

Ganador Arroba de Oro 2006



Web site: www.panamacybernews.com E-Mail: goberncl@cwpanama.net

THURSDAY, MARCH 27, 2014

Volume 14, No. 5 – La Boca Special Edition

Founded March 1, 2001

YOU ARE INVITED TO SUBSCRIBE TO THE PANAMA CYBERSPACE NEWS.

The annual subscription is thirty dollars (\$30), payable to Carmela L. Gobern

To subscribe, please send a check or bank draft to one of the following addresses:

PANAMA MAILING ADDRESS: Carmela L. Gobern, Box 0834-01388, Panamá, Rep. of Panama
U. S. MAILING ADDRESS:.....Carmela L. Gobern, PTY 3109, P.O. Box 025724, Miami, FL 33102
TELEPHONE (507) 314-0398 • **CELLULAR** (507) 6675-4507 • **FAX** (507) 314-0012
U.S. PHONE LINE (678) 995-7136

We have subscribers in Panama, throughout the United States, (Including Puerto Rico and Hawaii) France, Zimbabwe, Trinidad, Senegal, U.S. Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Canada and Costa Rica.

MEMOIRS OF THE OLD CANAL ZONE TOWNSITE OF LA BOCA, PANAMA



Photo collage courtesy of Lt. Colonel (USA Ret) Robert "Bob" Karrer (South Carolina)

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

The initiative for this La Boca Townsite Special Edition came from **Ilene Pilgrim Bovell (New York)**. I embraced the recommendation immediately, especially since part of my childhood was spent in La Boca. However, having moved from La Boca in 1956 at the age of six, to reside in Paraiso, Canal Zone, my memories of the old townsite are vague. I know that this report will bring back memories to many of you, my subscribers. On the other hand, there are several of you who never lived in La Boca, but have listened to comments of the townsite. One such subscriber is **Annesta Spencer (New York)**, who wrote the following:

- *"I can't wait to read about La Boca. I have heard so much about itBut it was before my time."*

I also received this note from Neva Shabazz (Virginia):

- *This is so refreshing to see, because whenever I tell my fellow Panamanians that my grandmother was born in La Boca, they've never heard of it. So I just say the Canal Zone. Of course everyone has heard of Colon, where my granddaddy is from. I wish I had photos to share but love your newsletter. Thanks for what you do for us Afropanameños.*



Baby Carmela on Christening Day in La Boca with godparents Ena Fyffe, Amy Coley Boyce and David Fyffe.

I was born in La Boca on December 15, 1949 and I resided there until 1956 when my family moved to the Paraiso townsite. I remember being bitten in my face by a dog pertaining to our neighbors the Holmes family. I still have the scar in my face. The Coleys were our neighbors and I used to spend a lot of time at their home. My mom would always recall that when I was a baby, the Coley sisters Ilene (Pet) and Amy (Dolly, now deceased) took good care of me and Amy became my godmother. I have pleasant memories of my godparents Amy Boyce, Ena Fyffe and David Fyffe (see photo of my christening).

CLG (Carm)



Bob Karrer in Panama, 1975

Lt. Colonel (Ret) Robert "Bob" Karrer, who provided several of the illustrations in this special edition, is a retired U. S. Army officer who was assigned to the Canal Zone three times for a period of ten years between 1967 and 1982. He has long been interested in Panama Canal area collectibles, and among them are picture postcards depicting the entire Isthmus of Panama. While never a resident of La Boca, he has dozens of pictures depicting that historic era, and during his years on the Isthmus his wife Sara attended the Canal Zone College there and he enjoyed many friendships with Zonian residents too.

Bob wrote the following:

"I never caught a corbina fish in Panama but one of my companions caught a couple.... so I KNOW they were there (smile). We used to get ours in the market downtown usually on Saturday mornings to be followed by dim sum at a Chinese restaurant down there somewhere. The Cerveza Panama and Cerveza Cristal were good. I recall hearing stories that an occasional body would be dumped down by the old ferry landing. I guess because there was lots of sea life that would dispose of them...I always wondered if there was any truth to that... strong tides there. I found some very nice old bottles out by Far Fan on the West Bank along the Canal at super low tides too... one was a quart sized 49er era bottle.... ahhh, more memories."

Bob Karrer (South Carolina)

