



Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago
Ministry of Public Administration and Communications

NATIONAL ARCHIVES in collaboration with
OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO Caribbean Yard Campus

P R E S E N T S A N E X H I B I T I O N

CARNIVAL OF LONG AGO

Featuring the sculptural installation of master artist, Leighton James

Leighton James, now 76 years of age, has lived life as an inventor, masman, composer of songs, (mainly calypso), sculptor, tuner and raconteur.

The sculptural installation, Carnival of Long Ago, which he considers his magnum opus, bears testimony to his lifelong dedication to art, culture and history, and his home-grown, extraordinary skills in painting, sculpture, and masquerade design. James was involved in all aspects of masmaking in every single mas produced by veteran bandleader, Cito Velasquez.

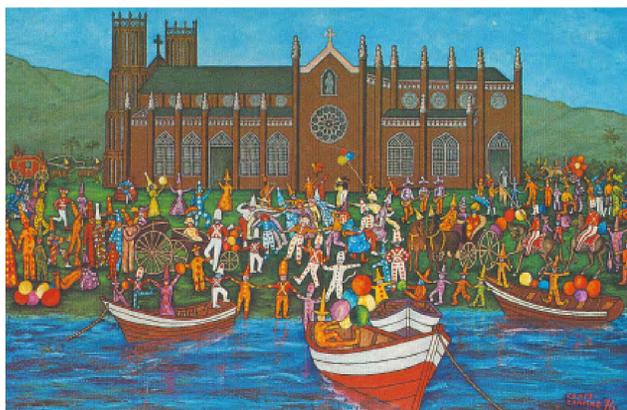
This unique display consists of some 280 figurines, depicting the drama of Carnival in the 50's and early 60's, with all its tradition, humour, grandeur and spectacle. The exhibition was completed in 2001 after seven years of devoted work.

The National Archives is pleased to tell this important story of our early Carnival through this installation, as well as to showcase the archives on Carnival from our collection.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES
OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

CARNIVAL OF LONG AGO

Carnival is a national festival celebrated in Trinidad and Tobago on the two days prior to the start of the Christian Lenten season. It has evolved, since 1783, from the influences of other cultures brought to the islands and is celebrated by all, regardless of race, class, or age.



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ORIGINS (1783 – 1838)

The celebration of Carnival first came to the island of Trinidad with French planters and their enslaved Africans after the Cedula of Population in 1783. It was celebrated mainly by the French elite and comprised grand masked balls, driving through the streets of Port of Spain wearing their masks, and going house to house on evenings.

Whilst the enslaved Africans were barred from participating in early Carnival celebrations, they did perform the kalenda (stick fighting), and jhouba and belair dances during their festivities. The calypso, which was developed during this period, drew heavily from kalenda songs, plaintive chants and West African religious music.



Source: The Trinidad Carnival by Errol Hill

POST-EMANCIPATION (1838 – 1860s)

After Emancipation in 1838, the formerly enslaved Africans joined in the Carnival festivities by masking, dancing, stick fighting, mocking the Whites and reenacting scenes of their enslavement, thus bringing radical changes into the pre-Lenten revelry. Popular masquerades during this period included Negre Jardin, Wild Indians, Devils, Moko Jumbies and Clowns. The Cannes Brulees/Canboulay, which had become an annual activity to commemorate Emancipation, became an important feature of the Carnival. The singing of calypsoes and kalenda chants to the accompaniment of African drums and the shac-shac continued to be part of the festivities.



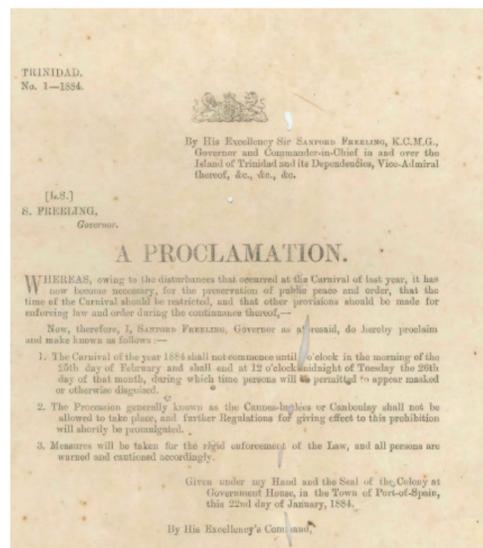
Canboulay Reenactment in Picadilly, Port of Spain. Source: Express 6 February 2016.

