Only thing buried in Freeport is the tide-washed-in seaweed



Most traveled young woman in this country the past year was Miss G. O. Smith, 'Miss Black America.' Miss Smith visited towns from next door to her New York to Vietnam, where she entertained servicemen.

reeport, Grand Bahama Island In Freeport, the only thing they bury is the seaweed borne in by the tide. Those who, like Ponce de Leon, expect to find the legendary Fountain of Youth here but finally succumb, have to be shipped to other resting places, for the bustling scheme of things here does not include a cemetery.

The fact is that in a resort so young and idyllic death takes a back seat, for Freeport has become a teenager and, like a lusty young non\$conformist, it is meeting maturity without batting a sundrenched eye.

Thirteen years ago a measure called the Hawksbill Creek Act transformed a wilderness of pine trees and scrub into one of the world's great playgrounds and industrial and residential complexes. Here you can find the flavor of olde England spiced liberally with touches of the Orient, the Middle East and Latin America.

beaches and crystal clear, waters, never more than a few minutes' drive from the hotels, golf courses, shops and marinas which hold their own special attraction for the tourists pouring into Freeport in ever-increasing numbers.

This might all be easier to comprehend had it occurred progressively over a span of a century as people from all over the world brought in their own native traditions, architecture and cultures.

But Freeport is still young. Befor 1955 it was almost impossible to traverse the woody terrain from one side of the island to the other.

Where now stands the oriental El Casino, coal-burners used to build fires and char pine trees for native fuel.

The site of the popular International Bazaar - a miniature -World's Fair may not have received the imprints of human feet at all before the bulldozers moved in to begin their dramatic face-

The bulldozers are still here, except that now there are even more of them, forever pushing back the natural barriers to modern growth and construction.

Building activity in 1968 was well over \$30 million, an increase of 50% over 1967.

Meanwhile, the number of visi tors keeps skyrocketing every year.

n 1967 there were 231,382 visitors, and last year the num ber was 308,737.

To accommodate the increase in travel to this popular resort island. hotel rooms and airline seats have increased accordingly.

While there were 4,000 airline seats available to Freeport weekly one year ago, the figure has now jumped to more than 14,000 each week on a total of 156 international

Bahamas Airways, British Overseas Airways Corp., Pan American, Eastern, Air Canada, Northeast and a steady stream of private aircraft contribute to the big rush to this island where the beautifiers bury washed up seaweed to make the beaches more immaculate.

In addition, December brought the inauguration of daily cruises between Miami and Freeport aboard the 14,000-ton luxury liner M V Freeport which makes the 100-mile trip in four hours for a minimum return fare of \$25.

Two new hotels, the Victoria and the Indies House, will soon boost the number of available hotel rooms to almost 3,000 and, if plans for further construction proceed on schedule, next season will see at least another 1,000 rooms added. By contrast, Freeport, in 1963, boasted only 35 hotel rooms.

Apart from the fun and island relaxation which lure most of the sun-seekers to Freeport, the possibilities of lucrative business investment is another attraction.

tatistics show that of the 2,000 business licenses issued since Freeport came into being. the mumber of failures can be counted on one hand. For this reason, the somewhat curious word "unhankruptness", has become a favorite on Grand Bahama Island.

A recent survey showed that Freeport's population comprises foreign nationals from 27 countries. Florida pizza chef; a Swiss

he crowning pleasure, however, is the fact that whether it's June or December, the

Freeport resident or tourist can kick off his shoes, shed his otherworld garments and splash about the gossamer waters off the island. With such a pulsating array of

growth and expansion, Freeport's lack of a local cemetery lends san enchanting icing to the myriad resort virtues there are here.

It was no accident. It was simply that everything in this cosmopolitan showpiece of the Bahamas is always in a state of flux - a constant changing and rearranging a perennial flow of life and activity in which dying seems out of place.

"There is only one explanation for it," one of the oldest residents said, "either people in Freeport don't die, or they go home to die." The fact is that if they do die

here, they are promptly shipped

out to another part of the island or elsewhere, for Freeport is a real live town in every sense of the word, and those who live here intend to keep it that way. mountain-climber, a retired Canadian Mountie and a former hawk-eyed writer for the Associated Press — along with thousands of others — have responded to Freeport's own peculiar magnetism.

While the population was a paltry 2,000 in 1964, latest figures indicate Freeport now numbers nearly 20,000.

Heavy industry is also on the upsurge. A \$50 million cement plant is supplying not only the bustling Freeport construction business, but parts of South America

A multi-million dollar chemical plant has opened up vaste new opportunities for both Bahamians and other Freeport residents. Devoted largely to the manufacture of synthetics, the Syntex Corporation turns out by-products used in any thing from swizzle sticks to birth-

Lewis Howard Latimer,

oped a fast inexpensive son of an escaped slave, came a prominent sur-

method of refining sugar- became an electrical engi- veyor, mathematician and

cane in 1846. Before this neer and an inventor. He astronomer. When Major

time, it was a luxury for invented a method for L'Enfant, the original ar-

the very few. Because of making carbon filament chitect of Washington,

Rillieux, sugar became in- in an incandescent lamp, D.C., packed up and quit,

expensive enough to make which he patented. Even- the job was turned over to-

aide to Thomas Edison scribed the Major's plans.

and one of the Edison Pio- Banneker played a key

neers. Today, a school in role in putting the White

Brooklyn, New York, House, the Treasury and

control pills.