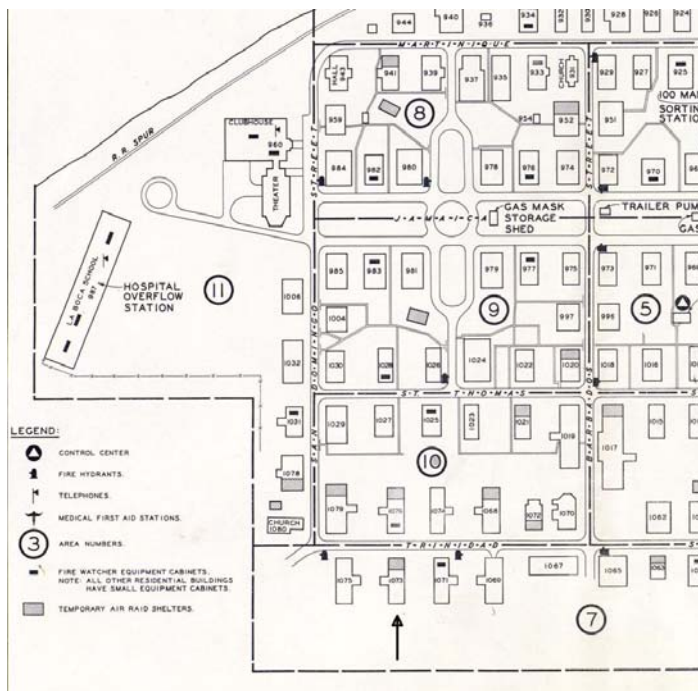
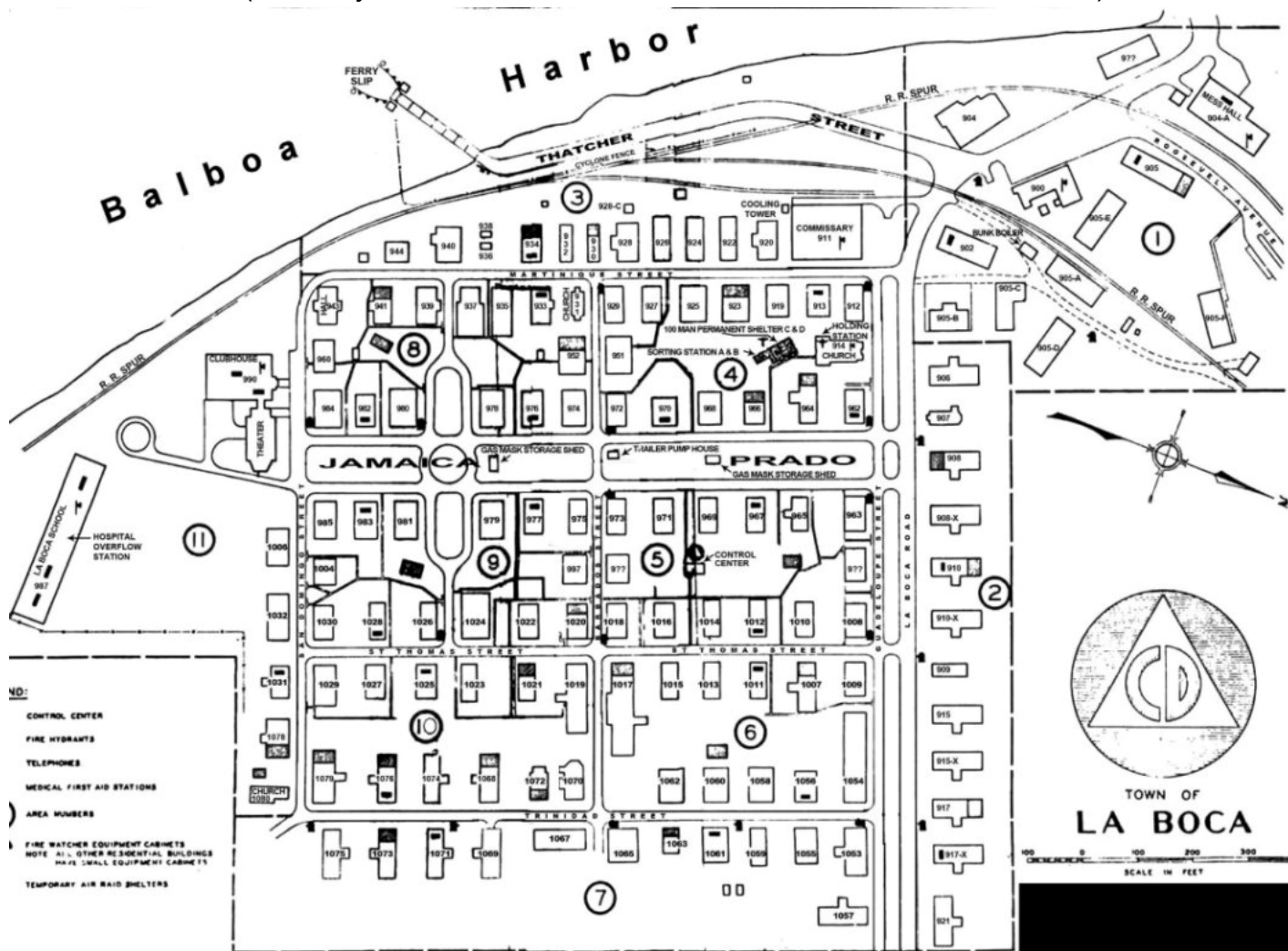
Thanks to all of you who contributed to making this report a reality, by sharing photos, anecdotes and experiences. Don't miss the segment titled **Reminiscing**.

CLG (Carm)

MAP OF LA BOCA

<http://ufdc.ufl.edu/AA00000074/00001/6x>

(Courtesy of Paul Losch, Luis "Lucho" Pearson and Allan Hawkins)



BRIEF INFORMATION ABOUT LA BOCA AND ITS PEOPLE

Read about La Boca Townsite courtesy of CZBrats.com:

The Panama Canal Review, June 4, 1954 <http://www.czbrats.com/Towns/laboca.htm>

DESCRIPTION OF THE HOUSES:

The houses were wood-framed tenements, with zinc roofs, copper wire screens, set on sturdy posts. Residents had tables, benches and chairs under the houses. Colorful congoleums floorings were popularly used in each home to cover the wooden floors. White clothes were washed, then boiled then bleached on the grass (to whiten) and then rinsed, blued and starched, in preparation for ironing. Mondays and Tuesdays were popular wash days. There were several wash houses in different areas where some people went to wash their clothes. Clotheslines were available. Because bathrooms and toilets were outside some the homes, most homes had a potty, chamber or stop pail.

Names of the churches in La Boca:

- | | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. Baptist Church | 4. Salvation Army Church |
| 2. Christian Mission Church | 5. St. Peter's Episcopal Church |
| 3. Methodist Church | 6. St. Theresa Catholic Church |

Names of the streets:

- | | |
|----------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1. Barbados Street | 5. Martinique Street |
| 2. Guadeloupe Street | 6. Santo Domingo Street |
| 3. Jamaica Prado | 7. St. Thomas Street |
| 4. La Boca Road | 8. Trinidad Street (aka Gold Street) |

Variety of street vendors:

- | | |
|------------------------------|--|
| 1. Breads, buns and pastries | 6. Scissors grinder (sharpen knives or scissors) |
| 2. Charcoal (for coal pots) | 7. Sugar cane |
| 3. Coconut | 8. Push cart with vegetables |
| 4. Ice | 9. Exchange of bottles for fruits |
| 5. Raspao | |

Schools in La Boca:

1. La Boca Elementary School
2. La Boca Occupational High School (sewing, cooking, agriculture, shop work, tailoring, science, etc.)
La Boca Normal Training School (preparing teachers for the Silver Schools)

Some of the Buildings:

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. Ballpark (baseball, cricket, track and field) | 6. Tennis Court |
| 2. Clubhouse | 7. Theater (10 cents double feature movie) |
| 3. Commissary | 8. Ice Houses (sold ice in blocks by the pound) |
| 4. Dispensary (First Aid Station) | 9. Chinese Garden |
| 5. Lodge Hall | |

BRIEF INFORMATION ABOUT LA BOCA AND ITS PEOPLE (2)

Some of the Games played:

- | | |
|---------------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Brown Girl | 10. Marbles |
| 2. Chipon | 11. Rhythm |
| 3. Follow the Leader | 12. Skipping Rope |
| 4. Hop scotch | 13. Statue |
| 5. Hot Bread and Butter | 14. Stick-in-the-Mud |
| 6. I've come to see Janie | 15. Tag |
| 7. Jacks | 16. Tic-Tac-Toe |
| 8. Jobalinda | 17. Tops |
| 9. Lata | 18. Yo-Yo |

Popular Hobbies of the Era:

- | | | |
|------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|
| 7. Baking | 15. Dancing | 23. Reading |
| 8. Ball-playing | 16. Drawing | 24. Saxophone-playing |
| 9. Bicycling | 17. Drum-playing | 25. Sewing |
| 10. Boxing | 18. Fishing | 26. Singing |
| 11. Caricaturing | 19. Organ-playing | 27. Sketching (art) |
| 12. Carpentry | 20. Photography | 28. Swimming |
| 13. Clowning | 21. Piano playing | 29. Typing |
| 14. Cooking | 22. Printing | |

The La Boca Alumni Chorus began in 1949 as an after school activity for students of the then La Boca Occupational High School (LBOHS) who were interested in singing. These students, all from the LBOHS, were residents from the Canal Zone communities of La Boca, Red Tank, Paraiso and Gamboa. Later, students from the La Boca College joined and as they graduated from the HS and College, they enjoyed singing together so much that they asked to continue singing after having left school. The Alumni Chorus was formed! At Christmas time, they sang in their own communities, and later included singing in hospitals and for shut-ins as well. They participated on community programs such as Easter Sunrise Services, scholarship fund-raising programs sponsored by the Latin American Scholarship Committee for needy students and many others. Emily Butcher served as director throughout the years.