JAMETTE CARNIVAL (1860s – 1890s)

From the 1860s to 1890s, Carnival was known as the Jamette Carnival due to the sexual themes and acts of aggression displayed by African revelers.

During this period, the Government of the colony sought to restrict the festival through various means such as legislation and police intervention.

It is within this context that the Canboulay Riots occurred in 1881 and this led to the banning of the Canboulay procession in 1884 as the Peace Preservation Acts were passed. The Canboulay procession was succeeded by Jour Ouvert (Jouvay) celebrations at the dawn of the twentieth century. The Dame Lorraine, Pissenlit and Burroquite were popular mas characters. The calypso, which had emerged as the music of the masqueraders, was accompanied by the music of the tamboo bamboo and string bands after the African drums were banned in 1884.



1884 Peace Preservation Act

CARNIVAL OF LONG AGO



Source: Trinidad Carnival by Paria Publishing Company Ltd.

The Band Wagon of the Victory Carnival of 1919. Photograph courtesy Gregor Duruty.



Photo courtesy the Carnival Institute of Trinidad and Tobago



Steel Band (pre-1945) (COURTESY OF Y. DE LIMA & CO. LTD.)

THE COMMERCIALIZATION OF CARNIVAL AND THE VICTORY CARNIVAL (1900 – 1939)

The early decades of the 20th century saw increased interest, participation, and sponsorship of prizes by the merchant class in Carnival. In 1919, after the end of World War I, Trinidad celebrated 'Victory Carnival'. This Carnival saw two competitions being organized and sponsored; one by the *Trinidad Guardian* which was held at the Queens Park Savannah and the other by the *Argos* newspaper in Downtown Port of Spain. Following the success of the competitions, the two newspapers assumed responsibility for running Carnival between 1919 and 1935.

The masquerades of previous years continued into the new century, with others such as Fancy Sailors, Minstrels, and the Midnight Robber being added. Lorry was also became popular.

The banning of the African drum led to the emergence of Tamboo Bamboo bands to accompany masqueraders during Carnival. By the 1930s, these bands started to slowly introduce metal containers to provide more rhythm. Continuous experimentation with oil drums and tins would lead to the development of the first steel pan.



Downtown Port of Spain, Carnival Tuesday 1939. Photograph courtesy Terry Bedford nee Ganteaume.

Source: Trinidad Carnival by Paria Publishing Company Ltd.

In 1935 a Carnival Improvement Committee was set up to run Carnival.

GOVERNMENT'S ADMINISTRATION OF CARNIVAL (1940 – 1962)

From 1940 to 1945 there were no Carnival celebrations due to World War II, but in 1946 they resumed. It was also the year of the inaugural Carnival Queen Competition. After the war, historical masquerade bands became synonymous with Carnival celebrations. Masqueraders portrayed Pharaohs, Kings, Vikings, and African and Indian Warriors. American films were also a source of inspiration for band leaders and mas designers.

Calypso music rose in popularity during this period as American service men often visited Calypso Tents. It also gained international recognition due to the infamous plagiarism of "Rum and Coca Cola" by the Andrews Sisters.

The 1940s was a period of experimentation for the steel pan with the development of the Cuff Bass, Tenor Kettle and Bass Kettle pans. This period extended to the 1950s with the introduction of sticks with rubber and the development of the Cuatro, Grundig, Guitar, Cello and Second pans. Many well-known steel bands of this era took their names from American films such as *Casablanca*, *Tokyo*, *Desperadoes*, and *Invaders*.

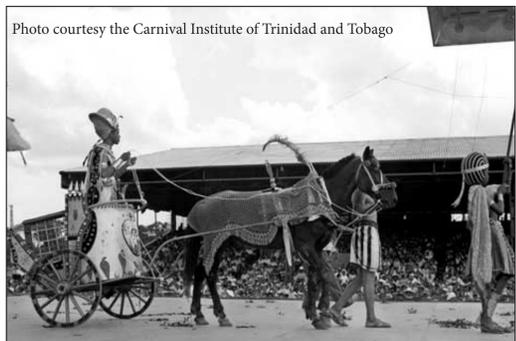


Herman Mannette of Invaders playing in the 1950's, one of the very early First Pans. Photograph courtesy L. Punch.

Source: Trinidad Carnival by Paria Publishing Company Ltd.

In 1957 the Carnival Development Committee was established to organize and regulate Carnival celebrations throughout the country. By 1962, the Trinidad Carnival had truly become a national festival.

