Henry Morgan, the pirate, sacked and destroyed Old Panama City in 1671.

Writers Forum

by George B. Ruffin

MRS JEANETTE PRATT

No matter how much the purist bemoan the fact that travel is no longer a pleasure, that, it has become an industry; it is wonderful that travel is being made available to more and more people each year. People who, hitherto, never dreamed of going any place besides New York and around the corner from where they were born are now able to reallly go places at a nominal cost. Actually go places on their Piggy bank Savings. A bevy of Tourist Guides are within easy reach of all persons desiring a change in scene with no thought to the art of travel: whether to improve their minds--besides, the matter of improving one's mind has undoubtedly been over done--or, travel for conversation--something to talk about afterwards; or, travel to break the log-jam of dull routine; there is much to be gained through travel.

Basically, we can assume, the average person, unknowingly, has a true motive of travel: to become lost in the unknown. The poetical angle, reason, motive, urge or what have we, can be wiped off the slate: Very few travel to forget," infact, a tourist trip is too short for such "ground-breakings" no matter how religiously one adheres to travel schedules, how busy one will be with one's camera, travel notes, etc.--forgetting someone or a traumatic experience is out of the question.

By and large, the essence of travel is to have no duties, no fixed hours, no mail, no nosey neighbors, no responsibility of having to repeat to someone dear to you specific directions:" before retiring tonight place your baggage in front of your cabin door properly tagged. Baggage tags must have first and last names; or keep your landing card and baggage declaration handy."

Mrs. Jeanette Pratt of 2302 Crest Street was among the many persons of Durham who was fortunate enough to vacation in Nassau, Bahamas.

Mrs. Pratt states that most of her excitement was exhausted during the months and weeks when this trip was in its planning stage; " I have always yearned to take a long trip some place--no place in particular. I am always left a bit giddy after browsing through travel folders, but I have never pin-pointed anyplace I would like to spend a vacation. However, I never once encircled the Bahamas on my vacation map. I am Baptist, but the saying that Baptist are not fearful of water does not apply to me. I was skittish of large bodies of water until my recent trip to Nassau. This was my first trip outside the U.S.A./ but I can assure you that the Bahamas is beginning of a series of Tours on foreign soil."

It was Sunday, a bright sunny, searing hot day but "Jeannie" didn't seem to mind, one iota, giving a detailed report of her vacation at Nassau. So, I propped my perspiring body against the handrail of the Union Baptist steps, and listened to the charming, shirpping "Jeannie." For encouragement I added, "Let me hear about your travels, lucky lady." And she replied with genuine enthusiam; "one who travels is awaken to a world of people and places--and delightful happenings. I had no dreams that there was so much to see and feel, to enjoy and learn. The 4-Day Cruise to Nassau was conducted by Costa Lines and I am a living witness that travel broadens one's whole being. I was in a tizzy, with the Alice in Wonderland world into which I suddenly found myself thrust into, for days. I have some friends in New York city and I wanted to spend more time in the lumbering city but time ran against my best wishes. We boarded the huge, snowy ship at 3 o'clock p.m. and went straight to the Riviera Lounge where we listened to heavenly music: "Italian Musical Moods" played by the ship's Orchestra "Flavia, Monday, our first day aboard ship was so shocked full of excitement that I developed a tension headache, but I did not let that inconvenience send me packing to my cabin. I took part in the Boat Drill, dined in the gorgeous Caribbean/Floridiana Dining Room." "Jeannie" laughed softly up to the glaring sunlight, then, whispered in a softer voice; "I wanted to crash the Discotque Rock Fest for young people in the Flamingo Lounge, but I reluctantly drew the line at the door of the lounge. My second day aboard the Costa Liner was no less fun filled than the first day. A group of us attended a movie in club Capri to rest up a bit for some of the late evening entertainment.

On Wednesday, we enjoyed Bouillon, coffee and tea served on Lido Deck. The vastness of the blue Pacific ocean, the lucidity of the bright blue sky above the white billowy clouds were actually startling.

