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Memories of the steelband festival

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I HAD no real intention to delve into the history of the steelband music festival while writing the article which was published in last Monday's Express.

I was merely giving the public an insight into this year's festival and I thought that it would have been fitting to give a brief background of the history of the festival. I realised on completion that I could have stirred up a jack spaniard's nest as steelbandmen are very sensitive people and I might have omitted some names or divulged incorrect information somewhere along the line.

The fact is, that the



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authentic documentation of the history and development of the steelband is one of the areas that is causing Pan Trinbago great concern and Education Officer Andre Moses and myself have

been recently mandated by the central executive to expedite this matter once and for all.

I have used my personal knowledge of the steelband from the time it gripped my interest and held my fascination as a young boy through my first efforts as a teen-aged pan player some 20 years ago and into the present time when I have befriended many older panmen whose stories I always seek out at every opportunity. I was still a toddler when Boys Town won the first festival in 1952.

I expected some feedback from my article but in the swift manner in which it has come has obliged me to give more details of past festivals and to do some research so that before the semi-

finals, I can present an authentic history of past steelband festivals.

The first correction I received was at midday on Monday as I reached to sign the attendance register at the Diego Martin Junior Secondary. My vice-principal Kenneth James, an ardent pan lover, called me into his office to point out that it was Southern All Stars and Theo Stephens that played Anna and as I reached home Boogie handed me a note and two booklets which Tony Williams dropped for me in order that I could do some factual research.

Tony corrected me by stating that Boys Town had played "Beautiful Dreamer" in 1952 and that Dixieland had played "Estudiantina" in 1959 during the preliminaries but had changed their tune of choice to "Agnus Dei" because of a time limit imposition during the finals which took place in 1960.

There were other competitions before 1952, however, but these were organised by individuals. The first island-wide steelband competition was held at the Mucurapo Stadium in 1946. Sun Valley who played "Home Sweet Home" and "La Paloma" won.

In another competition, Invaders won and Sun Valley, which was based at Upper Bournes Road, St James, was second. Sonny Roach won the Ping Pong solo from Eli Mannette. Chic Mc-