Photo courtesy the Carnival Institute of Trinidad and Tobago



George Bailey's "BACK TO AFRICA" the band which was adjudged Band of the Year at the Queen's Park Savannah in 1957.



Sources:

Hill, Errol. *The Trinidad Carnival: Mandate for a National Theatre*. London: New Beacon, 1997. Print.

Liverpool, Hollis "Chalkdust". *Rituals of Power and Rebellion: The Carnival Tradition in Trinidad and Tobago, 1763-1962*. Chicago, IL.: Research Associates School Times, 2001. Print.

Unless indicated otherwise, photos were sourced from various Carnival magazines of the period.

Acknowledgement:

The National Archives of Trinidad and Tobago wishes to thank Paria Publishing Company Limited, Adrian Camp-Campins and the Carnival Institute of Trinidad and Tobago for their kind permission to reproduce their Carnival images.

TRADITIONAL MAS

DRAWINGS BY CARLYLE CHANG



JOUR OUVERT—OLE MAS



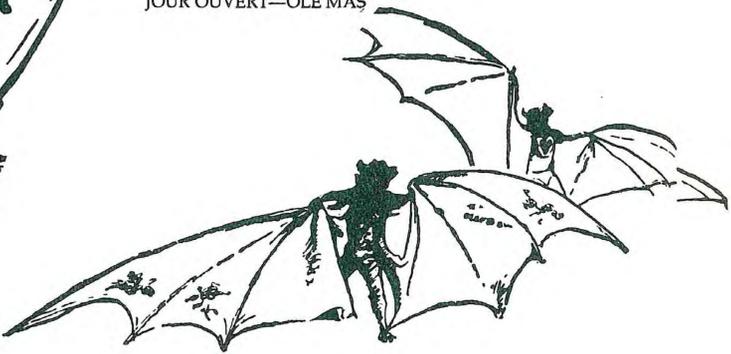
MOKO JUMBIE



WILD INDIAN—forerunner of Fancy Indian
circa 1930



BLACK INDIAN
WARRIOR



BATS



FANCY CLOWN



MAD BULL



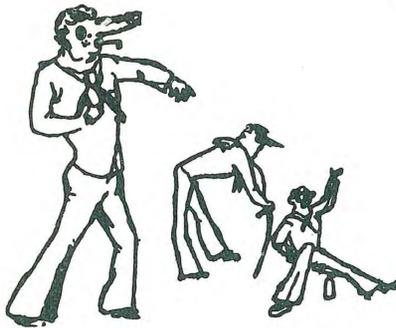
FANCY SAILOR



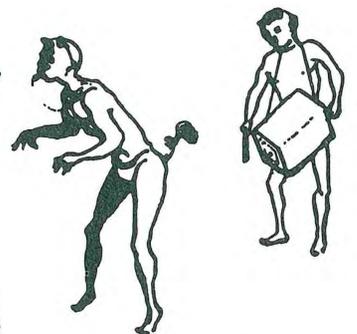
FANCY INDIAN



FANCY INDIAN CHIEF



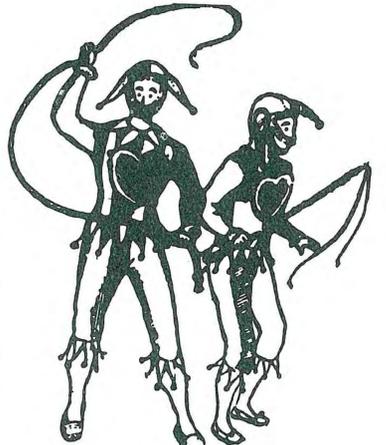
SAILORS—of Bad Behaviour type



JAB MOLASSIE



BABY DOLLS



JAB JAB



FEMALE MEMBER—
COW BAND



ROBBERS



MALE MEMBER—
COW BAND



EAST INDIAN BURROQUITE

Sources:

"Trinidad Carnival, a republication of the Caribbean Quarterly," published by Paria Publishing Company Ltd, 1988.
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MASTERS OF THE MAS

Pre-1960's



George Bailey, Band Leader
(COURTESY CARNIVAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE)

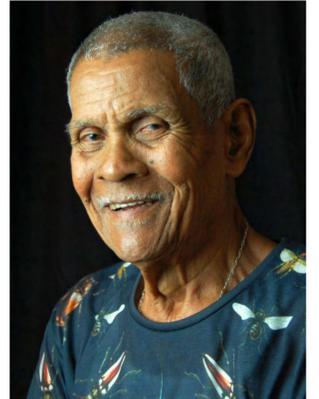
GEORGE BAILEY (1935-1970)