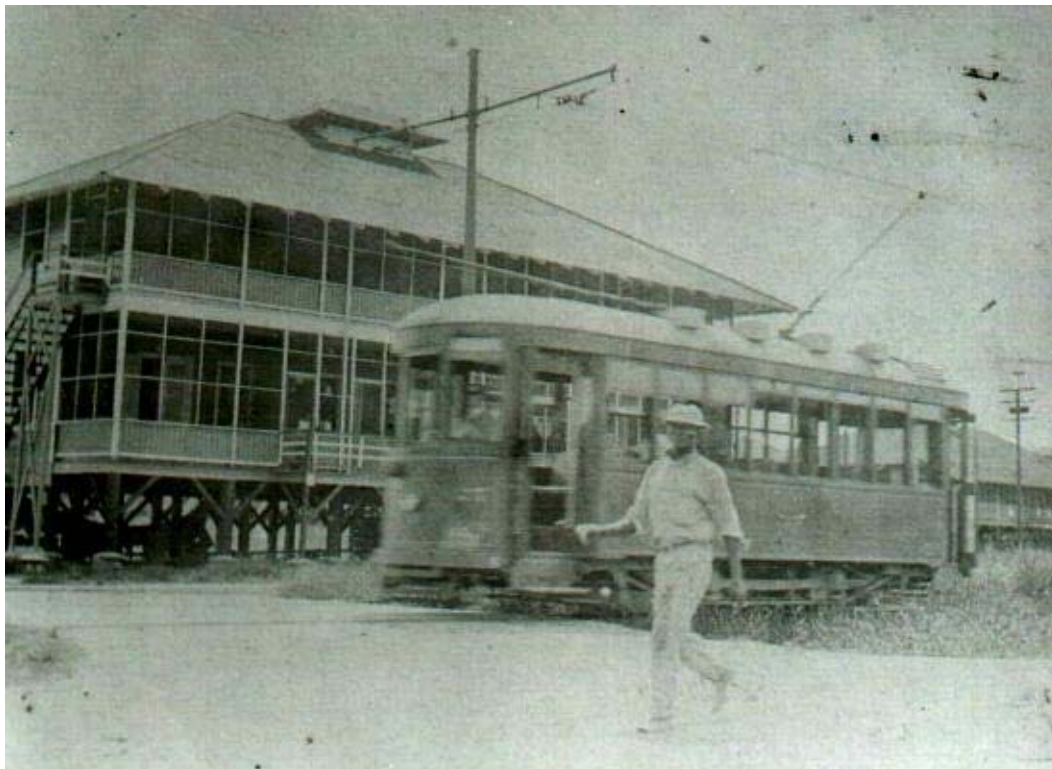
The Pacific Evergreen Club began in La Boca, when in 1952, invited by the Rev. Lemuel B. Shirley, then priest-in-charge of the St. Peter's Episcopal Church; Pat Morgan of Morgan's Gardens gave a few classes in flower arrangement which gave birth to the Club. Its first president was Evelyn Wason and her board included Mary Ferguson (treasurer), Doris Green (recording secretary) and Inez McKenzie (financial secretary). All are now deceased. The Pacific Evergreen Club worked closely with the music department of the La Boca School, to include elementary and high school, during Music Week when they presented a large musical concert on the lawn of the school with lots of flowers and music.

PHOTO GALLERY OF LA BOCA

(Photos courtesy of Allan Hawkins, Robert Karrer, William McLaughlin, Emilia Jimenez, Clarence Gordon Celestina Gayle, CZ Brats and Jaime Massot)



La Boca Commissary
(Courtesy of Jaime Massot)
Commissary Books were used in the following denominations:
\$2.50 (green) - \$5.00 (blue) - \$7.50 (yellow)



Tramcar in La Boca, 1941
(Courtesy of Allan Hawkins)

PHOTO GALLERY OF LA BOCA (2)



La Boca Clubhouse, Theatre and Dispensary, 1946
(Courtesy of Bill McLaughlin – czimages.com)

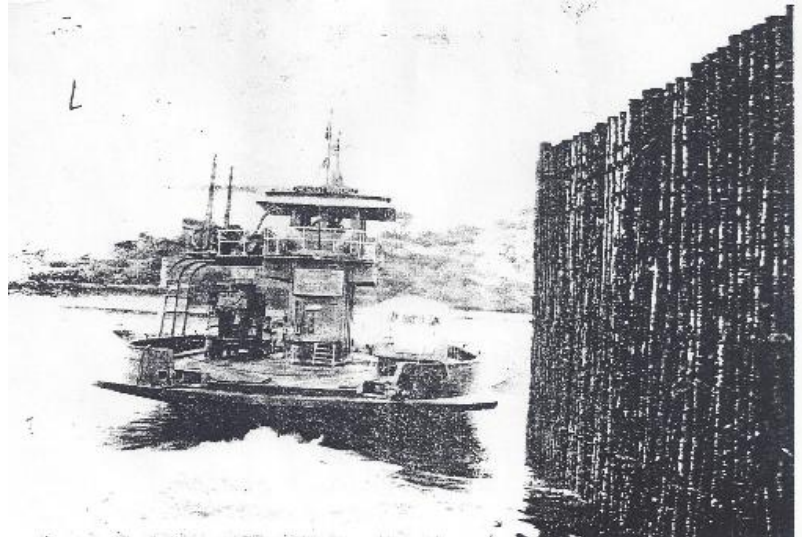
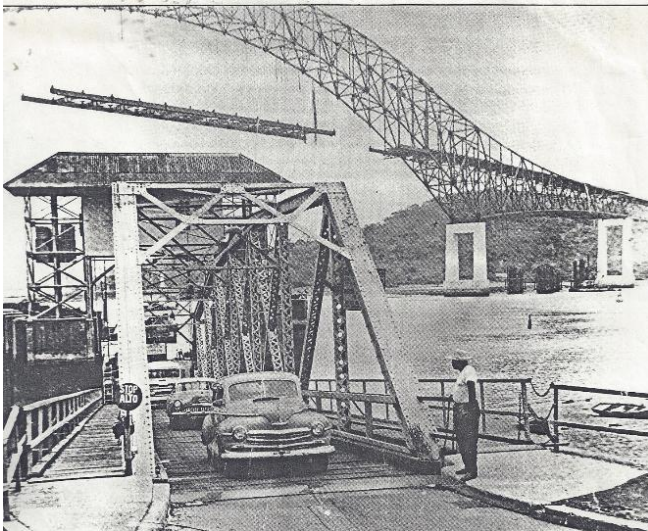


Soda Fountain at La Boca Clubhouse, 1946
(Courtesy of Bill McLaughlin – czimages.com)

PHOTO GALLERY OF LA BOCA (3)



