used to say, 'Child, you don't know who may come in, you gotta offer.' She cook like she cooking for ten or twelve people. She ain't cooking for no two people. Maybe she cook for five, six, or seven. She can't help herself."

Mother Merle agrees:

"I always say, you don't know who might stop by hungry. If you just cook a little bit for your family, and somebody come in and you got nothing to offer. I'm not used to that."

- **Does this conversation between Mother Merle and her daughter sound familiar? Whom do you know who worries, like Mother Merle, that "you don't know who might stop by hungry"?**

Questions

1. How does Mr. Malone capture the tourist market for his baked goods?
2. Why do you think people began to use lard or shortening in johnny cake recipes instead of mashed sweet potato? What are some of the advantages of using sweet potato? What are some of the disadvantages?
3. What parallels can you draw between what Mother Merle says about her versions of her mother's recipes and what storyteller Dr. Eneas means when he says many "stories are common to every country ... but every country adds its own flavour"?



1. Planning a Menu

Pretend you are starting a restaurant or a bakery. To pay for your high rent, you need to secure the tourist market.

- What will you sell to attract tourists?
- Write a sample menu or a list of baked goods for your business.

2. Recipe Adaptation

Although many of her recipes come from her mother, Mother Merle says she has adapted the recipes to her own tastes. Do you do the same thing?

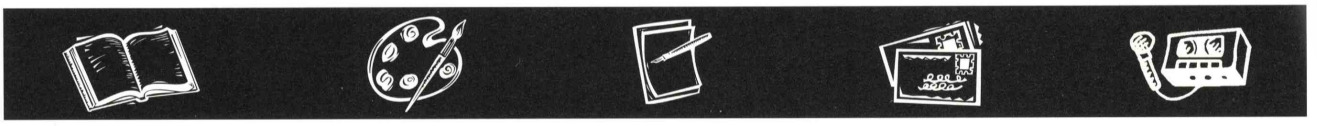
- Choose a recipe that someone has taught you, and think about how you changed the recipe to suit your tastes.
- If possible, write down both recipes side by side to show the changes.

3. Baking Bread

On a busy day, if Mr. Malone bakes three hundred loaves of bread, approximately how many oven loads will he bake?

- How long will this take?

Now it is your turn to make bread. Bring in a johnny cake recipe from home. Compare your recipe with the recipes of your fellow students. How do the recipes differ? Select three and test the recipes. How do the different versions of johnny cake vary? Do they taste different? Do they look different?






Activities




4. Choosing a Favourite Dish

Mother Merle has decided to cook a special dish for you.

- What do you request?
- Write a short paragraph explaining why this dish is a favourite of yours. When have you eaten it before?

5. Everyday Food versus Special Occasion Food

Mother Merle differentiates between dishes she cooks in her restaurant and dishes she cooks at home for her children.

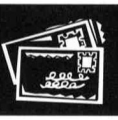
- In your family are there certain dishes that you make for special occasions and others that you eat every day?
- Write two lists of the different kinds of dishes.

6. Recipe Book

Make a book of your favourite recipes. Work in groups or as a class.

- Include drawings and personal recollections of why these recipes are important to you or your family.
- If your book is a success, consider making copies and selling it to raise money for a class camera, tape recorder or other tool that will help you in your documentation projects.






7. Interview Activity: Meet a Cook

- Do you know someone who likes to cook?
- Are they known for a special dish?
- Where did they learn to cook?

Pick someone you know who likes to cook, and interview the person about cooking. It is not always easy to collect recipes. Many well-known cooks are reluctant to pass on information. Elaine Toote found this out when she interviewed Gladys Saunders, a noted cook from Woods Cay, Abaco.

Mrs. Toote: Is it the special blend that you make?

Mrs. Saunders: I believe it is a special blend of the seasonings.

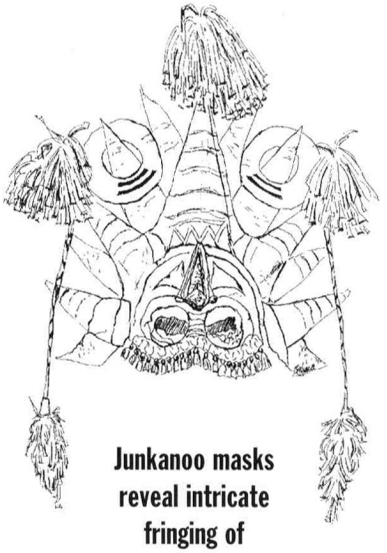
Mrs. Toote: And you don't want to go into the details about the seasonings?

Mrs. Saunders: Oh, that's my secret.

Remember that the interview is not a failure if you cannot get your cook to identify his or her "special blend" of seasonings. It is more important to understand where the person learned to cook and what types of traditional foods he or she makes than to worry about whether you have the correct amounts or ingredients for a particular recipe.



Celebrations



Junkanoo masks reveal intricate fringing of crepe paper.

This section reveals the range of celebrations in The Bahamas. Keith Wisdom's article describes the development of Junkanoo and outlines the different stages of the parade. Through the written profiles, students learn from Junkanoo leaders about their early experiences in Junkanoo and how the celebration has evolved in recent times. In addition to large-scale celebrations like Junkanoo, students will also examine smaller, more personal events. Students will read about a funeral and a "wake and settin' up" on a Family Island. Activities encourage students to think about what makes these celebrations particularly Bahamian.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this section students should be able to:

- **trace the historical development of a festival such as Junkanoo.**
- **differentiate between a religious and a secular celebration, with examples of each.**
- **list some of the differences between a celebration that takes place in a local community and one that occurs throughout The Bahamas.**
- **list different job opportunities that are related to a given celebration.**

Excerpt from

Ecstasy in Junkanoo, A Public Celebration of Freedom

by Keith G. Wisdom

Bahamian Junkanoo is an individual and community celebration of freedom. West African in origin, Junkanoo's meaning has evolved to bring new significance to the festival.

The name "Junkanoo" suggests connections with Jamaican Jonkonnu and similar festivals throughout the New World.

Junkanoo Time

"Junkanoo time" is an almost magical time at the year's end that exemplifies the spirit of Christmas, the idea that anything is possible. Junkanoo is also a time when the individual is free from a number of institutional, personal and family obligations. A Bahamian form of organized play, in which new symbolic worlds are generated, Junkanoo exists "out of" and in contrast to "normal" time.



Photo: Edes Talman

Drummers in the Junkanoo parade maintain the beat with their goatskin drums.

Junkanoo Practitioners

Today, Bahamian Junkanoo involves some fifteen adult groups representing roughly every area in New Providence and Grand Bahama. Unlike in times past, group members do not have to live in or belong in some way to the area being represented.

Alongside these organized groups are the "scrappers", individuals who are minimally costumed and are on the parade route to "rush" (a Junkanoo marching style) and have a good time. Scrappers are not interested in prize money, organization or group thematic presentation. Today, the Junkanoo scrapper represents the pre-1950s style of Junkanoo performance and attitude. Members of the major groups, on the other hand, represent the modern style of Junkanoo, whose complex and

colourful paper costumes visually dominate the event. Both men and women participate in Junkanoo, but its administration and costume creation are totally male dominated.

The Junkanoo Parade

The Junkanoo event has four distinct phases: Presentation, Judgement, Celebration (or last lap) and Transition. In the Presentation phase, major groups establish an intense performance pace, concentrating on the production of the group's own unique "Junkanoo beat", that is, repetitive, dominating notes of the Goombay drum. During the Judgement phase, which reaches its climax at daybreak, lead and dancer costumes are "displayed" — spun and raised up and down rhythmically. Judges make their final choices during this period.

Winners are announced just after the Celebration phase. In this short phase, beginning around 7:30 a.m., groups and spectators alike have decided whom they think the winners will be. The Celebration phase is marked by the energetic, almost frantic rushing pace that the major groups, and especially the presumed winners, adopt. This burst of energy also marks the beginning of the final phase, Transition, which occurs shortly before the "official" end of the Junkanoo event. The energy level on the parade route drops drastically, and discarded costume pieces litter the entire Bay Street portion of the parade route. Symbolically, this phase represents the transition of the entire Junkanoo setting from metaphor to its normal status as commercial banking and shopping district.

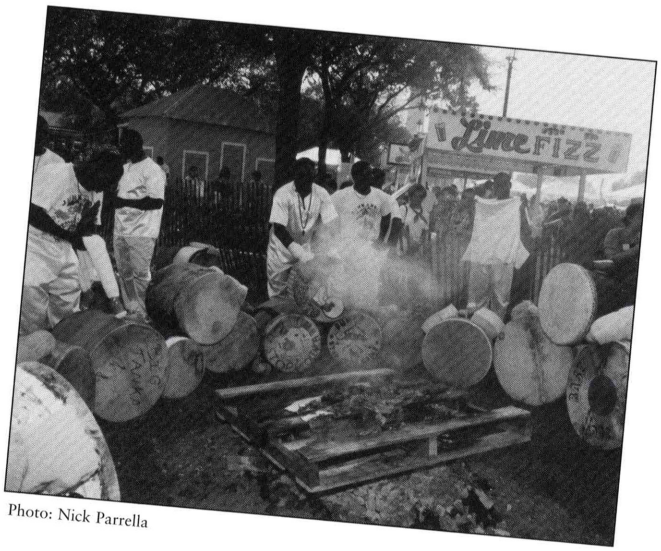


Photo: Nick Parrella

Goatskin drums must be heated before the Junkanoo Rush Out.

