Brazil: A Country Of Surprises

By William Moore

If you have two or more weeks to spare and want to do something really different, catch a jet down to Rio de Janeiro and take on the biggest country in Latin America - Brazil.

The surprises will probably floor you.

Few people, for example, realize that this country that is almost the size of the USA, has the largest black population of any nation outside of Africa. Yes, that includes the good ole USA too. We estimate our black population anywhere from 22 to 25 million. In Brazil they estimate their black population at about 33 million or more in a total population of about 120 million.

So when you hit the very sophisticated city of Rio, a big city (4 million) circled by beaches, you will find yourself right at home walking around the city. Most people will suspect you are just another Brazilian until you open your mouth.

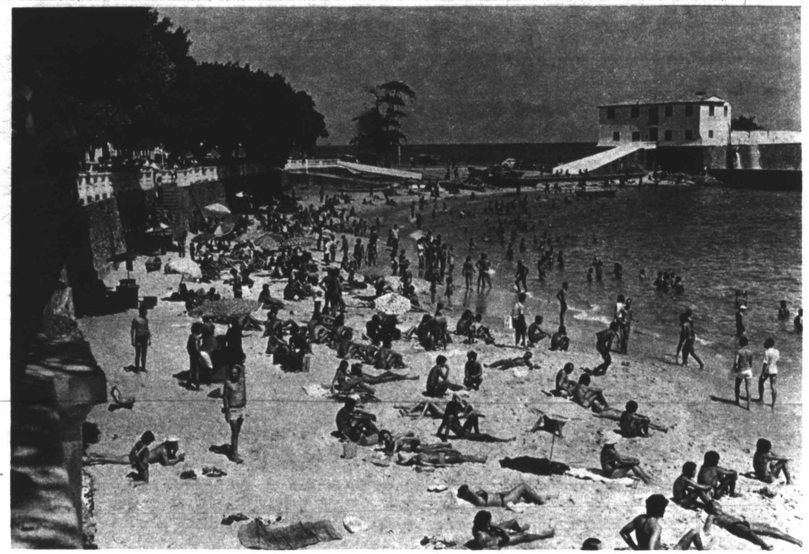
Surprise number two to most people: they speak Portuguese not Spanish, and those two languages are very different. But the friendly people of Rio (Cariocas) never let languages get in their way. They are warm and friendly and love to party. The nightclubs, called boites, begin at 11 p.m., **every night** and continue to the wee hours. Although the dance of Brazil is samba, you will also hear such familiar American sounds as Stevie Wonder and James Brown being played in the boites. Everybody dances in Rio and everybody likes to dance.

Of course, the best time to go to Rio is during Carnaval, which also happens to be the most difficult time to find accomodations there. You will have to make your hotel and flight reservations well in advance to be able to enjoy this annual February shindig.

It is the biggest bash in the world. Imagine a city filled with people 'a la Times Square New Year's Eve.' Since it is the middle of the summer (reversed seasons on the other side of the equator—surprise number three), the temperatures during these four hectic days hover up in the 90s.

The parades at night are like nothing anywhere on earth. Samba groups each consisting of up to a thousand people dance down Rio's major avenues competing for prizes with their music, dancing and glittering costumes. Beginning about 9 p.m., the parade of samba groups generally last until after dawn the next day.

There are also private balls, yacht parties, and all kinds of costumed activities geared to cram in all the earth's fleshy pleasures before the holy season begins on Ash Wednesday.



Beaches along the Bay and fronting the ocean circle the city of Salvador, Bahia, like a crown. Above the Barra beach is just a walk away from the city's family style smaller hotels in the Barra section.

Rio outside of carnaval is still a beautiful and exciting city. There is always partying and during Spring and Summer, October to March, there is always the gorgeous hot beaches. In the Winter, June to September, the beaches are not used much because the temperatures vacillate around the 70s and the water is chilly.

The other exciting Brazilian city to see within your two to three week period is Salvador, Bahia (the state name) some 1,000 miles north of the city of Rio. The city would compare to a southern city in the USA. it was the entry point of black people during Brazil's 300 plus years of slavery. Now, the black population is most concentrated in the state of Bahia as is the habits and customs of Africa.

If you can pull yourself away from the more quieter and less populated beaches of this town, you can see such quaint original things as candomble, the Brazilian equivalent to Haiti's voodoo, and capoeira, the Brazilian martial art that resembles acrobatics.

You will be surprised to find out too that not only did the Brazilian blacks retain their African religions, but they also held on to many African languages (i.e. Nago, JeJe, Angola) which they still use in some cases.

Salvador is a dual city; one near the harbor filled with cobbled-stoned streets and 16th century buildings; the other further inland made-up of modern office buildings and comfortable new hotels nestled close to ocean beaches.

Brazilian Bahian food is something you would have to savour to believe. You will be surprised to discover that many of the dishes seem familar (one I know taste like our okra soup). That is because in all probability the original recipe came from the same places in Africa.