Cafeteria of La Boca Clubhouse, 1946
(Courtesy of Bill McLaughlin – czimages.com)



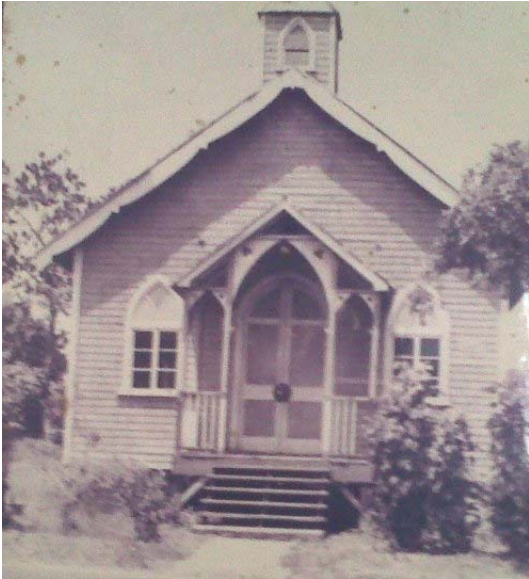
(Courtesy of Clarence Gordon)

The Ferry (there were three of them) transported people, cars, trucks, livestock, fruits and vegetables from the interior to the Panama city and vice versa. These photos were taken in 1961.

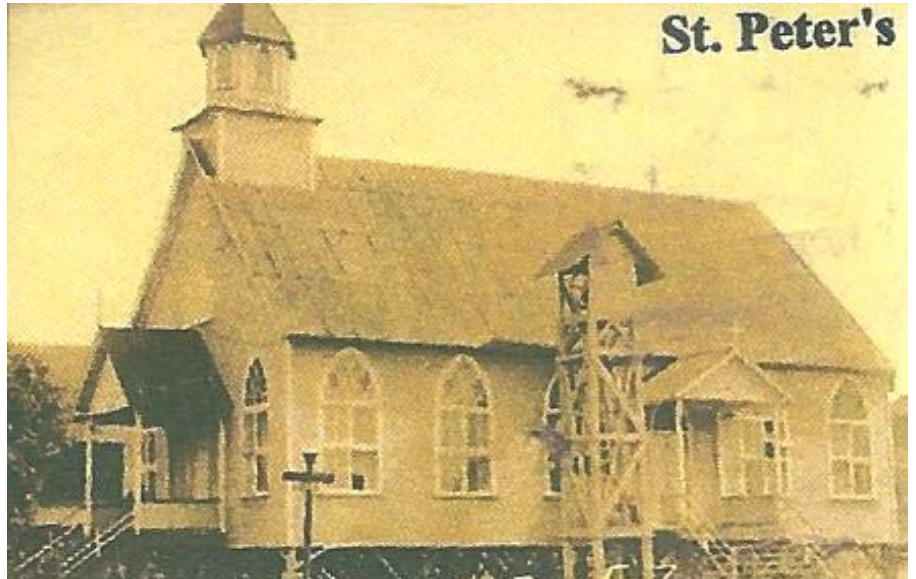
Photo on left shows the vehicles coming off the Ferry. The Bridge of the Americas is seen under construction (inaugurated October 12, 1962).

Photo on the right shows the: *"Ferry President Roosevelt"* leaving from La Boca Dock.

PHOTO GALLERY OF LA BOCA (4)



La Boca Methodist Church
(Courtesy of Museo Afroantillano)



St. Peter's Episcopal Church
(Courtesy of Celestina Grannum Gayle)



La Boca "Silver Roll Employees" Residential Quarters with a vegetable garden in the foreground, 1920
(Courtesy of Jaime Massot)

PHOTO GALLERY OF LA BOCA (5)



Aerial view of the town of La Boca, 1946
(Courtesy of Bill McLaughlin – czimages.com)



PHOTO GALLERY OF LA BOCA (6)



(Courtesy of Allan Hawkins)

La Boca Elementary School and Junior High School;

The schools were comprised of grades 1 to 5 in 1910; further extended to the 8th grade in 1928 and to the 9th grade in 1942. Grade 12 was added in 1946.



The Panama Canal 1935 Graduates of La Boca Public School (8th grade)

(Courtesy of Celestina Grannum Gayle)

My father Marcus Grannum is in this class. Maybe others can find their parents or grandparents in this picture. I found this picture when my father died and we all treasure it.

Celestina Grannum Gayle (Colorado)



La Boca Occupational High School Building, which also housed the La Boca Normal Training School
(Photo 1946, Courtesy of Clarence Gordon)

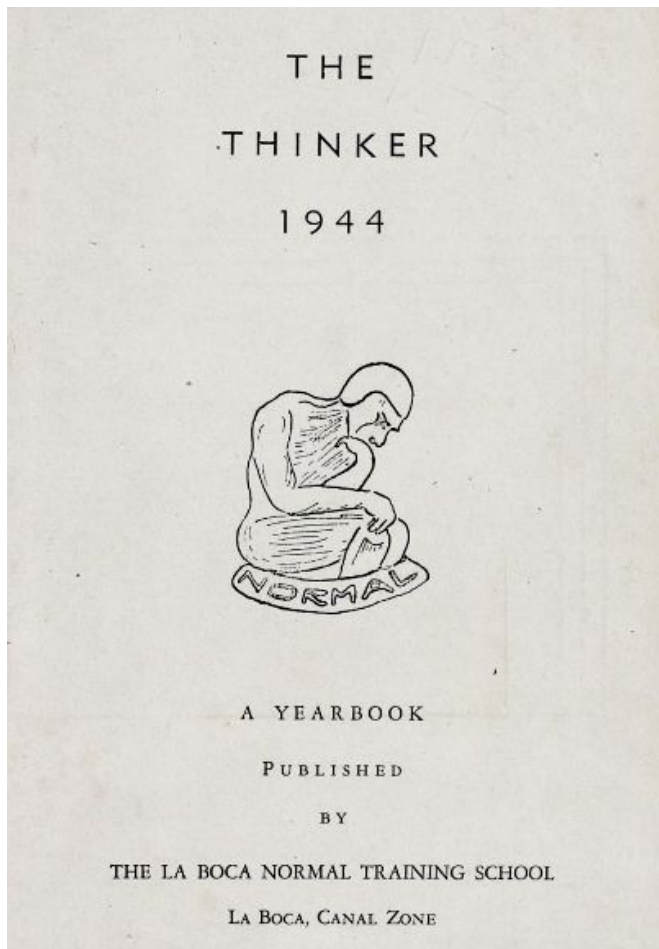
In 1957 the local state schools were converted from the English Language to the Spanish Language and the name of the school was changed to the Latin American Schools.