Junkanoo Costumes

In some instances, costume designers of major Junkanoo groups begin preparations seven to twelve months in advance. Groups strive for originality and excellence. Costume construction takes place mainly in high-ceilinged enclosures, the "shacks" which serve as the groups' base camps. The interior of the shacks are open and dry and can be locked or partitioned off. Organized groups prefer that their costume designs be seen only on parade days.

Junkanoo Music

Junkanoo music is indispensable to the Junkanoo experience, stimulating participants and spectators alike. The basic beat and variety of rhythmic patterns in Junkanoo music remain very much as they have always been. The older practice of singing in Junkanoo, however, has been replaced by chants. Melodic instruments such as the tuba, trumpet, saxo-

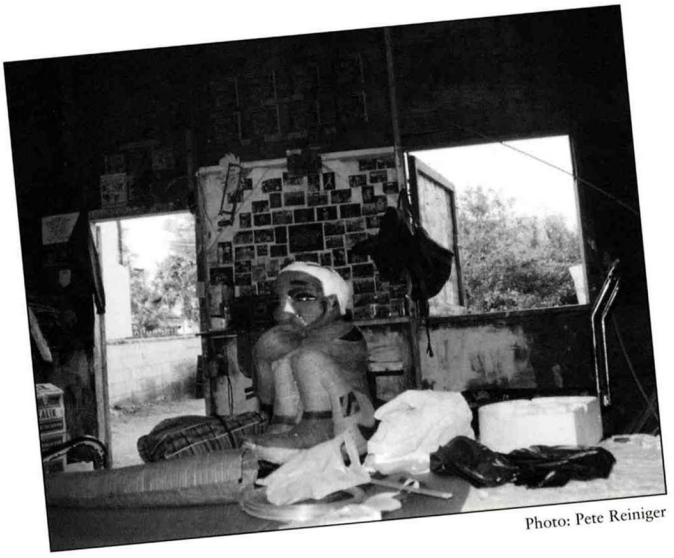


Photo: Pete Reiniger

There is not much natural light inside a Junkanoo shack. Windows are kept to a minimum so that a group's theme can remain a secret until the day of the Junkanoo rush.

phone and trombone have also been added to the traditional Junkanoo instruments (Goombay drum, cowbell, whistles, bicycle horns, conch shell, foghorn).

Junkanoo Dance

In modern Bahamian Junkanoo, as well as in traditional Junkanoo, a number of movements are usually done one after another. What is called "Junkanoo dance" is not a dance form like ballet or modern jazz but is any quick, rhythmic movement that is consistently repeated to create a noticeable pattern. The patterns consist of turns, spins, hops, skips, jumps and lunges and are mostly performed by group leaders, group dancers and linesmen who function as group marshals for major Junkanoo groups. Today, coordinated and choreographed contemporary dance steps can be seen in Junkanoo, copied from Junior Junkanoo groups.

Conclusion

Together, the parade's main artistic elements — costume design, music and dance — create a "Theatre of Junkanoo", whose dramatic impact motivates and influences many other Bahamian art forms.

Questions

1. What does Dr. Wisdom mean when he writes, "Junkanoo exists 'out of' and in contrast to 'normal' time"?
2. Dr. Wisdom refers to the Junkanoo setting as a "metaphor". What is a metaphor? How does the Transition phase of Junkanoo transform the commercial banking area back into its "normal" state?
3. How does the experience of a member of a Junkanoo group differ from that of an individual scrapper?
4. Have you participated in Junkanoo? Did Dr. Wisdom's article explain a new aspect of Junkanoo?

Activities

1. Describe the distinct phases of Junkanoo. Draw a diagram outlining these and the transitions between each phase.
2. Dr. Wisdom writes that Junkanoo "motivates and influences many other Bahamian art forms." What examples can you find to support his statement? Select one art form, and write a short essay explaining your choice.

Profiles II



Photo: Keith Wisdom

At the Smithsonian's Festival of American Folklife, some of today's foremost Junkanoo leaders and artists shared their recollections and discussed some of the issues facing Junkanoo today. Born in 1917, **DONZEL HUYLER** is the premiere cowbell maker in The Bahamas.

"I have been involved in Junkanoo for quite a few years. As a little fella, to be frank, I was actually afraid of the Junkanoo. When I was out by my yard and saw the Junkanoos coming up the street, the further they come up, the further I go to the back of the yard. By the time they were passing, I am peeping out of a window or from behind the house. My parents wouldn't allow me to go to Junkanoo. I was a late teenager before I began to participate."



Photo: Greg Elder

WINSTON "GUS" COOPER, the leader of the Valley Boys, has similar recollections.

"As a little boy I was very much afraid. I can remember holding on to my mother's dress. The characters would come up, and you were frightened. If you were naughty during the course of the year, your parents would say, 'Well, the Junkanoo will get you at Christmas time.' This was a deterrent to make you behave. When somebody interfered with you during the course of the year, you would have Boxing Day to get even."

- **Have you been to Junkanoo? Do you remember ever feeling scared like Mr. Cooper and Mr. Huyler?**

PERCY "VOLA" FRANCIS of the Saxon Superstars remembers that his family did not approve of his interest in Junkanoo.

"I came from a Christian home. My grandfather was a deacon, my grandmother was a missionary, and my father turned out to be a reverend, so it was very difficult for a person like myself to become involved with Junkanoo. Junkanoo was made up of the real ruffians, whether they be a derelict, a bum or an ex-convict."

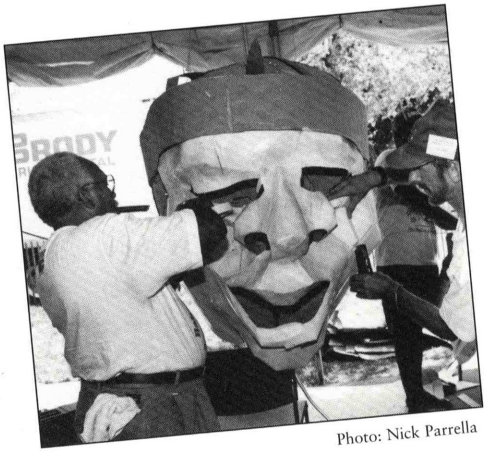


Photo: Nick Parrella

DOYLE BURROWS of the Valley Boys outlines some of the changes that took place in Junkanoo.

"As far as I could remember, at that time, the middle class or upper middle class didn't bother to rush. Ruffians rushed. The bad people. Our group changed that a bit. When our group came around in the early 60s, we wanted to make a festival where a lot of people would take part and wouldn't get into fights."

Mr. Cooper offers further explanation:

"Today Junkanoo has taken on a new look. I refer to our period as the renaissance of Junkanoo. We started to bring themes, we started to bring organization, we started to bring order into our parades. A lot of people from various classes wanted to become involved. Today in The Bahamas, anybody who is anybody in The Bahamas is happy and ready to be associated with Junkanoo."

Bahamian Junkanoo is unique. "Vola" explains the difference between Junkanoo and the Mardi Gras celebration held annually in New Orleans, Louisiana.

"The difference between us and New Orleans is we are a street festival. We make our own music. We make our own dances. We make our own costumes. The preparation is like a football Super Bowl. Whether you are a linebacker or a quarterback, you have to be somebody special, you just can't come off the street and buy a costume and jump in. We are all well trained. We practise for months and months and months."

Mr. Cooper agrees:

"In Trinidad and New Orleans, you can simply go into a store and buy a costume. In Junkanoo you have to make your costume. You can't buy it. Your craftsmanship is involved."



Photo: John Dillaber

Junkanoo costumes demand a particular kind of artistry. **STAN BURNSIDE,** an acclaimed Bahamian artist and member of One Family, recalls his own experiences in the shacks.

"I'm a trained artist. I have a Master's in Fine Arts from the University of Pennsylvania, but when I went into the Junkanoo shacks, I had to be re-educated. Everything in Junkanoo is collaborative. All of the works that you see are the result of many different people working together to create those works of art. No single individual creates those works of art. If someone is building the costume, somebody else is drawing the costume. If somebody is drawing the costume, somebody else is fringing it. And then somebody comes after that to decorate it and to finish it with the final decorations."

- **What does Mr. Burnside mean when he says he had "to be re-educated" when he went in the shacks? What is different about what he learned in the shacks and what he learned at the University of Pennsylvania?**

Some celebrations, like Junkanoo, are grand, public affairs which attract many tourists. Other celebrations are more personal but also involve much preparation. While Junkanoo comes at the same time every year, funerals are often unexpected but demand special arrangements. A funeral is a way of remembering the richness of a person's life. **KAYLA LOCKHART EDWARDS** explains the importance of mourning and funerals in The Bahamas:

"Sometime it is a granny or an auntie or a child who has been with us for two or three years or maybe a child that has been with us for only a couple of days. It doesn't matter. In The Bahamas, we mourn them just the same, because we really care about one another."

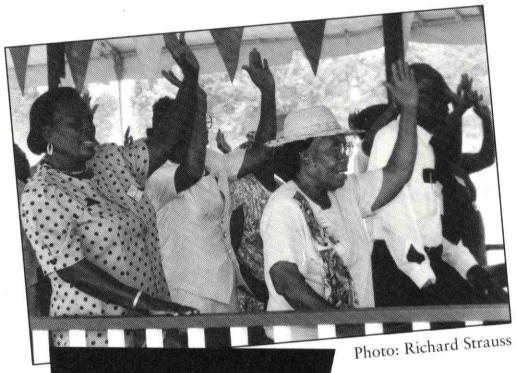


Photo: Richard Strauss

A "wake and settin' up" was held at the Festival in Washington, D.C.

