

Reflections of childhood stories, folklore and mysteries



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

In the beginning of this assignment, this writer believed that there would be no problems finding an adult who would be willing to share their memories. However, this writer talked to six different people before one would agree. When asked if they could answer a few short questions relating to their childhood, they got very defensive and said no. Finally, Dorothy a 60 year old female who left Jamaica in her 30's, was willing to answer questions. Although she was guarded at first (refused to give me her name at the beginning) she soon warmed up to the topic and was all too willing to describe the kind of life she had.

Dorothy grew up in a middle-class neighborhood. One of six children, the siblings were close, perhaps due in part to the lessons learned by their parents. Dorothy's father, a farmer, and her mother, a stay at home wife, instilled discipline and religion from a young age. Dorothy reported that her and her siblings did not have much time for fun. The kids were either in church, school, or doing chores on the farm. One of Dorothy's earliest memories is coming home from church, after school, to feed chickens, goats, and to help with the growing of a pig which would then be sold, according to Dorothy, this method provided well for the family.

Dorothy reported that the neighborhood she lived in was similar to that of an extended family. She said that all of the parents had a part in disciplining the children in the neighborhood, so if there was trouble and the parents were away, the kids would still have to face the consequences. Dorothy considered her parents strict when it came to religion. They belonged to a Pentecostal church, and were required to pray several times a day including

before leaving the house in the morning, at school before lunch and after lunch, then after church at night before dinner and again before bedtime.

Although Dorothy did state she bears no resentment towards her parents, she became wistful when thinking about the fun other children had because of less responsibility. Dorothy was also adamant that she had passed these values down to her children, but not all of them had observed the religion as closely as she did. When it came time to begin her education, Dorothy had said that she had been studying English for two years before going to school. This writer inquired about different languages spoken in the home, and defensively she said it was only English.

Dorothy did not go to preschool, but she was excited to discuss her schooling. According to Dorothy, the school was small consisting mainly of kids in her neighborhood. One of her first memories of school Dorothy remembers the older kids telling her and her friends that if they didn't do well in school, they would be "swept up by the devil while sleeping." As in elementary school, Dorothy reported that she attended high school with one teacher per year. Every year a group of 12-15 students would move together through the grades, curriculum, and teachers.

Socializing for Dorothy was easy for her. She reported that she had many friends and although they had to stay in the neighborhood, the adults would tell them stories about when they were young. The stories, because of the religious aspect, were usually about a man who lived in the mountains of Jamaica and that he would occasionally come into town to take kids to live with him. This writer asked her about dating when she was growing up; she

replied that before she could date someone, they would have to ask for permission.

In addition, all dates were supervised and Dorothy's eyes lit up when she spoke about how they would sneak away to be alone, to talk, to dream. Another favorite memory for Dorothy were what Jamaican's called " Dobby stories. " These stories, much like ghost stories, in America, would be told at the midnight hour in darkness. Her favorite story was about Nancy who went up a cherry tree to eat the cherries. Although this writer was unable to obtain the whole story, she likened it to a Nancy Drew mystery novel. Dorothy migrated from Jamaica to Florida in her 30's.

Dorothy remains closely tied to her roots and is still attempting to pass those on to her children. When asked the most important thing she took with her from Jamaica, Dorothy replied " her heart", which would always be tied to her home country. In fact as the interview came to an end, Dorothy stated that she would go back to Jamaica to live out her " Golden Age. " This treasure of a woman, had basically the same childhood as other middle class families, perhaps the luckiest part in her life came from a close-knit family who were unafraid to share their lessons and their love with their children.