WE SALUTE THOSE CYBERNEWS SUBSCRIBERS WHO ARE GRADUATES OF THE LA BOCA NORMAL TRAINING SCHOOL:

1. **Emily Butcher**, Class of 1938 (residing in Panama)
2. **George E. Caesar**, Class of 1940 (residing in Georgia)
3. **Mary George Callender**, Class of 1944 (residing in Panama)
4. **John P. Riley**, Class of 1944 (residing in New York)
5. **Roy W. Watkis**, Class of 1944 (residing in New York)
6. **John Evans**, Class of 1948 (residing in New York)
7. **Dubois Andrews**, Class of 1948 (residing in Florida)
8. **Ricardo Dogué**, Class of 1949 (residing in California)



The Thinker was the Yearbook of the La Boca Normal Training School
View the 1944 Yearbook at this link: <http://ufdc.ufl.edu/AA00017315/00001/3j>
(Courtesy of Emilio Collins, ejocollins@aol.com)



LA BOCA SCHOOL SONG:

Lyrics by A. M. Parchment Music by Helen Baker

*Where the ships of many nations
Sail across the narrow land.
Where the waters, so pacific,
Gently kiss the tropic strand,
There you'll find our junior high school
With its wealth of life's best joys.
Dealing out its stores of learning
To a crowd of girls and boys.*

REFRAIN:

*Alma Mater, proud of thy name are we,
Happiest on the Isthmus thus must it ever be
Fanned by the faithful trade winds,
Warmed by the tropic sun,
O sing forever—our junior high school,
The pride of the Zone!*

*Children of the Canal builders,
Heirs to tested brawn and brain,
Offspring of that gallant army,
Peacetime heroes of the Main,
Sing the praises of your fathers.
Emulate their deeds sublime.
Guided by our Alma Mater,
Be the heroes of your time.*

PREKINDER PRIVATE SCHOOLS:

(Reading-Writing and Arithmetic were taught at the Prekinder Level)

Mrs. Vassal School Mrs. Faulkner School Mrs. St. Hilaire School Mrs. Rance School

REMINISCING

FROM OUR E-MAILBOX: “Thanks to those of you who have written.”

CLG (Carm)

I lived in La Boca on building 1074, Apartment A. I remember how my cousins and I used to play hopscotch on the road and run in the clouds of D-D-T smoke when the truck will pass by in the evenings spraying the mosquitoes. I also remember the floggings we got from Mr. Parchment for playing around with the water hose and sprinkler in the playground area where the gas station is today...and the *parrillada*, that used to be the physical activities office. Also I remember playing marbles under the buildings and going to the theater for rikkey soda and Mary Jane Cookies and Butter Brickle Ice Cream to include the sticky bun. So much wonderful remembrance. I attended teacher Faulkner grade school who used to give us these long columns additions all brain power no calculators like today.

Antonio Reina (Panama)



Aubrey Nathan Blair

Aubrey Blair and Henry Watkis

La Boca Normal School first graduating class, July 2, 1938

My father was a photographer of sorts in Panama, and took many photos of buildings and officials. His name was Aubrey Nathan Blair (1917-2004). I also have a large photograph of the very first class of La Boca Normal Training School graduates, July 2, 1938. My father was one of the first chosen to attend and graduate from the Normal School. There were 37 graduates.

Emilia Jimenez (California)

Below are locations my family and I lived at in La Boca - Oh! - What beautiful memories, I'll cherish them forever.

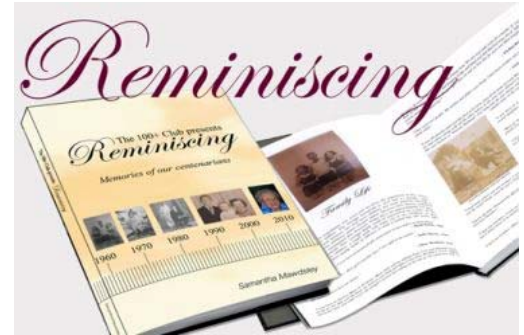
Ilene Pilgrim Bovell (New York)

House #984 - The 8-family one-story house directly facing the La Boca Theatre, Clubhouse and the Dispensary. Our next door neighbors were the Sinclairs (Alvin, Carl, Bertram, Sadie, Cecilia (Mums), Owen "Skinny", and Margie). Diana and Martha Fairclough and parents lived directly behind the Sinclairs, who lived next door to us, facing the Clubhouse. My parents took us to the movie theatre every Saturday. At that time they had only 4 kids. All we had to do was cross the narrow one-lane street, and we were right there, at the theatre door. How very convenient!

House #1018 - Our next door neighbors were the Reece family (Miguel "Tito" Reece's grandmother; his aunts were: Maudie, Elease (Pusey) Ianthe Moses (her sons are Charlie & Papito Moses); Virginia (deceased just a few months ago); uncles: Ivor, Franklyn, Oscar (Buster), and Livingston Reece. Livingston was Patricia and Miguel Reece's father.

House #910 (on the Main Street) - Our neighbors included the Walters (Beverly, Jaybest, Francella), the Airds (Jean, Roy, Robert & Marcus); the Nichols (Barbara, Lois, and their brother (can't recall his name)); the Serranos; the Williams (Thelma, Marcella, Eddie), Martinez family: (Norma, Paquita, Beto, Gloria and Gabriel); the Kennedys (Albert and his siblings), the Griffiths (Martin, Amy, Marva, Gloria, and Rogelio).

I just remember that it was believed that being able to live in a "corner-room" apartment was a privilege. There was a breadfruit tree behind the building that we lived on and much to **MY** lament, when the breadfruit was ripe for the picking, we ate boiled, baked, fried, roasted breadfruit. We could see the 4th of July fireworks (Sosa Hill) from the balcony. I also remember that ●the Salvation Army had a "Night of Fun" every Wednesday night, where they gave a short Bible class and then the rest of the night was fun and games. ●Skating under the high school building on weekends, holidays, vacation was lots of fun. ●Walking down to the ferry landing and going back and forth on the "Porras" (I believe) was also fun. It was the ferry that had an enclosed room on the upper floor. ●White-skinned non-U.S. residents lived on separate buildings. 1057 and 1079, at least. ●On some nights (I believe Fridays) we would go listen to the calypsonians sing and rhyme against each other; I cannot remember exactly where.



Thyra Sealey (Panama)

This special edition will remind us of how the people were classified in the Panama Canal area up until the fifties. The Silver Roll: Blacks and others. Gold Roll: Whites. Commissaries, beaches, swimming pools, water fountains, rest rooms, housing, salaries and benefits, recreation area, social clubs and events, etc.; were all divided into the two groups mentioned above. Some workers that were on the Silver Roll used to make as little as ten cents (\$0.10) an hour.

Franklin Gobern (Georgia)

I grew up with my family at 1074 Trinidad Street. One of my fondest memories is at ten years of age attending a meeting at the "Clubhouse". The meeting was called by the Athenium Society, a group of elders who met every Tuesday evening to discuss ancient Greek philosophy, literature, and mathematics. Aristotle, Plato, Euripides, Euclid, Herodotus, and many others were the objects of study at these auspicious gatherings.

Lloyd Hogan (North Carolina)

I am so glad that there are people like you and your husband who promote the history of Panama. I remember La Boca the way it was and then it was gone when we returned from the U.S. in 1960.