ULAMAE GRAY recalls a funeral on Acklins, where she grew up:

"My grandmother was an herbal doctor. So she helped with the embalming of the body. I used to travel with her because I was brought up by my grandparents. She would go to the house and help to close the dead's eyes and embalm the body and make it ready for funeral.

In the islands we have no type of facilities like the city, where we can keep a body like for maybe a day or two. So shortly after the person is dead, within twenty-four hours, they must have a funeral, so they would go right ahead with the procedures of embalming the body. The ladies normally embalm the bodies and dress the corpse for burial. The men would build the boxes.

Each church had a society. This is an organization that you contribute to while you are alive, and this will help to pay for a casket. Then that night, well, it depends on what time the person dies. If there is nighttime, they would have a wake, a service where everybody stays up, and the different settlements come to that particular settlement, and they would sing religious songs, and we would have hot bread and coffee and bush tea of all different sort, and they would celebrate until morning.

Then the next morning it would be the funeral service. They would have given a message, and you would have different folks who have known the individual. They would come and talk about the dead and, you know, special things that the person has done, etcetera. And after that we had no hearse to take them to the cemetery, so you would have those men that are referred to as the pallbearers, and they would close the casket and take the dead to the cemetery."

- **Have you ever been to a funeral? How does Mrs. Gray's description differ from what you experienced? What details are the same?**

- **What are the separate duties for men and women?**

Mrs. Edwards offers more details of the "wake and settin' up":

"When you go to a wake and settin' up, some people will wear the traditional black or white. Some people will just come in their ordinary clothes. And they literally sit up all night. They sit up all night singing and singing and singing. It starts around eight o'clock at night, and it goes until day clean. This wake and settin' up is divided into three different segments. It starts off with the chants, then it moves to the hymns, and, when day breaks, it moves to the anthem singing. There is one person in the set who acts as a raiser, the person who raises the hymn and keeps it going. It's a way of thanking God for the life of the loved one and also mourning and feeling very sad that we have lost our loved one."

- **Have you been to a "wake and settin' up"? What do you remember?**

- **What happens in your family when someone dies?**

Questions

1. What celebrations does your family participate in?
2. What kinds of changes have taken place in Junkanoo? What contributed to these changes?
3. What are the differences between the Mardi Gras celebration in New Orleans and Junkanoo in The Bahamas?



1. Interview Activity: How Celebrations Change

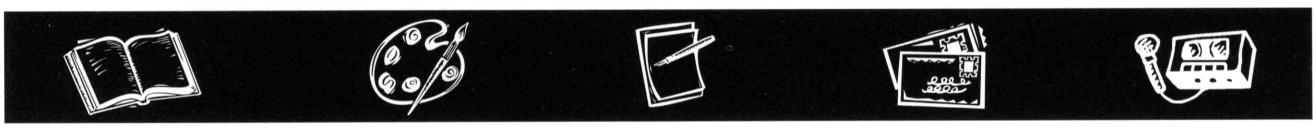
Why do celebrations change? The Junkanoo artists discussed the evolution of Junkanoo. Now it is your turn to uncover such transformation.

- Find someone who is older than you and interview that person about a particular celebration. Your celebration might be a public festivity, like the Exuma Regatta, or it can be more personal, like a family wedding.
- Find out how it has changed in the person's lifetime.
- You might talk to someone who grew up on a Family Island and now lives in Nassau.
- Is there a difference between a "wake and settin' up" in Nassau and one on a Family Island?

2. Collaborative Art

Think about Stan Burnside's claim that Junkanoo art is collaborative.

- What does this collaboration mean?
- Design a collaborative art project with several classmates. Possibilities include: one person can draw a picture, another can add colour and another can add other finishing touches.
- When you are finished with the project, discuss the collaboration with your "team".
- What was difficult and what was successful about the project?
- How would you change your plans if you were to do another collaborative project?



3. Describe a Celebration

Pick a celebration in which you participate. It could be a personal event, like a family christening, or it might be a public celebration like Independence Day.

- Write down what makes this celebration special to you. If you prefer, consider writing a poem or completing a drawing about Junkanoo.
- What elements of the celebration do you remember? Food? Music? Smells?
- How can you describe this celebration to someone who was not there?

Poem by Monique Culmer, L.W. Young School

The excitement of Junkanoo

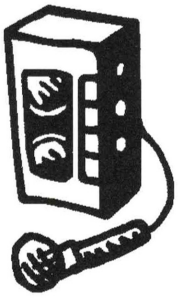
Junkanoo is a time of fun,
Where all the groups get up and run,
It's a time of joy and laughter
Where all the groups get out and scatter,
The horns are blowing,
Costumes are glowing,
People are singing,
While judges are thinking,
People get excited of what they see,
The losers of course will have to let it be.

By: Monique Culmer

SECONDARY

Exploring Your Own Communities

This section serves as a culmination of the short interview projects that have been interspersed throughout these materials. This section offers students a guideline to plan a large-scale research and documentation project on their own. After an initial exercise on their own family, students are encouraged to carry out a project of their own choosing. Students should work in groups. As the introduction to these materials explained, your research and that of your students is an important addition to the historical record. Consider establishing a pen pal school on another island to exchange research and information. Through pen pal schools students will be able to learn about traditions in other islands and will be able to share their hard work with a wider audience. If you need assistance in setting up a pen pal school, contact the Social Studies Education Officer at the Learning Resources Unit in Nassau.



Using a tape recorder makes it easier to gather information.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this section students should be able to:

- **understand the history and migration of their own family.**
- **choose and carry out a documentation project that interests them.**

Exploring Your Own Communities

These materials have introduced you to some aspects of the rich culture of The Bahamas. The Smithsonian's Festival project was only a beginning, however, and there is much more to discover.

Our Bahamian Heritage should encourage you to explore and document on your own. In a fieldwork report, Tracey Thompson, one of the researchers for the Festival, summarized her discoveries:

"Even before I sat down and asked myself what I had learned ... I knew that I would have to say something about witnessing settlements dying. I had been born in 1961 in Nassau. I had picked coca plums in areas of the city like South Beach and Carmichael. Hardly anyone had lived out there then. Now cement block houses are everywhere where the scrub and bush and coca plum trees used to be. I had taken the growth of Nassau to be what happened everywhere. I did not realize that places could shrink. Histories of The Bahamas talk about busts as well as booms. But I hadn't really understood communities dying. ... Seeing it face to face was another thing."

- What does Ms. Thompson mean when she speaks of "communities dying"? What can be down to slow down this process?

One of the most effective ways to slow down the process is documentation. By writing down, photographing and recording the traditions and stories of people around you, you will help to preserve these valuable traditions, both for yourself and for future generations of Bahamians. The documentation of traditional cultures in The Bahamas is essential for their preservation. The Festival project contributed to this process. The Department of Archives is committed to preserving Bahamian culture. Now it is your task to continue.

Your Own Family: Migration Stories

For your documentation project, it often helps to begin with what you know best, material that is easily accessible. Your own family is often a good place to start.

Make a map of The Bahamas on the classroom wall. To ensure sufficient space, cut out islands from paper. Use the wall as the ocean, rather than drawing islands on a piece of paper. Your map needs to be large enough to include information from everyone in your class.

Locate yourself on the map with a thumbtack or a coloured sticker. Have you always lived where you live now? Did you ever live on another island? If so, mark this island with another thumbtack or coloured sticker. Where did your parents grow up? Mark this also. Does anyone in the class come from another country? Or did their parents or grandparents? If you have space, cut out these countries to include on your class map as well. Mark these countries as well.

Each member of the class should connect the tacks that make up his or her family history with a piece of string or coloured yarn. What does the path of the string tell you about migration in your family? Has your family moved often? Has your family moved far? Each member of the class should write a paragraph about himself or herself. Include information about when your family came to your island and why.

Beyond Your Family: Your Own Documentation Project

Now that you have explored your own family history, you can choose a less familiar subject, one that you want to learn more about.

This project will take time and will require planning and preparation. The following guidelines will help you:

- choose a project.
- plan your research.
- prepare for documentation.
- organize your raw research and documentation into a final project.
- publicize and share your final project.

Your project should include a combination of

- interviews
- visual documentation through drawings, still photographs or video
- library or archival research.

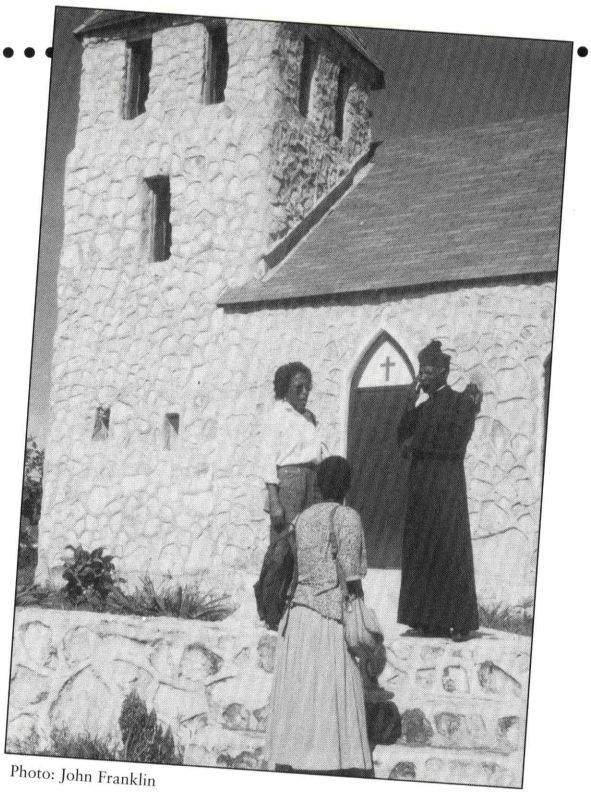


Photo: John Franklin

Father Rex Seymour shares his knowledge of Cat Island with Festival researchers.

