

More Negroes Vacation as Barriers Fall

By CHARLAYNE HUNTER

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OAK BLUFFS, Mass. —

Zaida Coles Edley, a black television actress, was lounging on the beach here on Martha's Vineyard with her husband and a couple of guests. "Watch what happens to this scene," she said. "In just about an hour you'll be in for a surprise."

It was high noon and time passed quickly as a blazing sun beat down on the long, sandy beach and a handful of other bathers and sun worshippers, mostly white.

Then one of Mrs. Edley's guests sensed something had changed, sat up and looked around. The sun had moved a few degrees to the west, but that wasn't it. What had changed were the faces around them: There were more of them and almost all were black.

The figures in this scene—prosperous black families languidly whiling away the hours of a summer vacation—would not have surprised anyone here but a stranger, for tiny Oak Bluffs has for generations been a favorite vacation place of middle class blacks.

More Black Vacationers

But the same scene, or something like it, is becoming increasingly common throughout the country at beaches and resorts that have never before had to accommodate large numbers of black guests. The reason is that more and more blacks are taking vacations.

Discrimination persists at some places, but formal racial barriers are down, the black middle class is growing and, at least for white-collar blacks, income is up and there is more money to spend.

According to D. Parke Gibson, a black public relations adviser for black travel agents in several cities, black vacation expenditures have risen by 25 per cent in four years. As a "conservative estimate" of this year's total at the close of the current season, Mr. Gibson gave \$675-million.

Many of the new black vacationers apparently prefer such traditional black vacation areas as Oak Bluffs or Sag Harbor, L. I., or Fernandina Beach, Fla. But some were breaking new ground,

'Entertainers?,' 'A convention?' said Miss Jefferson, a sophomore at Tufts University in Medford, Mass.

"My little brother, 16, was sitting in the snack lounge and heard this man say, 'Did you see that bunch of Mexicans they got here? They look just like niggers.'"

"It was like they couldn't believe that we were just black people that could afford their resort," said Miss Batchelor, a sophomore at Fisk University in Nashville.

In the South, the experiences of at least some of the black vacationers have been a little different.

Jacob Henderson, who with his wife, Freddie, owns a travel agency in Atlanta that has grown since 1955 from a \$25,000-a-year business to one with nearly \$1-million a year, there has been "a definite increase" in the number of blacks going to formerly all-white resort areas since the passage of public accommodations legislation in 1965.

Most such places, he said, have "honored the law," and blacks going there have been getting a "good reception."

"Usually two or three black couples will go together," he said.

West Coast travelers seem to be going to Mexico, Hawaii and Las Vegas, he said.

The Hendersons offer an "Ebony tour" through several European countries, and their emphasis is on blacks

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Joyce Dopkeen for The New York Times

A visitor on beach at Oak Bluffs, Martha's Vineyard, favorite vacation place for blacks

venturing into previously all-white resorts or taking off for black-dominated areas like the West Indies or certain countries in Africa.

Traveling Together

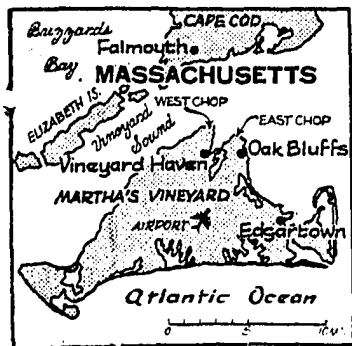
Even the more adventurous ones, however, seemed to want to travel with other blacks. (As Mrs. Edley put it: "We do like to be together.") And some of them have had problems.

Karen Batchelor and Joyce Jeffersons, both college students from Detroit, were among black vacationers who along with their families and about 50 of their friends vacationed this summer at a predominantly white resort in the Catskills.

A Detroit travel agent had suggested the place, partly for its golf courses, which sold the men on the trip.

They say they won't go back.

"People came up to us and asked us, 'Are you Mexican?'"



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traveling with other blacks. "There used to be a time," Mrs. Henderson said, "when blacks were self-conscious about traveling with other blacks. Now, if they're traveling with a group that includes whites, after the day's activities are over, at night people get together based on congeniality and similar interests. That's when it's important for other blacks to be along."

Mrs. Henderson said that blacks traveling to Africa were not much interested in those East African countries where the traditional white tourist has gone to hunt wild animals. Their main interest, she said, was in West Africa.

Pride in Achievements

There is a pride in the achievement of such countries as Tanzania, Ghana and Nigeria, which were among the first of the African countries to gain independence, she said.

"This started the trek toward Africa and the independent spirit," she said. "As they came out of colonial domination, they began to take on a new focus—blacks from America began to want to watch the total development—politically, economically as well as culturally."

Most of the travelers "fit into the white collar class," Mr. Henderson went on, adding: "But now there is a much broader range of white collar blacks—the young professionals, primarily, who follow the normal pattern of white collar workers."

Today's black vacationers at Oak Bluffs—the closest stop by ferry from the mainland at Woods Hole—are sometimes the great-grandchildren of the first blacks to buy property there.