George Bailey started his Carnival career by designing for Invaders Steelband in 1954 and 1955 and went on to produce his first independent band in 1956 at age 20. In his second year as a bandleader and designer, he won the 1957 Band of the Year title with his presentation "Back to Africa." During his fifteen years as a Carnival bandleader, his presentations won the coveted Band of the Year Award six times and the People's Choice Award ten times. He was awarded the Humming Bird Medal – Gold, for his outstanding work and service to Trinidad Carnival.

NARCENIO 'SEÑOR' GOMEZ (1931-2016)

Narcenio Gomez, better known as Señor Gomez and 'By so By so', was one of Trinidad and Tobago's most prolific wire-benders, beginning his craft at the tender age of ten. He was involved in designing, wire-bending and costume making for over 50 years, and created a legacy that continues to shape the landscape of Trinidad and Tobago's Carnival.

He found great joy in teaching the wire-bending craft and tutored in workshops throughout Trinidad and Tobago, USA and UK. He participated in Carnival in the 40's with bands such as Destination Tokyo (now known as Carib Tokyo) and Red Army.



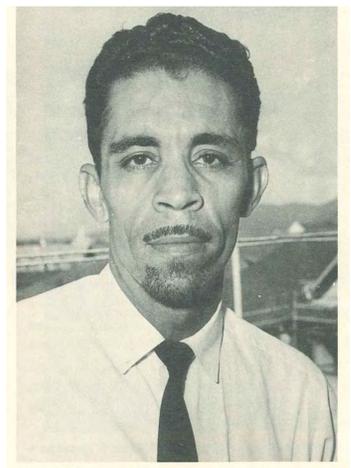
JASON GRIFFITH (1927 -)

Jason Griffith, a name synonymous with Sailor mas, influenced Trinidad and Tobago Carnival for over five decades and went on to become one of Trinidad and Tobago's revered mas-makers, earning numerous awards including the Humming Bird Medal – Gold, in 1990. Trained under George 'Diamond Jim' Harding, he launched his own sailor band, USS Sullivan, in 1949. In the following years, he joined forces with the famous "Big Six", Belmont's leading individual fancy sailors, helping them to perfect their Carnival presentations. Griffith continued to produce outstanding Fancy Sailor bands until 2000.

HAROLD 'SALLY' SALDENHA (1925-1985)

Harold Saldanha, better known as "Sally", began his Carnival career in the years immediately after the Second World War, as an assistant to bandleaders like Mansie Lai, his mentor. He had a deep love for history and thoroughly researched his topics in order to re-create historic moments in time through his mas. In 1952 he designed his first band, taking inspiration from the 1951 film extravaganza Quo Vadis. His most celebrated presentation was Imperial Rome 44 BC to 96 AD in 1955.

He moved to Canada in 1977, and took his expertise to the Trinidad-style Caribana Carnival. In 1972, Saldenah was awarded the Trinidad and Tobago Public Service Medal of Merit – Silver, for his role in the development of Carnival.



Harold Saldanha, Band Leader (GUARDIAN PHOTO)



LEWICITO 'CITO' VELASQUEZ (1929-2006)

Lwicito 'Cito' Velasquez, the indisputable wire-bender extraordinaire of Trinidad and Tobago mas, learned to sculpt at his family's doll factory as a boy. His first band, Fruits and Flowers, was produced with Geraldo Vieira Sr. in 1959, and was one of his most successful Carnival presentations. In recognition of his contributions to Carnival, he was awarded the Hummingbird Medal - Gold by the Government of Trinidad and Tobago in 1973.

GERALDO VIEIRA SR. (1938-2012)

Geraldo Vieira Sr. was known as a costume designer, costume technologist, entrepreneur, innovator and masquerader. He became fascinated with Carnival craft and learned pattern-making as a trade, as well as wire-bending from Cito Velasquez, with whom he produced Fruits and Flowers, his first band, in 1959. He pioneered the use of plastic mouldings in his designs to create lighter, stronger costumes, and introduced the use of pyrotechnics in costumes in 1999, using special effects such as fireworks, robotics and lighting, to create spectacular theatrical Kings of Carnival presentations, which won him numerous titles. Vieira won the King of Carnival title an amazing nine times.