A new \$60 million oil refinery is presently under construction, and at its completion will attract untold additional dollars.

As one resident explains: "Freeport is what everyone wants in his backyard — all the conveniences of modern-living without the trappings of radical weather changes every three months or so.'

What he meant, of course, is that Freeport offers such back-bone comforts as modern supermarkets; a neighborhood theatre; bowling alleys; tennis courts; playgrounds, churches and schools.

Benjamin Banneker be-

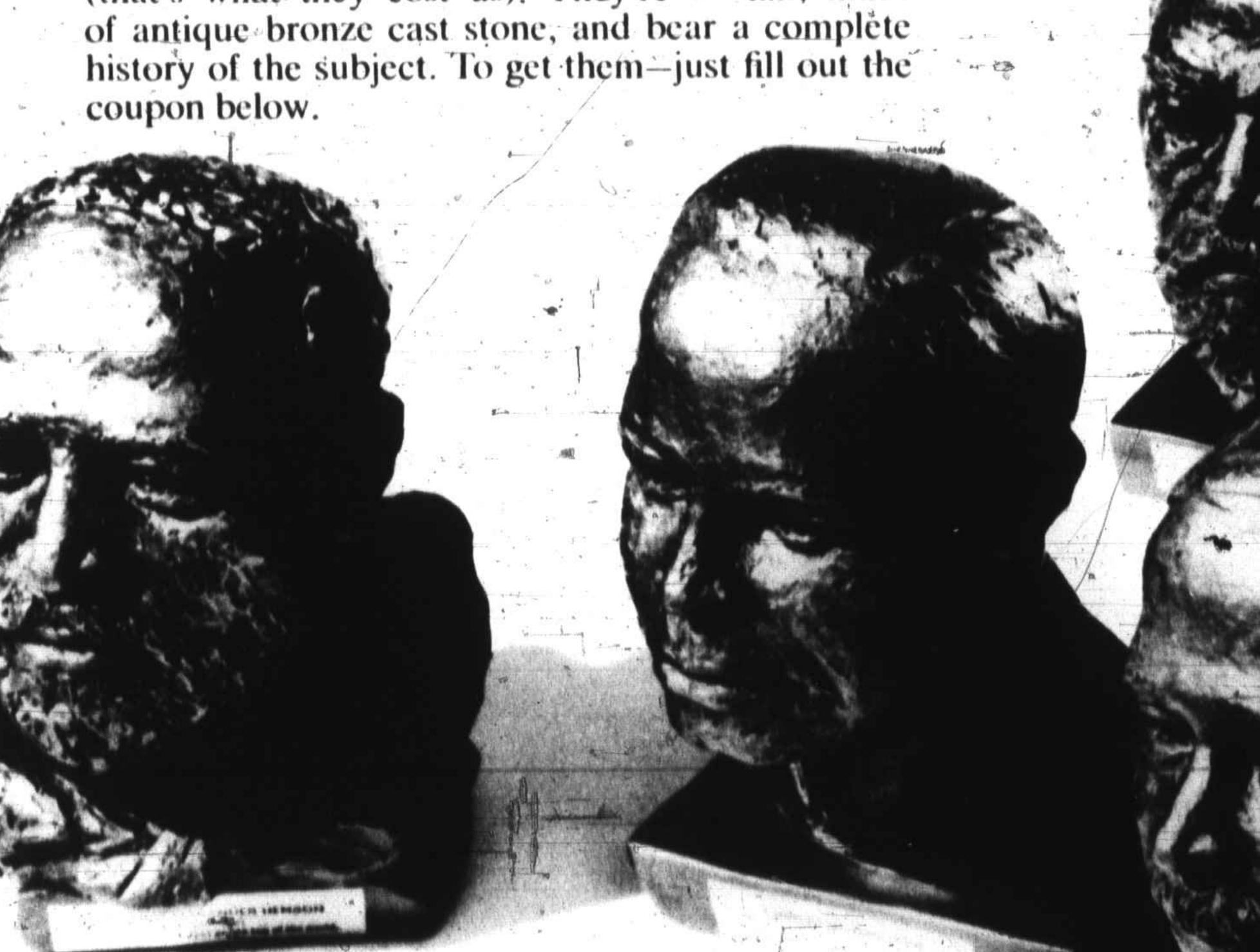
the Capitol where they are

Old Taylor Presents: 6 Ingenious Americans.

These black men helped change the world! all our lives a little sweeter. tually he became a noted Banneker, who had transcribed to Thomas Edison scribed the Major's plans

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Matthew Henson was cate and stand on the North Pole.

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Dr. Dan Williams

worked as a barber to get

through high school. Eight

years after graduating

from medical school, he

opened a man's chest and

sewed up a knife wound of

the heart sac. Dr. Williams

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