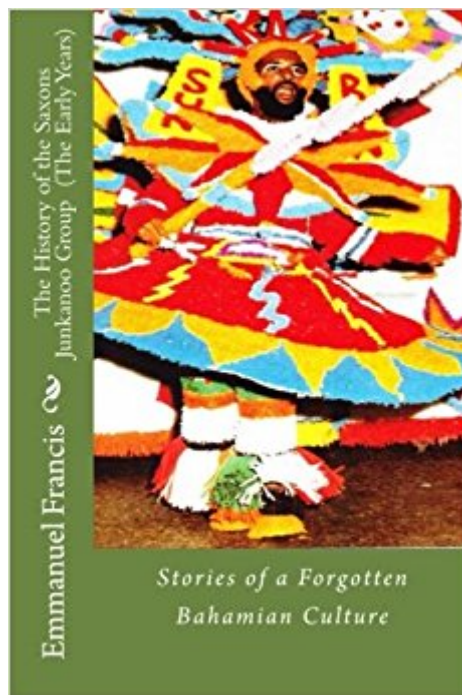




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The History Of The Saxons Junkanoo Group (The Early Years): Stories Of A Forgotten Bahamian Culture



Synopsis

Description of the History of the Saxons (The Early Years) The Bahamas was regarded as a country of a friendly, caring, happy, loving, talented, blessed and godly people whose cultural expression was admired and envied by the rest of the world. Visitors who were lured to our shores by the beautiful, sunny beaches returned in droves to bathe in the warmth of the Bahamian people. They boasted of our smiling faces, friendly greetings, unique architecture, historical sites and monuments, talented entertainers, excellent service, tasty native dishes, refreshing Bahamian beverages, exhilarating night life, magnetic hospitality, unsolicited Christian charity and junkanoo. I believe that junkanoo played a pivotal role in the development of the good character of most Bahamians as it afforded us the opportunity to express our inner brilliance. It became the medium through which we would connect with the repressed *Åçâ ÆœspiritsÅçâ Æœ* of our African ancestry and discover our identity as a peculiar people. Additionally, this (junkanoo) masquerade provided our predecessors with an opportunity to express their displeasure over economic and social injustices imposed by their colonial masters and their descendants without fear of reprisal. In many aspects, the junkanoo culture mirrored the culture of the Bahamian people. These annual Christmas parades have created an indelible imprint on the Bahamian psyche which embodies a distinct connection between junkanoo and politics. The release of this *Åçâ Æœfree spiritÅçâ Æœ* elevated our self-esteem and value for human life through the discovery of an inherent intimacy we had with our creator. Our creativity, genius, love, talent and perseverance, coupled with skill in music, art, drama and dance were all manifestations of this intimacy. It may seem that I am reaching a bit, but after reading our stories in this book you would favor my hypothesis on the value of the junkanoo experience to our spiritual development. The Junkanoo festival is an important part of Bahamian culture and recently there has developed an ever increasing interest in its history, but little has been written about it. Moreover, there is a growing consensus that junkanoo is not what it used to be and this has sparked a curiosity about the history of those times. Unfortunately, too much of it has been lost or forgotten as some of these junkanoo stories have been buried in our grave yards. This book is an attempt to capture and preserve the memories of the junkanoo experience of earlier years from the perspective of the Saxons junkanoo group.

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Customer Reviews

DR. Emmanuel W. Francis (Manny) is a Bahamian dentist who was born to Rev. Dr. Earle and Dr. Marjorie Francis (1951). He was raised in Nassau, Bahamas, and is a graduate of Government High School, 1969. Manny was inducted into the Phi Beta Kappa liberal arts honor society, and the Beta Kappa Chi scientific honor society while matriculating at Fisk University, Nashville Tennessee, 1976. Dr. Francis received a DDS degree from Meharry Medical College, School of Dentistry where he received honors in Biochemistry and Cosmetic Dentistry, 1981. He is married to the former Andrea Yvonne Young and they have three children: Ishmael, Denise and Kendra. Dr. Manny was inducted into the National Junkanoo Legend Circle by the Ministry of Youth, Sports and Culture and the National Junkanoo Committee in December, 2008 after 42 years of excellence and innovation in junkanoo. He is designer and builder of many winning costumes for group and individual group prizes with the Saxons and One Love Soldiers junkanoo groups. Manny introduced the four piece costume concept, (viz. hat, shoulder piece, back piece and front piece), while designing for the Saxons, 1969: This design concept has become the standard of costume design today for these magnificent parades, and is the focus of his recently published *“Manual of Junkanoo Costume Construction-A Beginner’s Guide to Junkanoo design”*, 2011.

Indeed his storytelling is fresh and the anecdotes bring to life a subculture not completely discernable by mainline media, educators, and the general public. Emmanuel "Manny" Francis remembers those true heroes of the junkanoo subculture - reveals the men and women behind the mask. The ones who defined and refined the masquerade celebrations. Also, he gives us a peep at the history of a wider community, which birthed these junkanoos. Excellent work - it has intertwined formal history and folk history. Thus, I must raise the latent question: should not all folk history be formalised? This work takes us in that direction.

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