

Haitians poor but proud

by Sherman Briscoe

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti (NNPA)—I am sure that the impression most tourists are likely to take away from this country is one of a poor but proud and friendly people who work very hard and are still determined to succeed despite nearly 200 years of political setbacks and enormous economic difficulties.

This impression is made by the swift pace of pedestrian an motorist alike, by the heavy loads they willingly and gracefully carry on their head or push or pull along the road to market, and by the pride that glows deep in the smiling eyes of even the poorest peasant.

The products on their head are either made or grown with their own hands. There are beautiful baskets, attractive pieces of porch furniture (wood and metal), bouquets of lovely flowers, baskets of fruits and vegetables, and even bags of charcoal. They can leave their wares by the roadside overnight and nobody bothers them.

At the docks where the big ships anchor, hand carts, instead of motor trucks, deliver most of the imports. And the workers do it quickly and enthusiastically. At sea, fishermen harvest thousands of pounds of seafood.

Along the highways and side roads, one sees more homes and other buildings going up. Busy craftsmen are digging foundations in the mountainside or the rocky soil, constructing forms, pouring cement, plastering walls, carving ornate doors, painting houses in colorful pastels, and beautifully landscaping yards. There is no siesta; they work through the heat of the day with the same vigor of the morning hours, even though the average diet of the people is only 1,800 calories a day.

In addition to this work, an increased number of Haitians are seen on jobs in small American-financed factories where they make dozens of items for export to the U.S. These include: Baseballs, sportswear, belts, boots, brassieres, handbags, fishing lures, electronic parts, small tools, women's wigs, men's hairpieces, their own carved figures, and stuffed toys. These export products were valued at \$17 million last

year.

But the principal occupation of the Haitian people is farming. Four million or 80 percent of them live on two-acre farms, raising coffee, sugarcane, cotton, bananas, sisal, fruits and vegetables in addition to cattle, hogs, goats, and poultry. However, farming is difficult in this mountainous country that is slightly smaller than Maryland. But the people seem determined to succeed at farming or whatever else they do.

lie's beautiful palace, the legislative building, the post office, and other attractive government buildings. And we saw proud statues of the liberators: Toussaint Louverture, Jean Jacques Desalines, and Emperor Henri Christophe. Also we saw a statue that the late President Francois Duvalier had designed of a young Haitian slave with bulging muscles, blowing a conch-shell, the country's symbol of liberty. We visited shops, stores, and small factories, and we



A good example of this was our guide, Gesner Faton, whom my wife and I hired the first day or two we were in the country. After that we rented a car and drove and drove.

Messieur Faton once lived in a shabby house and pushed a handcart at the war for a dollar a day. But he studied English at night to become a guide. Now he is studying Spanish to become more proficient and further increase his earnings for his family of seven.

At no time during his hire to us was he tardy. Walk out of our hotel day or night and he was there. Step out of a night club or the casino and he met us smiling at the door.

He drove us all over Port-au-Prince and Petionville and up into the mountains. We saw President Jean-Claude Duva-

saw libraries, many elementary and secondary schools, and the university with several colleges, including a college of medicine.

Many of the homes we saw are as beautiful as are to be found anywhere. But in the older part of the capital city and throughout much of the countryside, most of the housing and the grinding poverty are a depressing as the worst in Alabama or Mississippi, or Chicago or Cleveland. Sometimes we had to fight back tears and hurry along.

However, our guide explained that the First Lady, the President's mother, has set as her goal more improved housing for the people. This and economic development will be discussed in the 2nd and final installment.



Ramsey Lewis and his trio helped to close the final night of entertainment at PUSH EXPO, recently held in Chicago, Ramsey's hometown. The Columbia recording artist, whose "Upendo Ni Pamoja" is one of the best selling albums in the country, is in the process of cutting another LP, to be released in the near future.

PUSH EXPO draws crowds

PUSH EXPO, recently held in Chicago before close to one million people over a five-day period, was one of the best showcases in the country for witnessing the increasing development of Black businesses. It was also the mecca of Black entertainment during that period, with virtually every big name in Black music represented.

While over 20,000 spectators at each of the concerts watched their favorite stars perform, other considerations for artists, such as security and comfort, were being executed. The man who was in charge of the major endeavor was Logan H. Westbrook.

In his capacity as director of artists relations, Westbrook and his staff of 40 people were responsible for all non-performing activities of the artists. This involved hotel assignments, scheduling of rehearsals for the artists, provisions for escorting the artists around EXPO, backstage security, and whatever emergencies that might develop regarding the artists.

"My staff took care of most activities of the acts from picking them up at the airport, to making sure that they were on time for their performances," Westbrook stated. "We were also in charge of taking care of VIPs, such as Black government officials and personal friends of the people who put PUSH EXPO together."

Westbrook, who serves as director of special markets for Columbia Records, also worked closely with Rev. Jesse Jackson, president of PUSH, making sure that all programs were coordinated and covered at all stages.

While working with artists of other labels, Westbrook assigned Granville White, Columbia's R & B regional director in Chicago, to handle the Columbia acts, which included the O'Jays and Billy Paul, artists for Philadelphia International, and Ramsey Lewis, a member of the Columbia roster. Harold Melvin and the Blue Notes, Philadelphia International artists did not perform at EXPO, but did participate in the activities. Westbrook also used some of his own promotion men, Bill Craig, Glen Wright, Fred Ware and Chuck Offutt, and his assistant Marnie Tattersall, to aid him in the undertaking.

"Since most of the artists created the most hysteria of any of the acts,

"It was absolutely unreal," commented Westbrook. "There were screams for other artist, but unlike they were appearing at their own expense, we had to make sure that everything went well," Westbrook added. "If as



The O'Jays, Philadelphia International recording stars, are shown performing their just certified gold record, "Back Stabbers" at opening night of PUSH EXPO, recently held in Chicago.

artist forgot to wear one of the badges given to him, one of my people had to know how to take care of it so that there would be no unnecessary embarrassment on anybody's part."

Westbrook pointed out that although all the acts that appeared were superstars, the Jackson 5, during their Saturday afternoon performance, Jackson 5. And because of this we had to take special security precautions. But

the concert took place without incident, and everyone had a good time."

PUSH EXPO, according to Westbrook, was a huge success because of good planning overall. "EXPO showed the country that Black people could work hand in hand to bring of something that would be beneficial for them not just individually, but collectively. I was pleased to be involved."

This week No.	Top 10 Survey	Last week No.
1.	Loose Booty-----Funkadelic	2
2.	I'll be Around-----The Spinners	3
3.	Good Times-----Kool and the Gang	4
4.	Freddie's Dead-----Curtis Mayfield	1
5.	Memphis at Sunrise-----Bar-Kays	8
6.	Don't take my Kindness for Weakness-----The Soul Children	
7.	If You let Me-----Eddie Kendricks	10
8.	If you Don't Know me by Now-----Harold Melvin and The Blue Notes	9
9.	Work to Do-----Isley Brothers	0
10.	Woman's Got to Have It-----Bobby Womack	5

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