Rio de Janeiro and Salvador are just about the limit for a two or three week Brazil stay. Since Rio is bigger and filled with more varieties of things to do (shopping included), it would be wiser to schedule more time in that lovely city. Salvador could be the serene contrast in your two week visit. Two weeks, by the way, that will just make you hungry for more.

Carnival time is a major annual holiday in Brazil.

Business Pioneers

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failure of this bank, and the distrust for banks remained strong in their lives. Some gave up the idea of saving, but some did not.

Blacks belonged to fraternal organizations which had benevolent origins based on their contributions and savings. With such high regards and trust in these orders and the large amounts of money accumulating one Saving Bank of the Grand Fountain United Order of True Reformers was established in 1874 in Richmond, Virginia.

Masons, Odd Fellows, and Knights of Pythias were also instrumental in establishing insurance companies better known for their benevolence rather than their sound acturial principles.

Other attempts at cooperative efforts were evident in Virginia, namely the Home Building and Loan Association in 1875, and Mount Alto Mining and Financial Association in 1880.

All over the country businesses were beginning to spring-up ranging from caterers to undertakers. Many were able to go into business by saving their money from their labors.

Others took money made in such businesses as grocery stores, tailoring and barbershops, etc., and bought real estate or branched out into other businesses.

Many were short on capital and education but long on the desire to be their own "boss" and help their race.

Recognizing the need for some direction and statement concerning blacks and business, Atlanta University held its fourth conference of the Study of the Negro problems, entitled "The Negro in Business." At the conference 1,900 black businessmen were given as many statistics as could be compiled through questionnaires, U.S. Census reports, and face-to-face contacts.

Testimonials were given by those who had gone into business under the most adverse circumstances and still succeeded.

Out of this conference came the following resolutions:

1. Blacks ought to enter into business life in increasing numbers. The present disproportion in the distribution of Negroes in the various occupations is unfortunate. It gives the race a one-sided development, unnecessary increases competition in certain lines of industry, and puts the mass of the Negro people out of sympathy and touch with the industrial and mercantile spirit of the age.

Moreover, the growth of a class of merchants among us would be a far-sighted measure of self-defense and would make for wealth and mutual cooperation.

2. We need as merchants the best trained young men we can find. A college training ought to be one of the best preparations for a broad business life; and thorough English and high school training is indispensable.

3. Blacks going into business should remember that their customers demand courtesy, honesty, and careful methods, and they should not expect patronage when their manner of conducting business does not justify it.

4. The mass of the blacks must learn to patronize business enterprises conducted by their own race, even at some slight disadvantage. We must cooperate or we are lost. Then million people who join in intelligent self-help can never be long ignored or mistreated.

5. The 1,900 business men reported to the conference are to be congratulated. They are pioneers in a great movement, and some of them have made a creditable record. We earnestly ask blacks — especially the better class of thinking blacks — to patronize these establishments and encourage them in every way.

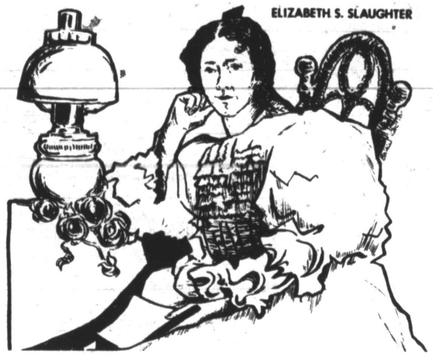
6. The most advisable work for the immediate future would seem to be:

(a) Continued agitation in churches, schools, and newspapers, and by all other avenues, of the necessity of business careers for young people.

(b) Increased effort to encourage savings and habits of thrift among the young that we may have more capital at our disposal.

(c) The organization in every town and hamlet where colored people dwell of Black Business Men's Leagues, and the gradual federation from these of state and national organizations.

The way and formula is as clear today as it was in the resolution of 1899. Anything that could be added would be superfluous.

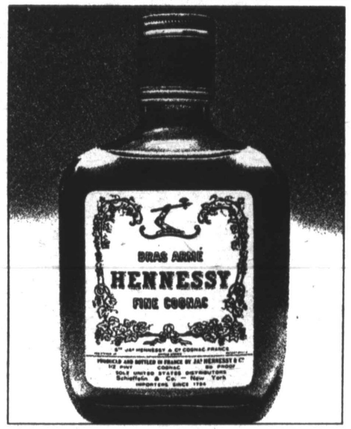


ELIZABETH S. SLAUGHTER

One of the many black women who helped compel white people to see black women as competitors rather than cooks, and washwomen, was Elizabeth B. Slaughter. She was a graduate of the "Armour Institute," Chicago, Illinois, where she learned the millinery trade and business.

In the later part of the 1890's she opened her own business in Louisville, Kentucky, where her patrons numbered among both black and white.

Hennessy says...



take me along. In a flask-size portion of the world's most civilized spirit. For those who believe that a little bit of a good thing is the best alternative.

HENNESSY COGNAC, 80 PROOF, IMPORTED BY SCHIEFFELIN & CO., N.Y.