Choosing Your Project

You can work by yourself or preferably with other members of your class. The project should lead to a final product that can be displayed, performed or written and illustrated. You may already have some ideas for your project from completing the activities in this guide. Here are some more possibilities.

- Photo essay on a local celebration or programme. Interviews with participants, organizers and audience members might produce some interesting quotations to use in the text. How do people decide what to perform for a programme? How long have the people participated in programmes?
- Written profile of a local artist in your area. Combine interviews with photographs. Include information about the artist's family history, how the artist learned his or her

craft and what he or she is doing to pass on the tradition. Why did you pick the person you did? Does this person or the craft he or she does have a special meaning for you?

- A twelve-month calendar of your community, with each month including an illustration (photograph or drawing) of your own family or community. Possibilities include: birthdays of local heroes, commemorations of historical events, dates marking local natural disasters (floods, hurricanes), annual religious celebrations.

Outline

Write a one-page outline of your topic. Some of the questions you may want to answer include:

- Whom do you plan to interview?
- What kind of additional documentation will you include (photographs, drawings, videotape)?
- Will you need to consult libraries or archives for your project?

In your outline, explain what the finished product will be, with information on length, number of images, wall space it will cover and other details pertinent to your plans. Describe who you think the audience for the final product will be (classmates, the rest of the school, parents, etc.). Include a short bibliography if possible. Write out a schedule for completing the project. If you are working with a group, be sure to explain who will be responsible for which parts of the project.

Share your outline with your teacher and classmates, and adjust the outline to incorporate their comments and suggestions.

Carrying Out the Project

Now you are ready to start. The place to begin will depend on your project. You may need to start with a survey of your community for likely subjects for photographs or interviews. Alternatively, you may want to gather preliminary information at your school or local library, historical society or archives of the local newspaper office.

Here are some clues to successful information gathering:

• Interviews

Use a cassette tape recorder if available. It is much easier to record speech than to write down every word. Practice runs are recommended to make sure you are comfortable with your equipment. One of the biggest problems for a beginning interviewer is the tendency to dominate the interview. Ask one question at a time, and let the person take time in answering. A list of questions helps to begin, but do not let these questions rule the interview. If a question leads to a topic not on your list, do not hesitate to ask. You may come away with information that you had never thought to ask.

• Library or Archives

Consult the reference staff of a library or archives before plunging into research. Explain your project, and ask for suggestions of the best place to start. Be sure to respect any rules the institution has about handling materials, using equipment (such as computers or microfilm readers) and the proper way to credit photographs or other materials gathered. Find out the policy for copying materials before you decide what to include in your project.

• Visual Information

Make sure you know how to use your equipment (still camera, video camera) before you begin! Practise before shooting the pictures for your project. If possible, get some pointers from a skilled photographer or videographer. It may help to look through photo essay books and to watch some well-made documentary videos to get some ideas on what you would like to do (ask your librarian or look in the bibliography of these materials to locate some good references).

Make sure your equipment is in good working order and that you have enough film, videotape and batteries with you. In some cases you may need to use a tripod to avoid blurry photographs and jumpy video. Be sure to allow enough time to reshoot photographs or video if a problem occurs. If you are working in a group and have enough equipment, have more than one person shoot different aspects of the same event to ensure good coverage.

If you do not have access to a camera, careful drawings can often provide substantial information. For instance, if your project involves comparing the traditions of different boatbuilders, detailed drawings of their boats would be a nice addition to your interviews.

Putting It All Together

Once your information is gathered, you are ready to edit, compose and finalize your project. Here are some ideas that will help to guarantee a good final product:

• Choose your best work.

Your project will look sloppy and will be less effective if you choose blurry photographs, uninteresting quotations, scratchy recordings

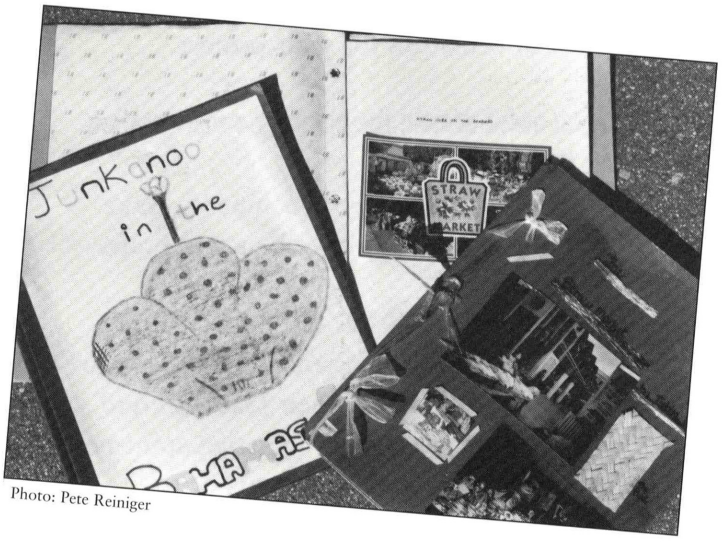


Photo: Pete Reiniger

Student documentation projects

or badly reproduced artwork. Consult your teacher, family members and classmates to help you select information if you are having a hard time deciding what to use.

• Keep it short and precise.

You may be tempted to include all of the information you gathered, but your audience will remain engaged longer and better understand your message if you keep explanations as concise and clear as possible. Select only those images and quotations that best illustrate the theme of your project.

• Know your audience.

If you plan to present your final product to lower grades, parents, family members or the community at large, you will want to adjust the information to suit the age, knowledge and/or interests of the audience.

• Be sure to get permission from all sources.

Properly credit all of the information used, and the people you interviewed or who participated in a performance you may have videotaped.

You do not want to anger or hurt anyone who provided information for your project.

• Plan an event around the opening or inauguration of your project.
Consider offering simple refreshments. Take the time to get audience reactions and praise.

• Get some formal feedback.
After you have presented your project to your audience, be sure to note their reactions and comments. You might wish to assign someone in your group to gather comments or to administer a short evaluation sheet to audience members. This information will help you improve your next project or adjust this project if you are so inclined.

Follow-up

After you have finished your project, it is important to share the information you have discovered.

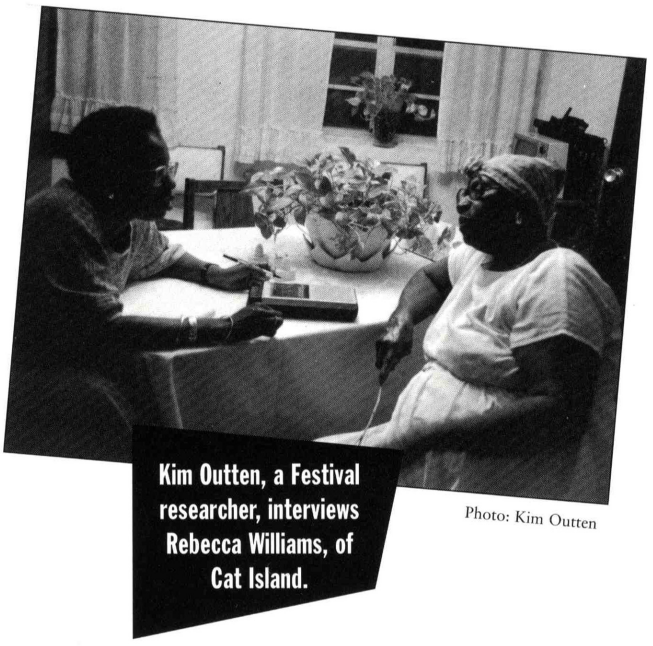
- As a class, gather together the information from all of the projects. Make a book of the different interviews, and ask your teacher about setting up a pen pal school on another island. Exchange the information you have researched with research from your pen pal school.

In addition to sharing your project with your pen pal school, there are other ways to take your project further. Here are some suggestions:

- If you make a video, find out if your local television station is interested in broadcasting the programme.
- If you create a small exhibition, ask a local business (like an historical society, or a bank) if they want to borrow it for a display.
- Share your project with another audience. If appropriate, take your show to a local senior citizen centre, a nursing home or a day care centre. Find out if local organizations are looking for programme ideas (Boy Scouts, Lion's Club, community centre), and present your project to them.
- Write an article for the local newspaper based on your research.
- Organize all of your transcripts, notes, photographs or video footage and create an archive for the school library. This is a good way to use information that you cannot include in the final product. Be sure to include an index for easy access by others.

Appendix

As the introduction explains, these materials are only a start. These materials aim to inspire you and your students to further action.



Kim Outten, a Festival researcher, interviews Rebecca Williams, of Cat Island.

Photo: Kim Outten

What's Next?

As outlined in the introduction, the research and fieldwork collected for The Bahamas Programme at the 1994 Festival of American Folklife can be found in the Department of Archives in Nassau and at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C.

However, by completing the activities in this guide, you and your class have made a considerable addition to the Festival research. It is important to share this new information with other educators and researchers. There are many ways to do this. Here are a few:

- Establish a local archive in your community to properly save the information you have gathered.
- Organize pen pal schools. These materials can help to promote interaction between islands. Assemble the material you and your class have researched, and share your work with a school on another island. Such interaction will allow students to learn about traditions particular to certain islands.
- Plan local festivals to showcase the tradition bearers you have researched. If a Festival seems too complicated to organize, you can begin by inviting local craftspeople and tradition bearers to your classroom. The following pages offer specific suggestions about how to ensure the success of such an event.