Berta Thayer (Panama)

I don't remember too much since I was so young. However I do remember we were neighbors, we lived at opposite ends of the building. We must have been about seven or eight years old. Our building number was 1073; going up Trinidad Street, to the left is the entrance to the tanks. I remember the Philpotts, the Chandlers, the Holmes, and Puntí lived on it. We lived on the second building before the gates to the holding tanks.

Ernesto Charles (New York)

While living in La Boca (1953-1957), one of the experiences that filled me with an inexpressible joy was going to the ballpark during the dry season to watch men's softball games made up of teams mostly from La Boca, Paraiso and Gamboa. I was especially thrilled when I saw Phillip Malcolm Sr. (Gamboa) hit one of his towering home runs! I also enjoyed playing games like "lata", "paper ball," stick-in-the mud" and "spin the bottle." I always looked forward to greeting the D-D-T truck with the chant: "D-D-T comin' tonight", followed with running ecstatically in the smoke. However, we eventually had to stop running in the smoke because mean kids began throwing bottles, stones, etc. in the smoke to hurt those who were having fun.

Richard Williams (Illinois)

Hi Carmela: So nice to see an interest in La Boca town site. Keep up the good works, Carmela.

Martha Olton (Panama)

I was born in 1924. I resided at House 971, in the area of one of the Ice Houses, until 1938. I can remember when I was growing up the cost of codfish was 9 cents a pound and the spare ribs sold for 12 cents a pound.

Adica Moore (Panama)

I remember our family was living in Building 1071 next to the fuel tanks fence and a 10 minute walk to La Boca Elementary School. I remember teachers Miss Mclean, Miss Lee, and my good friend Carlos Lopez, (we did homework together on the stairs of the Clubhouse, while in third grade). On the next building (maybe 1070?) lived Jean Holmes (the Olympic runner for Panama) and across the street where the Avila Family, (Edgar and Joseito) (1952-1957). I remember sometimes the dry grass around the Fuel Tanks caught fire, there was lot of excitement from the neighbors, fire trucks, etc., thinking of a possible explosion, which never happened. The Ferry was a nice distraction, going back and forward across the Canal, with the high and low tides from the magnificent Pacific Ocean at the Panama Canal Entrance.(no bridge in those days).

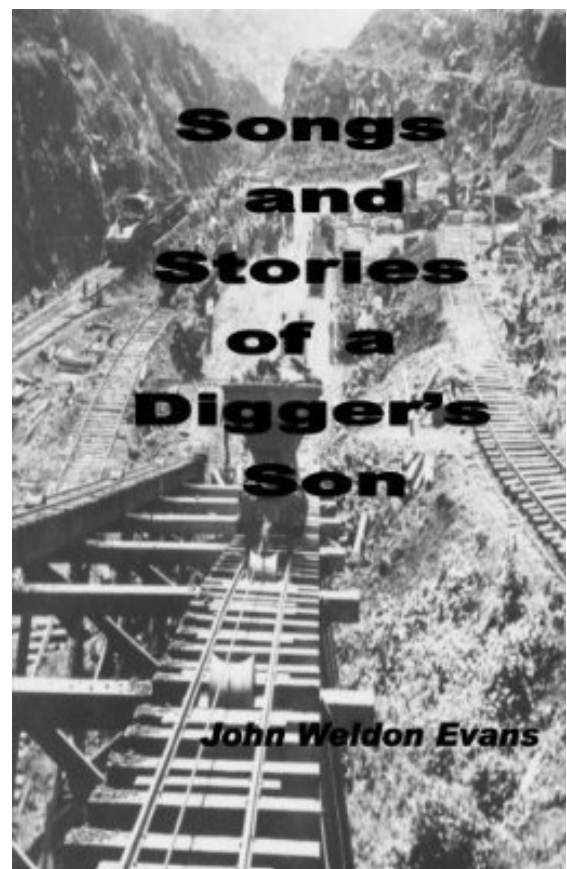
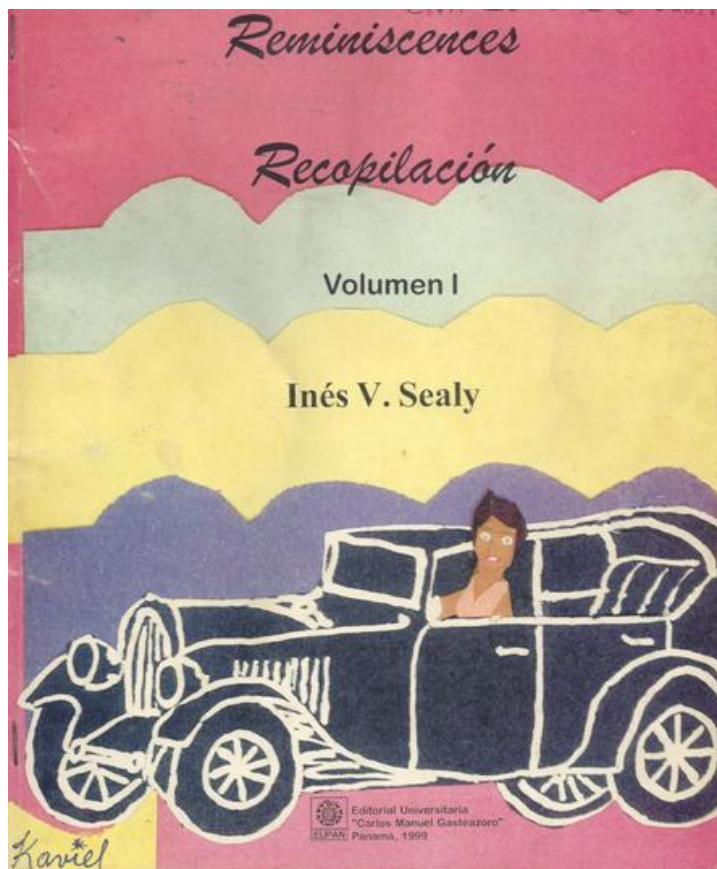
Reminiscing is
a great way of
reconnecting...

Ramon Morales (Puerto Rico)

You are free to pull from my La Boca Articles in **Reminiscences/Recopilación Vol. I.**

Ines Sealy (Panama)

Editor's note: Subscribers may contact Ines Sealey for a copy of her book at sealyxxi@gmail.com



John Evans' book **Songs and Stories of a Digger's Son** contains poems and stories of La Boca.

Melva Goodin (Panama)

Editor's note: Subscribers may contact John Evans for a copy of his book at jweldone@aol.com

These books are an excellent source for more complete and detailed information on La Boca. They are also on sale at the West Indian Museum.

Jos and Josefina Bell were living with their grandparents, Heginton and Doris Hunt, in La Boca Bldg. 1007 and subsequently moved to Paraiso Bldg. 349-B.

Joselyn Bell (Arizona)



We resided at #1076 in a double apartment at the far end away from the street. I didn't like the military color gray of all the houses and was happy to move to Parque Lefevre where colorful houses comprised our new community.

