

Pickney Sinting

Ask a child today about his or her favourite toy and it is automatically something bought in the store and most times works with batteries.

But there was a time, not too long ago, when children made their own toys, using any and everything in the environs. And trust me, those were the days of real fun and games, and it encouraged creativity and perpetuated the 'tun you can meck fashion' syndrome. Those were the days when boys learnt, without an instructor, to swim in the gully, in the river or at sea. Those were the days when girls used mud to make their 'dolly pot' and created several intricate hand games – clapping, crossing hands, turning to clap with your partner then, clapping again. We used string to make 'four a diamond' and spelled Contents – 'Cut Off Nanny Titty, Eat Nanny Titty Sweet ... Some Teacher Never Eat Till Nine O'Clock' (backwards). Apart from taking the bus and walking longer distances, playing outdoors afforded us a lot of exercise, so we were more fit. We would play the game of 'cow' – no equipment needed. One person was the 'bull cow' and that person would run down the others head at full tilt saying 'moo.' Whoever the cow managed to 'buck', would become the next cow and the running continued. Or we would play bicycle where two children would lie on their sides facing each other, their feet pulled up, soles touching the other person's foot, and pedal away. On a 'moonlight night', we would play 'moonshine dawlin'. Children would use white stones, usually from the river to trace (outline) the body of another child lying on the ground. The child would get up, leaving the white outline, and that would be the moonshine dawlin. Dark nights were great for making movies. All you needed was an old sheet and a light from a lamp or moonlight. We twisted our hands to cast intricate shadows representing people and animals. Our characters had names and our stories had plots to rival any blockbuster. Source: Kin Teet Kibba Heart Bun by Joan Andrea Hutchinson. This book celebrates the creativity and resourcefulness of Jamaican 'poor' people and will be sure to take you back in time as you remember your growing up years. Order your copies for Christmas kinteetkibbaheartbun@yahoo.com or bumpyhead@cwjamaica.com