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1. GUYANA

SAGHS ' Young Leaders 2005 ... Strengthening Our Societies ... Our Vision ... Our People ...
Our Culture

Known for its gold, Guyana is truly a beautiful and classic example of the rich diversification of cultures present in the Caribbean. As one attempts to study the population of this magnificent country, it becomes evident that the country is indeed representative of the unity of different races present among our Caribbean people.

1.1. BRIEF HISTORY OF GUYANA

Guyana was first populated by the indigenous peoples of the region -- the Amerindians. In 1615 the Dutch befriended the Amerindians and settled in Guiana. They began building cotton and sugar plantations on the coast and brought slaves from West Africa to work on these plantations. During this period, the French and British were also setting up cotton and sugar plantations in other parts of the country and using slaves as labour.

As the British empire began to expand around the world in the late 1700's, so did their territory in Guiana. In 1814, the colonies of Essequibo, Demerara and Berbice were ceded to Britain, and later in 1831 these colonies merged and became British Guiana. With the abolishment of slavery in 1834, the British had to turn to other sources for labor and so they began to bring indentured labourers from India, Portugal, Germany and China to work on their plantations.

On May 26, 1966 British Guiana gained its independent from the Britian and changed its name to Guyana which was derived from an Amerindian word meaning Land of Many Waters. Four years later, on February 23, 1970 Guyana was proclaimed the Co-operative Republic of Guyana within the British Commonwealth of Nations.

The main city of Guyana is Georgetown along with other major towns such as Linden, New Amsterdam and Rose hall. There are three counties Essiquibo, Bermacana and Berbice. Most of the population lives in the northern coast which, in some areas, is below sea level while there are regions in the western half of the country which elevates to 8,000 feet in some spots. There are two seasons: dry and rainy. Guyana is known for its gold mines. However, much of the country's mines are covered with dense vegetation.

Today, the people of Guyana live in harmony each contributing to the rich culture of this multi ethnic society of six races with influences of Amerindian, European, Chinese, African, North American and East Indian.

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