

HOW MASHRAMANI CELEBRATIONS STARTED IN LINDEN BY THE JAYCEES

The Jaycees of Linden, since Guyana became independent in 1966, had been arranging and organizing an Independence Carnival in McKenzie. When Guyana became a Republic in February, 1970, the Jaycees of Linden, under its President Nobreiga, formed a Jaycees Republic Celebrations Committee. Basil Butcher was selected as Chairman but because he was selected to tour Australia with the West Indies Cricket Team, Mr. Jim Blackman was appointed as the Deputy to carry on.

A broad based committee including resource personnel such as Wordsworth McAndrew, Arthur Seymour and Adrian Thompson, began the organization of the Carnival activities.

The search for a name to replace Carnival began and it was suggested by Basil Butcher that an Amerindian name be chosen. This was agreed to and several individuals including Mr. Allan Feidtkou, an Amerindian, were contacted.

Mr. Feidtkou held discussion with his grandfather who explained a type of Festival that was held by Amerindians whenever they gathered to celebrate a special event. This event he said was like "Muster Many"

which sounded in Arawak like Mashramani.

Steps were taken to confirm this. The help of Mr. Adrian Thompson, who was the District Commissioner of the interior and was considered an authority on Amerindian Affairs, was sought.

After checks could not confirm or deny that the Arawak word for the Festival was Mashramani, and in keeping with Mr. Feidtkou's interpretation, it was decided that the Festival would be called Mashramani.

On February 23rd, 1970 the festival called "Mashramani" was a huge success with people drawn from all Regions of Guyana to Linden welcoming Guyana's Republic status with over three days of frolic and fun.

After witnessing the massive crowds, glitter and level of competition, Mr. David Singh a Government official held discussion with the Jaycees Committee about bringing the event to Georgetown. Approval was also given by the then President Forbes Burnham for Mash to be the National Event for the Republic Celebration.

Mash activities were rotated in Linden, Berbice and Georgetown but due to sponsorship, the Costume Bands contest remained in Georgetown.



**MASHRAMANI
1968**

Evadne Gravesande, first Mashramani Queen at McKenzie



MASHRAMANI 2012

Allan Fenty

Guyana's Mashramani, now virtually a three - week long festival of both art - forms and educational activities, is really the celebratory aspect of the Republic Anniversary Observance. It climaxes, in a way, with an extravaganza of a Costume and Float Parade through the streets of the Capital, Georgetown.

There is now something for all Guyanese, their friends and other visitors and tourists at February's Mashramani in Guyana.

COME VISIT TROPICAL RAIN-FORESTS OR THE MIGHTY MOUNT RORAIMA STRADDLING THREE COUNTRIES,

STAY AT OUR ECOLOGICAL LODGES IN THE FORESTS OR ON THE RIVERS.

PARTICIPATE IN STREET DRAMA -

LOCAL AND INTERNATIONAL TRADITIONAL AND POP CONCERTS
PLAY MAS'

SEE FOLK RITUALS RE -ENACTED
ATTEND UNIVERSITY - LED LITERARY/ CULTURAL WORSHOPS.

What? You still love PAN, MASQUERADE, CALYPSO, SOCA AND CHUTNEY! We'll come on down to Georgetown. Mashramani is more varied, more diversified than many other festivals or carnivals. And by air, road or bridge, you may slip across to Venezuela, Suriname or Brazil.

Then it's back to Georgetown or some hinterland or rural community to "festivate" with the folk. Book a fantastic February in Guyana this year. What? Weather? Rain or Storm Mashramani 2012 goes on!