Using a Resource Person in Your Classroom

Teaching Traditions

These materials provide you with lots of information. Within this notebook and accompanying video and audio tapes, there are songs, stories and crafts demonstrations to share with your students. However, these materials should encourage you to take the next step: invite a resource person into your classroom!

Bringing a resource person to your classroom can be very exciting. Musicians, cooks, basket makers and boatbuilders are only some of the possible resource people to invite into your classroom. However, it is up to you to make the event a success. Here are some tips to ensure that the event runs smoothly and is as stimulating as possible for both students and teachers alike.

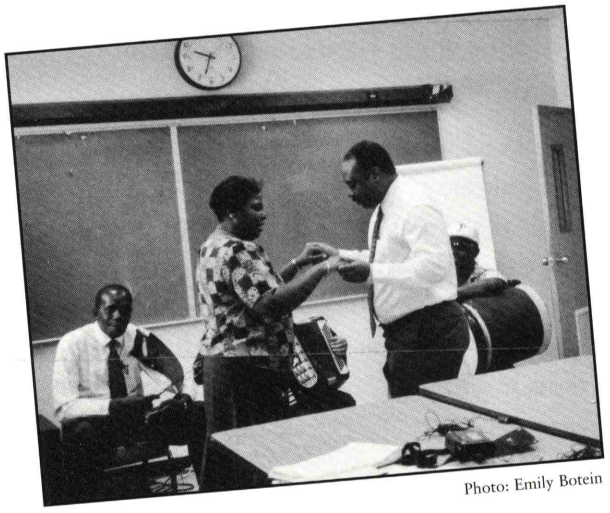


Photo: Emily Botein

Teachers practise traditional dance steps at a teacher workshop in Nassau.

PLAN in advance. Following this page, you will find a sample letter of invitation to a resource person. To make sure no confusion arises, send a written invitation, but follow up with a phone call.

DISCUSS the session with the resource person before he or she comes to your class. How long will the class be? How far ahead of time should he or she arrive? Does the resource person need any special equipment or supplies? Talk with the resource person about the format for the class. Explain that you hope the session will be a combination of demonstration and discussion. Make sure the resource person understands that talking with students in an informal question-and-answer session will be a central part of the class. If possible, invite the resource person to sit in on a class beforehand to make sure he or she is comfortable with the space and format.

ENHANCE the session with props. Before the resource person comes to your class, ask him or her what kind of objects he or she can bring to the class. If possible, ask the resource person to bring objects that students can touch and try out. Students will be most engaged if the session can be as hands-on and interactive as possible.

PREPARE yourself and your students for the session. Most likely, the resource person will begin with a short talk about his or her own work. If possible, you should visit the resource person at his or her home or workshop beforehand. Take some photographs, record a song or story and preview these with your students before he or she joins your class. Look for background material to distribute among your students before the session. If possible, discuss the session in a prior class. Can you obtain some video snippets of the resource person to share with students? This is a good way to generate interest and questions among students before the resource person comes to class. During the class session there should be time for performance and/or a brief lecture, but many stories are uncovered by the spontaneity of a simple question. When did you first learn to play the accordion? Where do you get the wood for your boats? If each student is required to prepare three questions to ask the resource person, the student will be more engaged. Be wary of long lectures, or thirty minutes of uninterrupted musical performance. These tend to make students drift off, rather than remain focused.

MODEL your behaviour toward the resource person. Give a proper introduction before the person begins. Share a little about the person's background, the number of years he or she has been practising the traditional skill and how he or she learned this tradition. Do not leave the room while the person is visiting, and give him or her your full attention. (This may seem like a good time to grade papers or prepare tomorrow's lesson plan, but remember that students will not give the resource person their full attention if you do not.) If you show your respect and interest for his or her skills and knowledge, your students will follow suit.

THANK the resource person. Many of the people you will invite have full-time jobs in addition to their traditional practices; spending a morning at a school often means loss of work time. They may ask you to write a letter to their supervisor at work to explain the session. Some schools may have a fund to offer a small honorarium to resource people making classroom visits. Perhaps a raffle or a bake sale can raise additional funds. Even if you do not have access to money, make sure you remember to thank the resource person for his or her generous donation of time. A sample thank you note follows these suggestions. Consider sending a thank you from your students as well, perhaps with drawings or photographs by the students.

Date

Dear (resource person):

I am a ____ teacher at the ___ school. In recent weeks, my students and I have been studying traditional culture in The Bahamas. We have looked at music, storytelling, traditional foodways and much more. We have learned about the heritage of our islands and peoples.

I am writing to invite you to my classroom to share your knowledge of _____ with my students. I am eager for my students to see living examples of our heritage and your fine craftsmanship/extensive knowledge will offer a perfect opportunity.

If you are interested in visiting my class, I look forward to speaking with you soon to discuss the details of this session. I know my students will benefit from any props you can bring. These might include [instruments, finished pieces of work (baskets, quilts, etc), tools used, such as a corn meal grinder] as well as the materials you use, such as [sisal, pieces of fabric, different grades of corn meal][6]. When we speak on the phone, we can talk more specifically about how the class will run. You can reach me at _____ during the day or at _____ in the evenings.

I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely

(your name)

[6] As the page on *Using a Resource Person in Your Classroom* explains, any props the resource person can share with your class will help to bring his or her tradition to life for students.

Date

Dear (resource person):

Thank you for joining my class recently. My students have not stopped talking about your presentation. As I mentioned before, we have been studying our heritage in school through readings and audio and video tapes. However, a visit from a true carrier of our culture really opened their eyes.

I appreciate you taking the time from your busy schedule to share your knowledge and tradition with us. I am enclosing a drawing [card, scrapbook] from my students as a small token of our appreciation.

Thank you very much.

Yours sincerely,

(your name)

Sample Lesson Plan

Grade 11

Topic: Storytelling *Time:* 1 hour, 10 minutes
Resources: Cassette tape with stories, cassette tape player, profiles of Kayla Edwards, Cleveland Eneas, Mabel Williams, chalk, chalkboard.

Objectives

Students will be able to:
- explain the purpose of storytelling.
- distinguish between "fiction" and "non-fiction".
- identify the characteristics which make stories Bahamian.
- create a short play from one of the stories on the cassette tape.

Focus Activity (Introduction)

Teacher asks for a student volunteer to recite a nursery rhyme.

Teacher asks students to summarize the rhyme, pointing out that the rhyme is indeed a story, with a beginning, a middle and an end.

Teacher asks students to list reasons why children may be told nursery rhymes or short stories. Possibilities include:
- to foster an interest in reading
- to enhance powers of imagination
- for entertainment
- to promote history and culture.

Development

Teacher writes "fiction" and "non-fiction" on the chalkboard and asks students to define the words.

Teacher explains that stories may be divided into one of these two categories. Teacher invites students to listen to stories on the audio cassette and decide which category the stories should be placed in. A short biography of the storytellers is given to students. (Possible comparisons include "Tar Baby" [side A, #2] and "Going to School" [side B, #2] or "Truth to a Bahamian" [side A, #1] and "B'Man and B'Shark" [side A, #4].

Discussion takes place. Topics include: Can some stories be a combination of fiction and non-fiction? What lessons do these stories teach? What makes these stories particularly Bahamian?

Glossary of Key Words

A capella describes music that is performed without any instrumental accompaniment.

Bain Town is an area south of the city of Nassau that was originally settled by liberated Africans in the 1820s.

Baptism is a ceremonial immersion in water that is part of a church initiation. In The Bahamas some baptisms take place in the sea as total immersions, while others take place in basins of water in church.

Bruise is a pounding technique used to tenderize meat or conch before cooking or slicing.

Coconut straw is made from the coconut palm leaves used in straw work. It is used for a colour contrast with light-coloured straw in certain patterns, such as the peas 'n rice design.

Drum ovens can be found in some Family Islands. They are usually made from a recycled large oil drum with a door cut out of a side panel. Drum ovens are used for baking breads and pastry, as are rock ovens.

Fire hearths are found in many Family Islands. A fire hearth refers to the area of the kitchen where a wood fire is used for cooking.

Goombay music has its roots in West Africa. In The Bahamas, newly arrived Africans, many of whom came as slaves, made music with the local materials they could find: carpenters' saws and wooden barrels.

Grits is a popular side dish in The Bahamas. Grits came to The Bahamas from the southern United States and consist of coarsely ground corn.

Hemp or sisal is a plant, the fiber of which is often used for making rope and plait.

Palm top comes from the heart of the palm tree. At the heart, the new leaves have not yet unfolded. The tender leaves are stripped and dried to use in straw work. Pond top and silver top are used for straw work as well.

Plaiting is one of the steps in straw work. After the palm is dried and split, the strands are plaited together, in a manner similar to braiding. This plait forms the basis of much of the straw work found in The Bahamas today.

Programmes are social events that showcase local music and dramatic talent. Programmes are hosted by a chairperson and are held in society halls, school rooms or church halls.

Quadrille is a traditional dance with roots in England, but with an African flair.

Rake 'n scrape is a form of Goombay music. Rake 'n scrape can be heard in clubs and society halls. Many modern musicians combine rake 'n scrape rhythms with contemporary songs.

Regattas are annual boat races in The Bahamas. Regattas have evolved from small Sunday afternoon activities to grand competitions that are anticipated for months in advance.

Ring plays are children's games that are often accompanied by ditties, or short songs.

Rock ovens are common in the Family Islands. They are often shared by many community members. Rock ovens are made out of lime plaster, a material made from burned limestone and conch shells. Rock ovens are used for baking breads and pastry.

Short water refers to a reduced sauce that often accompanies stew fish or stew chicken. The sauce can include tomatoes, thyme, onions, sweet and hot peppers and sometimes okra or other vegetables.