Victor Smythe (Mexico)



Owen Blanchard (1975) Owen Blanchard (1952) La Boca Baptist Church (2003)
Formerly St. Theresa Catholic Church in La Boca

Owen Blanchard, a former resident of La Boca, Canal Zone, relates that the current La Boca Baptist Church was formerly St. Theresa Catholic Church. He lived with his parents on the ground floor of the church building until age 19 when he joined the U.S. Army in 1952.

Federico Smith (Florida)

I am glad that you are doing a piece on La Boca. My fondest memory of Panama is of La Boca. I lived in building 915X. I'm sitting here reminiscing on the great times that we shared. I am remembering the high school with the concrete pavement. This is where we learned to roller skate (with the iron wheels) play shuffle board, volley ball and baseball. The area between the Board Elementary School and the High School with the wide open space and the Club House. The movie house was right across from the school. We could buy a pint of good ice cream for twenty-five cents and two of the best square brown cookies for five cents. The movie cost ten cents for a cartoon and news wheel. These were great times.

Ernesto R. Smith (New York)

In response to the La Boca townsite my husband Terrance Herbert (Ted) was a resident of La Boca living with his grandparents, the Padmores, from 1940 until 1954 at 1016 St. Thomas Street.

Olga Herbert (Florida)

My cousin Alicia Best (R.I.P.) lived in La Boca where my brother (now deceased) and I would visit and stay for a while during vacations. As we were from Colon, once we encountered a "dude" that we had to teach a fisticuff lesson to. Unbeknown to us, turned out he was part of a 'bad' family....Boy did we have to hit the road in a hurry, as the entire clan was looking for us.

Tito Johnson (Panama)

I was not even in the making when La Boca was around, 🤔 but the pictures will surely bring nostalgic and sad moments; this is how I feel when I see my hometown, Colon.

Judie Boyce (Panama)

I lived in Red Tank from age of 1.5 until we moved to La Boca for Kindergarten through 2nd grade and then onto Paraiso where I begun 3rd grade.

William Murrain (Georgia)

REMINISCING

I lived in La Boca; I think the house number was 915 or 917X? This house was on the main street, going towards St Theresa Catholic church (I made my first communion at this church). Everyone knew me as Marva Bailey. Annette Burgess lived on the same building. Never had many friends because my aunt was very strict with us.

Marva Muir (Florida)

I lived in La Boca on St. Thomas Street from 1937 to 1944. I remember that the house where I lived would be considered a row house as it was one building with several 2-room apartments with a screened-in porch and a front-covered stoop (screened in porch, bedroom, kitchen, bathroom.). Upstairs were single rooms with a common bathroom and wash area. The houses were built off the ground. There was a large field area in front, between my house and the house in front which was built with a large stairway in the middle. A family by the name of Hall lived there. The families that I remember that lived on first street, mostly Spaniards were the Larrinaga, Ponce, Pena, a family by the name of Davila lived on the last street. I remember taking a ride on the ferry with my mother at night when it was hot. Also remember going to the segregated beach in Far Fan. There was a lady that gave me piano lessons at the Church on front street next to the laundry, can't remember her name. Another person that lived next to me was named Dorothy (her boyfriend cut her fanny with a razor and my Dad had to get her to the hospital.). Games we played were stick-in-the-mud and ring around the rosie. Remember the ginger cookies that the Caribbean ladies baked and I remember that I loved to eat their cooking; they were always feeding me because I was so skinny. There were a lot of ghost stories, like the chains you would hear dragging at night and the horse and buggy sound in the middle of the night.

Paquita Prieto Pujol (Panama)

Our family moved from Red Tank to La Boca in 1950. La Boca was the ideal place for an 11 year old lad to truly begin his approaching teen years growing with intentional nurturing through a vibrant community. We lived on Building 917 located on the main road coming directly from Balboa. My paternal grandparents also lived in La Boca on Building 1061 which bordered the play-ground/ball-field. In addition, our apartment on Building 917 was right above the apartment of Charlotte Gooden, the great Panamanian female sprinter who represented Panama in the Summer Olympic in 1954 (I believe), lived with her parents. When I attended La Boca Elementary School, the late, Edward A. Gaskin was principal at the time. My recollection of play time included surroundings around the La Boca High School and La Boca Elementary School which provided a field in the middle. We learned quickly that we had to set-up important grounds rule. One of our softball games rule stated that any batter hitting a ball into any school window was out automatically, in order to avoid cutting the game short. The space under the high school was smooth enough for our ball-bearing roller skates and there was also a shuffle board game template. The proximity of houses with each other and with the empty ground floor some tenants utilized space as storage areas. During daylight we would play a variety of board games, hopscotch, marble, "platillo" and at sunset we settle for hide-and-seek, "lata" or follow the DDT truck around the community, until our parent gave us the call to come inside. We were privileged to enjoy various professional sporting events such as Cricket, men and women softball and hardball leagues, bicycle races and marathon races which started from Panama City and culminating in La Boca at the main play ground. I would be remiss not to include the La Boca Ferry carrying vehicles and people which took us across the Panama Canal to interior access roads to Far-Fan and Hide-A-Way beaches and to farming plats leased to residents. My grandfather, Alfred Wilson, who retired as the chief maintenance personnel for Gorgas Hospital, leased a lot there during his residency in La Boca. My brother and I would travel each Saturday to bring back crocus bags loaded with yam, yucca, bananas, plantains, mango, etc. Our family moved from La Boca in 1956 to reside in Paraiso.

Eugene Wilson (Florida)



Reminisce

I lived in La Boca from 1934 through 1951 at House #1015 St. Thomas Street. I attended La Boca Elementary, Junior High, and High School and my family attended St. Peters' Episcopal Church. I completed La Boca Junior College in 1956. Mr. Morgan was the principal of the school for most of the years. The next principal (cannot recall his name) was "a trip." His favorite words were "Look in the back of the neck of the child before." This ensured straight lines as we entered or left school.

Letha Ometta Wilkinson Terry (New York)

Good morning Carm, I think this idea of doing Memoirs of La Boca is great, I only hope that you are going to follow-up with other City in the Canal Zone I will love it.

Amelia Thom (Indiana)



Attached is a photo of one of the first Little League Baseball team taken in 1951 for the inaugural Little League started in La Boca for Panamanians. There were two teams from La Boca. The name of the second team was Ifill. I was one of the members on the Fergus. I am in the first row – 3rd from left (excluding our bat boy. I can't recall all the players and full names. However, I think the little bat boy is Ricky Howell, from left first row – Holland Gayle, Winston Faulkner, Eugene Wilson (can't recall the last three). The second row standing from left – Tony Howell, Carl Sinclair, Catcher (last name) St. Louis, (can't recall the next player) next is (last name) Jolly and I can't recall the last player. Our first Little League game was played under the lights at the Balboa Stadium.

Eugene Wilson (Florida)

My last address in La Boca was House 1027. I was born at house 1073 before my family moved to the later address. I have great childhood memories of this town. Very close nit neighbors where everyone looked out for each other. I would love to see photos of my little town. Callender Family.