Since Thursday was our last day before disembarkment, we decided to splurge a bit, so, we stayed up until past midnight. A midnight buffet was served on Riviera Deck--And!" My excited narrator exclaimed; "you haven't really enjoyed living until you have dined beneath a star-studded sky, listen to music drifting from port holes and spreading across the vast acreage of sluggish ocean waters. You don't know whether to weep for joy--or scream from fear of someone pinching your arm and you awaken to the humdrum world you have known, perhaps, too long.

Friday morning as I waited in, the now familiar, Riviera Lounge, accompanied by old friends and newly made acquaintences; my thoughts grew apprehensive--soon, I would be faced with a new situation--an entirely new experience--walking down the gangplank onto foreign soil, however, my fears were unwarrented. Nassau was much more than I expected and the panoramic view of the picturesque city has kindled interest to a point of frienzy to see more of the happy, apparently, carefree Islanders. Aside from a visit to Pino's Night Club where I enjoyed, immensely, Calypso and Soul Rock music, pizza, Lesagna and lots of fun, Isaw the summer home of the Archbishop; the home of Sidney Poitiers; the lovely cottage where Mrs. Margaret Truman Daniels spent her honeymoon--and we enjoyed and island drink mixed for us by the Mayor of Nassau.

Just before leaving the ship for the last time, pangs of remorse gripped my sense as I read the announcement on the Bullentin Board: From--the Master Officer-Crew--Cruise Director--Staff: To--All of our passenger, we have enjoyed the pleasure of your company these few days and we hope that we will meet again soon, But until we do, we bid you, "Arrivederci!"

FROM BLACK

By John Hudgins

John Hudgins

Perhaps there are a number of things that we can learn from the recent closing of Malcolm X Liberation University. It is probably important that we look at the alleged facts before going on. According to statements made by its president in a recent press conference, there were two basic situations surrounding its closing.

I. Improper orientation. Too much emphasis on the African continent and not enough on the local Black communities.

II. Lack of financial resources. Not enough money available from the Black community and too many limitations on white money.

The first is the more important though both are significant. The important fact is that both problems were known from the beginning and one would have to be rather short-sighted not to understand them. One of the reasons that MXLU was founded was to provide the kind of relevant education not available at traditional institutions, namely Duke. The underlying assumptions being that those individuals embarking on this effort knew something about what relevant education is, education that should prepare Black youth to make a significant contribution to the growth and development of the Black community. It is indeed unfortunate that this objective was somehow lost. It is perhaps more terrible that any Black person could neglect or fail to analyze and apply this objective.

The second problem was not only predictable but in some ways avoidable. That is to say that if one expects to provide a relevant education to Black youth then he cannot expect to provide a relevant education to Black youth then he cannot expect white people to pay for that education. This simply means that the needed institution cannot be a traditional one. It must find other means of surviving. One must also be certain that the limitations placed on white money do not interfere with the intended objectives of the institution.

Yes, it is unfortunate that MXLU missed its calling and because of that a beautiful and much needed concept has been lost or at least postponed.

What we must also be concerned about is leaders who fail to analyze and understand the community that they intend to serve. There is no excuse for waiting this long before one realizes that his orientation is incorrect. There is no excuse for fomaking a commitment to the desires and needs of the people around you. It is unthinkable in my mind that one could exist in the Pettigrew Street (Hayti) community and set objectives that did not deal with that reality. It is strange but often the case that we read enough to make analysis that are limited by their own structure. One who reads or learns without a constant awareness of his immediate and real community is no less a dope than white egg head professors who read, write, and jump to non-realistic conclusions.

I hesitate to refer to MXLU as a failure, I choose rather to think of it as a call unfulfilled, a mission not completed, a temporary set-back. To discover one's mistake and not capitalize on it is to fail, to understand a mistake and to try again with that understanding is the making of revolution. Not only is this a lesson to us who have a kind of commitment to Black people. That is, formal and extensive education can help us know how to do sometning. But only a realistic involvement with our people can tell what it is we need to do. Change does not come alone in the head, but it must come from the Blood and sweat of a people, struggling together, where they are, relying on who they are, and where all of them want to go.