Sisal (also called hemp) is a plant that grows wild and is also manufactured commercially. Sisal was traditionally used to make rope. It is also used to make plait for straw work.

A **society hall** is often a community building owned by a lodge, a friendly or burial society, or even a church. Society halls are used for programmes and community events.

Music of The Bahamas

SIDE A: SACRED SONGS

1. Dry Bones

Chorus:
Great God, Ezekiel saw them wheel a rollin',
Way up in the middle of the air
Oh Lord, he saw the wheel a rollin',
It was way in the middle of the air.
repeat

Great God Almighty now the Bible declare,
Ezekiel saw the wheel in the middle of the air,
Great big wheel and a little bitty wheel,
Turning over in the middle of the air.
My God said and the Book don't lie,
He told Ezekiel to prophesy,
And my God spoke and Ezekiel, man,
Shook his head, he began to cry.
He said, oh bones, dry bones a walkin',
Great God Almighty, look a dry bones talkin'.
He said, bones, bones, bones, listen to me,
Bones and the Lord talk.

Great God now your toe and your foot bone,
join together,
And your foot and your ankle bone, join on,
And your ankle and your leg bone, join together,
And your leg and your knee bone, join on,
And your knee and your thigh bone, join
together,
And your thigh and your hip bone, join on.

Chorus

That time the leg and the knee bone began to
walk,
The skull and the jaw bone began to talk,
And they all get together as God command,
They were walkin' and talkin' like a natural man.

Great God, we gon' walk and talk them dry
bones,
Let's walk and talk them dry bones,
Let's walk and talk them dry bones,
Now hear the word of the Lord.

Sung by Sons of Andros, Staniard Creek, Andros: Harrington "Zippy" Frazier Sr., Harrington Frazier Jr., Ricardo Frazier, Quintero Frazier.

Traditional Spiritual sung in Bahamian rhyming style.

2. When I Get Inside

When I get inside, oh when I get inside,
All my troubles will be over, when I get inside
the gate.
repeat

Sung by Cat Island Mites and friends, Nassau, New Providence: Patricia Bazard, Buina Cleare, Dwayne Curtis, Garland Dean, Susiemae Dorsett, Kayla Edwards, Pearl Hart, Ozzie King, Kermit Strachan, Tex Turnquest. Soloists: Patricia Bazard and Buina Cleare.

Spiritual "rushin'" song from Cat Island. Orginally this song was sung after midnight on New Year's Eve to usher in the New Year. Participants march or "rush" through the aisle of the church, clapping their hands and rhythmically stamping their feet. "Rushin'" is also used to raise funds; everyone puts a piece of money in the collection plate as they "rush" past.

3. Let the Church Roll On

Let the church roll on, my Lord,
repeat
If the people in the church, oh my Lord,
And they don't do right, oh my Lord,
What must we do, open the door and let 'em go,
And let the church roll on.

Lord let the church roll on, my Lord,
repeat
If the deacon in the church, oh my Lord,
And he don't do right, oh my Lord,
What must we do, take him off the deacon board,
And let the church roll on.

Lord let the church roll on, my Lord,
repeat
If the pastor in the church, oh my Lord,
And he don't do right, oh my Lord,
What must we do, take him off the deacon board,
Let the church roll on.

Oh let the church roll on, my Lord,
repeat
If the pastor in the church, oh my Lord,
And he don't do right, oh my Lord,
What must we do, pay him off and let him go,
And let the church roll on.

Oh let the church roll on, my Lord,
repeat
If the devil in the church, oh my Lord,
And he don't do right, oh my Lord,
What must we do, take your foot and kick him out,
Let the church roll on.
Sung by Dicey Doh Singers, Nassau, New Providence: Dwayne Curtis, Garland Dean, Kermit Strachan, Tex Turnquest.

Traditional Negro Spiritual sung in typical Bahamian Quartet style.

4. God Sent Jonah

Oh God sent Jonah to Ninevah land,
repeat
But Jonah disobeyed, oh my, the Lord command.

Jonah went aboard, he boarded a ship,
The ship did bound for Tasha Land,
But God sent Jonah to Ninevah land,
And Jonah disobeyed, oh my, but the Lord command.
repeat

A big fish, by the name of the whale,
But he swallowed brother Jonah, from his head to his tail,
Swallowed brother Jonah, from his head to his tail,
But the rack-ul-lous (reckless) wind, oh the wind, keep blowin' down.

God sent Jonah to Ninevah land,
But Jonah disobeyed the Lord's command,
But Jonah disobeyed the Lord command,
The rack-ul-lous wind, oh the wind, keep tumblin' down.

Sung by Israel Forbes, Bluff, South Andros.

Traditional Bahamian Spiritual, typical of storytelling in song.

5. I'm Going to Live That Life

I'm gonna to live that life
Gonna sing within my soul
Gonna live that life that's in my mind.

Live that life, gonna sing within my soul
Not gonna give up right for the wrong
That's another route child, but I don't mind
living alone
I'm gonna live the life within my soul.

I'm gonna live that life, gonna sing what's in
my soul
Gonna be given ...

Gonna live that life, gonna sing what's in my
soul
Then given my right for that role
My life has another route child, but I don't
mind living alone
Then, I'm gonna live that life.

This recording is from Joseph Spence: The Complete Folkways Recordings • 1958. *Smithsonian/Folkways 40066. Copyright 1992. Used by permission.*

Typical Bahamian rhyming Spiritual, perhaps one of the early roots of today's rap music.

6. Christian Automobile

Lord you know, every child, every child of God,
Running for Jesus, just like an automobile,
repeat
Prayer is my driver's license,
Oh faith is my steering wheel.

But when you get on the road to glory,
Satan is going to try to turn you round,
But you got to keep on driving,
If you want a starry ground.

Great God, now you better check on your
brakes,
Stop your wicked ways,
A man that's gone from a woman
Only have a few more days.
You better check on your light,
To see your way clear,
Because if you don't do right
You just won't be there.
You better check on your generator,
You need more Christian power,
You can't do nothing with automatic,
You need him every hour.

Christian, oh Christian,
Switch on your starter and start your
automobile,
Put it in first gear, ride on up the hill,
Ride on children, we'll never see you no more,
I'll meet you over there, on the other shore,
But I'm not worrying about my parking space.

As long as I can see my saviour face to face,
I say prayer is my driver's license,
Oh faith is my steering wheel.
repeat

Sung by Sons of Andros, Staniard Creek, Andros.

Typical Bahamian rhyming Spiritual.

7. Out on the Rolling Sea

Out on the rolling sea,
Jesus speak to me,
Out on the rolling sea,
When he come.
repeat

Sung by John Roberts, written by Joseph Spence.

Traditional rhyming Spiritual from Andros. This recording is from Joseph Spence, Folk Guitar, John Roberts and Frederick McQueen: Bahamian Ballads and Rhyming Spirituals. *Folkways Records 3847. Copyright 1964. Used by permission.*

8. Bid You Goodnight

Well lay down my dear sister,
Lay down and take your rest.
Won't you lay your head upon the Saviour's breast,
'Cause' I love you, good Lord, but Jesus loves you the best,
Oh I bid you goodnight, goodnight, goodnight.

Lay down my dear brother,
Lay down and take your rest,
Oh won't you lay your head upon the Saviour's breast,
'Cause I love you, good Lord, but Jesus loves you the best,
Oh I bid you goodnight, goodnight, goodnight.

One of these mornings bright early and soon,
You're gonna look for me but I'll be gone,
'Cause John the Divine said he saw the sign,
"A" for the ark, that big, big boat,
It was built on the land in order to float,
He gonna walk in the valley and the shadow of death,
Surely goodness shall follow me on.
La la la le la la la la le la la la

Sung by Cat Island Mites and friends, Nassau, New Providence. Solo rhymer is Patricia Bazard.

"Bid You Goodnight" is often sung at a "wake and settin' up", an all-night vigil practised for hundreds of years throughout The Bahamas. The ceremony begins with hymns and anthems. As day breaks, the music changes to rhyming songs and Spirituals. Most songs centre around the eternal rewards of the Christian religion: heaven, immorality, God's providence in taking the life of the loved one. Black coffee spiced with island spirits is the preferred drink. Sometimes bush teas are served. A "wake and settin' up" is a time to mourn all night long and serves as a source of comfort to the bereaved.

SIDE B: SECULAR SONGS

1. Watermelon is Spoilin'

Performed by Thomas Cartwright and the Boys, Clarence Town, Long Island: Thomas Cartwright, accordion; Orlando Turnquest, drum; Huelon Newbold, saw (New Providence).

Music used to dance the set 1 of the Quadrille and the Round Dance, Plait the May Pole, Skullin' Dance or Meringue (Marangie).

The words to this song, not heard on the cassette, are as follows:

Watermelon is spoilin'
Watermelon is spoilin'
Watermelon is spoilin' on the vine
O me O my O baby
Watermelon is spoilin' on the vine.

2. Girl If I Write You

Girl if I write you,
You can't read it,
How you gonna know?
repeat

She said, can I carry it to someone to read it for me to know,
I said, oh no, oh no, oi, your mammy gonna know.
repeat

I tell you long time, your mammy, I don't want her to know,
I tell you long time, your mammy, I don't want her to know,
You carry that letter to nobody, no.

Girl if I write you, you can't read it, how you gonna know?
Carry that letter to no one, no one to know,
Oh no, oh no, oh no, then your mammy gonna know.
repeat

Composed and sung by Nattie Saunders, Alice Town, Bimini, who accompanies himself on banjo.