Leroy Callender (Panama)

My mother and I were living with my grandmother at the time of my birth which was December 24, 1945. I was delivered at home by a midwife. We lived there until I was 4 years of age. Other than that, nothing else since both my parents and grandparents have passed on. I wish I had more to contribute. I am so looking forward to these Memoirs, because this is something I can pass on to my children and grandchildren. Thanks for everything you do.

Cheryl Mitchell (Virginia)

R·E·M·I·N·I·S·C·I·N·G

I resided at 908 La Boca road facing Jamaica Prado from 1947 to 1954. Once my mother won the lottery and she bought a television set. I believe we were the first to own a television in the community. We would take the TV downstairs to share with the neighbors, then take it back upstairs every evening.



Queen Cynthia I, May 28, 1954

Roberto Diaz (New York)

My family worshipped at the Methodist Church on Front Street. I don't know why this stands out in my memory, but there was a family who lived next to the church, and they would display the lottery numbers as they were played. Those were the days when the lottery numbers were drawn around 12 noon when the sermon was being preached. There were certain members who insisted on sitting next to the door where they could see the numbers, and others would be stretching their necks to see the numbers as they were written down.

On May 28, 1954, I was crowned Queen at the Salvation Army Church in La Boca.

Cynthia Lowe (Florida)

I believed we lived on Building 908....don't know the name of the street; it was near the ball field where my father took me on Sunday afternoons when he hung out with his friends. He always carried that little brownie box camera that fascinated me to this day, and is the reason i so love photography now. The camera was in a fancy little brown leather case, and the inside lining was a pretty royal blue; the camera came out like an accordion. Here I am with oldest brother Carlos on my left, to his left is a neighbor I remember her name as Barbara; to my right and almost cut out the picture (my father's style of photog, LOL) is my second oldest brother Luis, who we lost in 1995. We were on our way to church. This is one of the Sundays I spoke of. Pa and ma would take us to church and he always had that brownie camera; after church we came home, I changed my clothes and he would take me down to the baseball field. I am the oldest girl. I love this idea of the reminiscing piece. Thank you, Carm, for doing what only you and your husband can do....appreciation for your hard and continued work is huge.

Nathifa Mawiyah – formerly Marva Chambers (New York)



Left to right: Luis (R.I.P.), Marva (Nathifa) and Carlos "Curly" Chambers and neighbor Barbara.

My old address in La Boca was 908X. Don't remember much more but the old address.

Lois Nicholson-Maddox (California)

Was too young when we left La Boca.....can't remember much else other than playing under the building. "peanie wally come for bread and tea". :)

Gerardina Leacock (New York)

We lived at 917X Apt A. My dad was Dudley Farrell who worked at the Store House Section I.

Miriam Wilson (Panama)



Herman Bayne

I love the work you are doing of re-creating our communities. My family lived on Building # 1068 on Gold Street. On that building were several families you may know of: Fred and Clotilde Wason and their three daughters, Carol, Sandra and Marcia Yvonne. These were my earliest playmates and still are today. Carol and Marcia Yvonne no longer live in NY but Sandra and I go to the theater, ballet, grab a bite to eat and just spend some time together every other month or so. In addition there was the Babb family, Germaine Babb came upstairs to visit often, Mrs. Maude Stewart lived a few doors down and was a good friend of my mother; Mary George Callender - the George family, my grandparents Richard & Adelaide Prince initially had the "apartment" next door and when he retired and they moved into Panama City and the Smith family moved in. There was also the King family, and several others that I can not remember. I am enclosing a photo of my Dad, Herman Christopher Bayne, that I recently found as he knew everyone on the building and I miss him so, not only for his *joie de vivre* but also his voice which many may remember as he sang at so many events while I was growing up. Many of those from his singing group the Cleff Melodaires have gone on to Glory but those old timers and the old neighborhood are never forgotten.



My dad, the late Arthur H. Holder, was a graduate from the La Boca Normal School. I don't remember the year of graduation but I remember he and the late Zelma Lee. I think I have a picture of the Glee Club directed by Miss Emily Butcher, doing a Christmas Concert, I'll see if I can find it.

Marcia Bayne Smith (New York)

Just want to chip in as a LA BOCAN. I shared much time with my grandparents from both sides. The Airds lived entering La Boca on 917, that's on the main road. The neighbors that I do remember are the Smiths, Graves and Roberts. On the other side of the main lived Dixon/Parchment; don't remember the house number but it was at a corner.

Patricia Brown (California)

What a great memory! I love to go "back in time" with a look at our former stomping grounds!

Charles "Charlie" Dixon (Panama)

Yolanda Holness Clark (California)

My brother Rogelio went for his first hair cut at 1 year old. This is the back of La Boca Clubhouse and note Dispensary in left corner.

Celestina Grannum Gayle (Colorado)

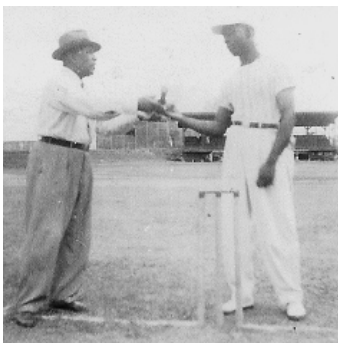


Photo left. My grandfather Arnold Grannum seemingly giving out recognition of some sort to a Cricket Player at La Boca Baseball Park. Note Stadium in the background.



Photo right: My father Marcus Grannum beside his parents' residence at 1061 by the baseball park in La Boca. We all had a wonderful childhood growing up in La Boca. Some friends we still see or keep in touch occasionally.

Celestina Grannum Gayle (Colorado)



We invite you to pause in a moment of silence for all those who have gone on before, but have left their footsteps in the sands of time, having paved the way to make better lives for us today. Among these persons are our parents, grandparents, neighbors, friends, children, grandchildren, teachers, mentors, employers, laborers, construction workers and others.



Editor's Note: We have enjoyed putting this special edition together and have learned quite a bit about our La Boca townsite. We trust that this report will serve to reminisce on the “good ole days as well as reunite old friendships and rekindle former relationships. **Thanks to all of you who shared.**

Special thanks to:

- Adica Moore
- Allan Hawkins
- Bill McLaughlin
- Celestina Gayle
- Clarence Gordon
- CZ Brats
- Emilia Jimenez
- Emilio Collins
- Emily Butcher
- Federico Smith
- George Caesar
- Ilene Bovell
- Ilene Hylton
- Ines Sealy
- Jaime Massot
- John Evans
- Lucho Pearson
- Mary Callender
- Owen Blanchard
- Patricia Forbes
- Paul Losch
- Robert Karrer
- Scott Robertson
- Everyone who has shared

Carmela Lowe Gobern

Editor, Panama Cyberspace News

E-mail: goberncl@cwpanama.net

Tel. (507) 314-0398

Cell (507) 6675-4507

U.S. (678) 995-7136

www.panamacybernews.com