Typical Bahamian ballad about a young man's secret courting of a young girl by letter in the early 1950s.

3. Went to the Bight

Went to the Bight, oh yes,
Went to the Bight, oh yes,
See Miss Cooper, oh yes,
Jazzy woman, oh yes,
Long hair, oh yes,
Sharp nose, oh yes,
Forlorn to stand,
Oh shaky stand, oh yes,
Has to leave Old Bight, oh yes,
To come to New Bight, oh yes,
And I'm at the Time, Oh the same time,
Wasn't it the Roll time,
Has to leave New Bight,
And I've come to Freetown,
And I'm at the Time,
Oh the same time,
Has to leave Freetown,

And I've come to Smith,
Come to Knowles,
Come to Teabay,
Hot Springs,
Come to Dart's Bay,
Come to Cove.

Sung by Cat Island Mites with lead singing by Buina Cleare, Nassau, New Providence.

Traditional Cat Island ring play which usually precedes the seven-set Quadrille dance. Each dancer gets an opportunity to "show off" in the centre of the ring until each one has had a turn. Accompanied by hand clapping and syncopated drums.

4. Big Belly Man Polka

Performed by Ed Moxey's Rake 'n Scrape, Nassau, New Providence: Ed Moxey, accordion; Huelon Newbold, saw; Cyril Dean, drum.

Song accompanies the Heel and Toe Polka.

The words to this song, not heard on the cassette, are as follows:

Went to well for a pail of water
Big Belly man come muddy the water.

5. All in the Woods

All in the woods, there was a tree,
The finest tree you ever did see,
Oh the tree in the woods
And the green leaves grow around, around,
The green leaves grow around.

And on that tree there was a limb,
The finest limb you ever did see,
Oh the limb on the tree
repeat remainder of previous verse

And on that limb, there was a branch,
The finest branch you ever did see,
Oh the branch on the limb
repeat remainder of previous verse

And on that branch, there was a nest,
The finest nest you ever did see,
Oh the nest on the branch
repeat remainder of previous verse

And in that nest, there was an egg,
The finest egg you ever did see,
Oh egg in the nest
repeat remainder of previous verse

And in that egg, there was a yolk,
The finest yolk you ever did see,
Oh yolk in the egg
repeat remainder of previous verse

And in that yolk, there was a bird,
The finest bird you ever did see,
Oh the bird in the yolk
repeat remainder of previous verse

And on that bird, there was a wing,
The finest wing you ever did see,
Oh the wing on the bird
repeat remainder of previous verse

And on that wing, there was a feather,
The finest feather you ever did see,
Oh the feather on the wing
repeat remainder of previous verse

And on that feather, there was a spot,
The finest spot you ever did see,
Oh the spot on the feather
repeat remainder of previous verse

Sung by Avis Armbrister and Almeda Campbell, Arthur's Town, Cat Island.

Typical song taught by teachers in the early 1900s to generation after generation of Bahamian children.

6. Round and Round the Barrel

Round and round the barrel,
Running round the barrel,
Running round the barrel,
Go looking for your Nassau tango
Nassau gal go tango
Long Island gal go tango
Rock Island gal go tango
Eleuthera gal ...
Bimini gal ...
Bahama gal ...
Ocean Cay gal ...
Andros gal ...

Sung by Nattie Saunders, Alice Town, Bimini. Nattie Saunders, banjo; Huelon Newbold, saw; Orlando Turnquest, hand drum.

7. Sloop John B

We sail on the sloop John B.,
My grandpoppy and me, round Nassau town
we did roam,
Drinking all night, got into a fight,
I feel so break up, I want to go home.

Chorus:
So hoist up the John B. sail,
See how the main sail's set,
Send for the captain
And so let me go home,
I want to go home,
I want to go home,
I feel so break up, I want to go home.

The first mate he got drunk,
Broke out the people's trunk,
Policemen come on down and take him away,
They take him to jail,
Without any bail,
I feel so break up, I want to go home.
repeat chorus

Sung by Dicey Doh, Nassau, New Providence.

8. Jimmy Bend the Tree

Performed by Thomas Cartwright and the Boys, Clarence Town, Long Island: Thomas Cartwright, accordion; Orlando Turnquest, drum; Huelon Newbold, saw (New Providence).

The words to this song, not heard on the cassette, are as follows:
Jimmy bend the tree while dey young.
(The words come from the Biblical proverb, "Train a child when he is young.")

This is a traditional Bahamian dance song, performed by a Goombay rake 'n scrape band. The song is often used to accompany Maypole dances and skullin'.

9. Roll of Pin

I bring to you this roll of pin,
For this the way that love begins,
That I will only marry you,
That I will marry you.

I would not accept your roll of pin,
For that's no way how love begin,
Not I, not I, would marry you,
Nor I would marry you.

I bring to you this dress of red,
With borders all lined
With silken thread,
That I will only marry you,
Yes I will marry you.

I would not accept your dress of red,
Or borders lining with silken thread,
Not I, not I, would marry you,
Nor I would marry you.

I bring to you this dress of green,
To make you look like a fairy queen,
Yes I, I will marry, marry you,
Yes I will marry you.

I would not accept your dress of green,
To make me look like no fairy queen,
Not I, not I would marry you,
Nor I would marry you.

I bring to you the care of my heart,
That we will never, never depart,
That I will only marry you,
Yes I will marry you.

I would not accept the care from your heart,
Love all that you can impart,
Not I, not I will marry you,
Nor I will marry you.

I bring to you the key of my chiss (chest)
That you will have money at your request,
That I will only marry you,
Yes I will marry you.

I would accept the key from your chest,
That I will have money at your request,
Yes I, yes I will marry you,
Yes I will marry you.

Ha ha ha ha money is all,
You lady's love is nothing at all,
Yes I, yes I will marry you,
Yes I will marry you.

Sung by Avis Armbrister and Almeda Campbell, Arthur's Town, Cat Island.

Musical dramatic skit was taught by colonial school masters throughout the Family Islands.

10. Let Me Call You Sweetheart

Let me call you sweetheart,
Dear, I'm in love with you,
Baby let me whisper to you, and you'll call me,
I'm in love with you, let me call you sweetheart,
Darling, I'm in love with you.

Let me call you sweetheart darlin',
I'm in love with you,
Baby let me whisper to you, then you'll call me,
My girl can give me, but my darling you don't know,
Baby let me call you sweetheart, darling I'm in love with you.

Sung by Israel Forbes, Bluff, South Andros.

In The Bahamas, this song accompanies the traditional waltz.

11. The Times Table

Performed by Ed Moxey's Rake 'n Scrape, Nassau, New Providence: Ed Moxey, accordion; Huelon Newbold, saw; Cyril Dean, drum.

This tune is the traditional melody used to teach children the multiplication tables. The words to this song, not heard on the cassette, are as follows:

Twice one are two
Twice twos are four
Twice threes are six
Twice fours are eight, etc.

This song can also accompany sets 1 and 2 of the Bahamian Quadrille dance.

STORYTELLING IN THE BAHAMAS

SIDE A

1. **Truth to a Bahamian,** Cleveland Eneas
2. **The Tar Baby,** Kayla Edwards
3. **The Toilet on the Cliff,** Cleveland Eneas
4. **B'Man and B'Shark,** Kayla Edwards
5. **B'Bouki Rides B'Rabbi,** Cleveland Eneas
6. **Worrum,** Kayla Edwards

SIDE B

1. **Hard Times,** Mabel Williams
2. **Going to School,** Mabel Williams
3. **Fishing Conch,** Mabel Williams
4. **Hurricane of 1941,** Mabel Williams

(Interviewer: Tracey Thompson)

Except where noted, the songs and stories included in Our Bahamian Heritage *were recorded in February 1995 at Bahamen's Cultural Club, Nassau, New Providence. Produced by Kayla Lockhart Edwards, recorded and engineered by Pete Reiniger. Special thanks to Fred Ferguson and staff for providing recording space.*

Bibliography

Albury, Cheryl. 1994. *Perspectives from Inner Windows.* Nassau: The Counsellors Ltd.

Albury, Paul. 1975. *The Story of the Bahamas.* London: Macmillan.

_____. 1984. *The Paradise Island Story.* London: Macmillan.

Alcena, Kevin, J. 1988. *A Nation Unfolding: An Outlook of The Bahamas from Independence to Now.* Nassau: Kevin J. Alcena.

Arawak Editors. 1971. *Journey Through New Providence.* Arawak Editors.

Armbrister, Cindy. 1995. *Runnin Sheep.* Nassau: Guanima Press.

Bahamas Poetry Society. 1985. *Junction.* London: Macmillan.

Bahamas Writers Association. 1993. *From the Shallow Seas: Bahamian Creative Writing Today.* La Habana, Cuba: Casa de Las Americas and Bahamas Writers Association.

Bain, Gillian. 1983. *Bahamian History Books I & II.* London: Macmillan.

Bethel, Clement. 1978. Music in the Bahamas, Its Roots, Development and Personality. M.A. Thesis, University of California, Los Angeles.

_____. 1991. *Junkanoo: Festival of the Bahamas.* Edited and expanded by Nicolette Bethel. London: Macmillan Caribbean.

Bethel, Marion. 1994. *Guanahani, Mi Amor: Y Otros Poemas.* La Habana, Cuba: Casa de las Americas.

Brown Jordan, Portia. 1986. *Herbal Medicine and Home Remedies. A Potpourri in Bahamian Culture.* Nassau: The Nassau Guardian Printing Press.

_____. 1991. *The Crack of Dawn.* New York: Vintage Press.

Brudenell, Bruce P. 1975. *The Birds of New Providence and the Bahama Islands.* London: Collins.

Buettner, Dan. 1990. *Inside Grand Bahama: The Insider's Guide.* Atlanta: Fair Prospect Press.

Burnside, Jackson. 1991. *Match Me If You Can.* Nassau: The Counsellors.

Campbell, David. 1978. *The Ephemeral Islands.* London: Macmillan.

Carstarphen, Dee. 1982. *The Conch Book.* Miami: Pen and Ink Press.

Cartwright, Jerome. 1988. *Long Haul.* Nassau: Nassau Guardian.

Cash, Philip, Shirley Gordon, and Gail Saunders. 1991. *Sources of Bahamian History.* London: Macmillan Education Ltd.

Catalyn, James J. *Laughin at Wesef.* Nassau: Nassau Guardian.

Chase, Vera. 1994. *Take Me Back to Guanahani.* Nassau: Nassau Guardian.

College of the Bahamas. 1983. *Bahamian Anthology.* London: Macmillan Education Ltd.

Collinwood, Dean W. 1989. *The Bahamas Between Worlds.* Decatur: White Sound Press.

Collinwood, Dean W., and Steve Dodge, eds. 1989. *Modern Bahamian Society.* Parkerburg, Iowa: Caribbean Books, USA.

Cooper, Basil. 1973. *From Adam's Rib to Women's Lib.* Nassau: Basil Cooper.

Craton, Michael. 1968. *A History of the Bahamas.* London: Collins. (Revised and reprinted 1986).

Craton, Michael, and Gail Saunders. 1992. *Islanders in the Stream: A Social History of the Bahamas.* Athens: University of Georgia Press.

Crowley, Daniel J. 1966. *I Could Talk Old-Story Good: Creativity in Bahamian Folklore.* Berkeley: University of California Press.

Dodge, Steve. 1983. *Abaco: The History of an Out Island and Its Cays.* Decatur: White Sound Press.

Douglas, Robert. 1992. *Island Heritage Architecture of the Bahamas.* Nassau: Robert Douglas.

Dupuch, S.P., ed. 1993. *Bahamas Handbook.* Nassau: Etienne Dupuch, Jr. Publications Ltd.

Edwards, Kayla Olubumni Lockhart. 1994. Bahamas Musical Survey. *1994 Festival of American Folklife.* Washington: Smithsonian Institution.

Eneas, Cleveland. 1976. *Bain Town.* Nassau: Cleveland Eneas.

Glinton, Patricia, Charles Huggins, and Basil Smith. 1992. *Bahamian Art.* Nassau: The Counsellors Ltd.

Glinton, Patricia. 1993. *An Evening in Guanima. A Treasury of Folktales from The Bahamas.* Nassau: Guanima Press.

Glinton-Meicholas, Patricia. 1994. *Talkin' Bahamian.* Nassau: Guanima Press.

_____. 1994. *How To Be A True-True Bahamian.* Nassau: Guanima Press.

Holm, John A., with Alison Watt Shilling. 1982. *Dictionary of Bahamian English.* Cold Spring: Lexik House Publishers.

Hutcheson, Albert E. 1992. *This Is Their Story: The Story of The Preachers of The Bahamas Living and Dead: Independence 1973, Quincentennial Year 1992.* Nassau: Albert E. Hutcheson.

Johnson, Doris L. 1972. *The Quiet Revolution in The Bahamas.* Nassau: The Family Islands Press Ltd.

Johnson, Howard. 1991. *The Bahamas in Slavery and Freedom.* Kingston: Ian Randal Publishers.

Keegan, William. 1992. *The People Who Discovered Columbus: The Pre-History of the Bahamas.* Gainsville: University of Florida Press.

Laramore-Crawford, Sylvia. 1992. *Cooking the Bahamian Way.* Nassau: Sylvia Laramore-Crawford.

Lloyd, Harvey. 1991. *Isles of Eden: Life in the Southern Family Islands of the Bahamas.* Akron, Ohio: Benjamin Publishing Company.

Malone, Shelley Boyd, and Richard Campbell Roberts. 1991. *Nostalgic Nassau Picture Postcards 1900-1940.* Nassau: Nassau Nostalgia.

Morley, Anthony. *Junkanoo Annual.* Nassau: Far East Publications.

Outten, Kim, and Grace Turner. 1994. Straw Work: A Case Study of Continuity & Change. *1994 Festival of American Folklife.* Washington: Smithsonian Institution.

Patterson, Jack. 1977. *Native Trees of the Bahamas.* Abaco: Jack Patterson.

Peggs, Deans. 1959. *A Short History of The Bahamas.* Nassau: The Deans Peggs Research Fund.

Pintard, Michael C. 1995. *Still Standing.* Nassau: Guanima Press.

Popov, Nicholas. 1992. *The Bahamas Rediscovered.* London: Macmillan.

Rahming, Patrick. 1973. *Reflections.* Montreal: House of Sesum.

_____. 1992. *The Naive Agenda: Social and Political Issues for The Bahamas Through the Eyes of a Confessed Dreamer.* Nassau: Superior Printing.

Riley, Sandra. 1983. *Homeward Bound: A History of the Bahama Islands to 1850.* Miami: Island Research.

Russell, Seighbert. 1979. *Nassau's Historic Buildings.* Nassau: Bahamas National Trust.

Saunders, Ashley. 1990. *History of Bimini, Vols. 1 and 2.* Bimini: New World Press.

Saunders, Gail. 1983. *Bahamian Loyalists and Their Slaves.* London: Macmillan Caribbean.

_____. 1985. *Slavery in The Bahamas 1648-1838.* Nassau: Nassau Guardian.

_____. 1988. *The Bahamas: A Family of Islands.* London: Macmillan Press Ltd.

_____. 1994. *Bahamian Society After Emancipation.* Kingston: Ian Randle Publishers.

_____. 1994. The Peoples & Cultures of The Bahamas. *1994 Festival of American Folklife.* Washington: Smithsonian Institution.

Saunders, Gail, and Donald Cartwright. 1979. *Historic Nassau.* London: Macmillan Caribbean. 1979.

Saunders, Hartley Cecil. 1991. *The Other Bahamas.* Nassau: BODAB Publishers.

Saunders, Winston. 1982. *Them.* Nassau: Nassau Guardian.

_____. 1995. *You Can Lead a Horse to Water.* Nassau: Rosebud Ltd.

_____. 1995. *I Nehemiah Remember When.* Nassau: Rosebud Ltd.

Savishinsky, Joel, S., ed. 1978. *Strangers No More: Anthropological Studies of Cat Island, The Bahamas.* Ithaca: Ithaca College.

Sealey, Neal E. 1985. *Bahamian Landscapes: An Introduction to the Geography of The Bahamas.* London: Collins Caribbean.

Symonette, Michael A. 1973. *Discovery of a Nation.* Nassau: Management Communication Services, Ltd.

Tertullien, Mizpah. 1976. *Pyschologically Speaking.* Boynton Beach, Florida: Star Publishing Co.

Thompson, Tracey. 1994. Shootin' Pigeon & Ducks and Wild Hog Huntin': Traditional Lifestyles on Land & Sea. *1994 Festival of American Folklife.* Washington: Smithsonian Institution.

Turner, Telcine. 1977. *Song of the Surreys: Poetry For Schools.* London: Macmillan.

_____. 1988. *Climbing Clouds.* London: Macmillan.

_____, ed. 1988. *Once Below a Time: Bahamian Stories.* London: Macmillan.

Wallace, Susan J. 1973. *Island Echoes.* London: Macmillan.

_____. 1975. *Back Home.* London: Collins.

White, Virginia. 1985. *The Outermost Island: An Oral History of San Salvador, The Bahamas.* Fort Lauderdale: CCFL Bahamian Field Station.

Wisdom, Keith. 1985. Bahamian Junkanoo: An Act in a Modern Social Drama. Ph.D. Thesis, University of Georgia.

_____. 1994. Ecstasy in Junkanoo: A Public Celebration of Freedom. *1994 Festival of American Folklife.* Washington: Smithsonian Institution.

Young, Everild. 1966. *Eleuthera: The Island Called Freedom.* London: Regency Press.

Music and Storytelling Resources

Bahamas National Youth Choir. 1991. *Music of The Bahamas, Ghana and Haiti.*

_____. 1992. *Junkanoo Suite.*

_____. 1993. *In We Back Yard.*

_____. 1995. *Bahamian Folk and Art Music.*

Burrows, Derek. *Once Upon A Time: Stories of The Bahamas.*

_____. *Afro-Caribbean Animal Folktales: Common Sense and Other Trickery.* For tapes, please write Derek Burrows, 2 Glendvale Terrace, Jamaica Plain, MA 02130

Edwards, Kayla. *Lil Piece Uh Duh Bahamas.* Artists International.

Video Resources

A People's Trust. Produced by The Bahamas National Trust.

Exuma Land and Sea Park. Produced by The Bahamas National Trust.

Heritage: History and Culture of The Bahamas. 1989. Produced by the Ministry of Tourism.

Historic Nassau Over The Hill. 1994. Produced by The Counsellors for The Bahamas National Trust.

Historic Family Islands: Exuma, Cat Island and Long Island. 1995. Produced by The Counsellors for The Bahamas National Trust.

Nassau's Historic Miles. 1993. Produced by The Counsellors for The Bahamas National Trust.

Quincy Rap. 1993. Produced by The Bahamas National Trust.

Remembering the Contract. 1993. Produced by The College of The Bahamas and Broadcasting Corporation of The Bahamas.

Tell Every Generation. The History of the Roman Catholic Church. 1995. Researched and directed by Patricia Meicholas.