Mrs. Sadie Ashburn, who at 85 still does most of the cooking at her cottage resort—one of the few black businesses in the area—can remember coming to Martha's Vineyard when she was 5 years old.

And while many city residents prefer the quiet solitude of the small "up island" settlements—the most remote of which is Gay Head, about 45 minutes away—the blacks for the most part seem to stay in this bustling little town with its quaint and sometimes elegant gingerbread houses.

'To Renew My Soul'

When asked to describe Oak Bluffs, the usual reply from those who live farther out is: "It's urban."

change here. I call it coming to renew my soul."

The Haylings own one of the most beautiful homes on one of the most spacious lots in the section of the Bluffs called East Chop. It overlooks the boat basin and borders on the West Chop area, a section a few blocks away in which only a handful of blacks live.

While the Haylings, at one time considered buying a home at Sag Harbor, they decided that the disadvantage of distance—five hours by car, compared with two to Sag Harbor—was outweighed by the variety: more beaches, more golf courses, more of their friends.

Of course, Dr. Hayling, a World War II pilot, said he would probably not have bought a house on the Vineyard "if I didn't have an airplane"—a Beechcraft Bonanza that seats five.

Mrs. Hayling and their son drive up and stay for the entire summer, while Dr. Hayling flies up on Thursdays—about a 45-minute trip—and returns to Trenton on Monday afternoons. The house has been "winterized," and the family spends long winter holidays there as well.

"From Tuesday to Friday, it's a real matriarchy," said Texeira Nash, a personable artist—known as "Tex" to her friends—who is chairman of the Council of the Arts in Washington.

No Real Issues Found

Mrs. Nash's father was a Portuguese who came to Boston from the Cape Verde Islands, off the coast of West Africa, in the early nineteenth hundreds, and she and her friends spent their summers here as children. Her best friend then is still coming and has a daughter, 14, who is Mrs. Nash's oldest daughter's best friend. They both spend a lot of time horseback riding.

At a get-together at her rented house one night—she and her husband, Robert, an architect, are building here—Mrs. Nash's cousin and his wife, Mr. and Mrs. Harold Johnson, told how they had fallen in love with the Vineyard. Now that they are retiring, they plan to maintain here all year round.

Mr. Johnson drives a taxi, dabbles in other businesses and serves as president of the local Alcoholics Anonymous and also of the Martha's Vineyard N.A.A.C.P., which has about 75 members, mostly white.

property there other than members of the Town Meeting, a fundamentalist religious group.

No one seems to know what has happened to the covenant, but it is apparent that the tradition has not been broken.

Bruce Lewellyn, a New York businessman, who along with a Puerto Rican and a Jewish partner, owns a multimillion-dollar chain of 11 supermarkets in Manhattan and the Bronx, owns a house that overlooks the Oak Bluffs beach.

Property Values Rising

While his family—which includes his wife, Jackie, whom he met here, their two children, his cousin, United States Customs Court Judge James L. Watson, and his family—have come here out of tradition, he said, the houses for blacks have become available mostly as the result of the exodus of whites to the more remote parts of the island.

But property values, at one time low, seem to be rising.

Ten years ago, the Edleys (she acts in a soap opera now and he is an official of the Ford Foundation) joined with five other couples from Philadelphia, where they were living then, and purchased their 12-bedroom house for \$8,000.

This year, after a decade in which each couple contributed \$25 a month, the six couples finally paid for it. They could sell it now, they say, for twice that. But they don't want to. One reason is that altogether they have 14 children.

One of their neighbors is Senator Edward W. Brooke, Republican of Massachusetts, whose spacious lot includes a tennis court.

But despite their professional and economic attainments, the gap between them and their white counterparts vividly exists.

'Peaceful Coexistence'

"For 30 years we've [blacks and whites] been living side by side up here," said one of the black professionals, "and there is hope—but only for a continuing peaceful coexistence. If you're talking about integration, if it hasn't happened in 30 years, it won't."

Still, the ability to get away from it all may also continue to touch a sore spot with those blacks who are left back in the hot cities to cope with the urban, asphalt summers.

And yet, paradoxically, it is a desire to get away from urban living that seems to have attracted most of the blacks here. Mostly they are the families of businessmen, lawyers, judges, politicians, doctors and artists from Boston to Atlanta.

"We live in the heart of Trenton," said Mrs. Audrian Hayling, wife of Dr. Leslie Hayling, a dentist, and mother of 14-year-old Leslie Jr.

"Les can't ride a bike or do any of the things that he has the freedom to do here," she said. "It's such a

"We don't have any real issues here," he said. "Mostly we raise scholarship money for the local children." During the winter, he said, there are about 35 to 40 black families here. Most of them, he said, are elderly and include the Portuguese as well.

Still, in addition to the Chop area, there are other places on the island where blacks do not own property.

The town circle, for instance, at one time had a restrictive covenant prohibiting anyone from owning

When Mrs. Edley's sister and her husband, Alpha and Walter Blackburn, flew up from Indianapolis for a long weekend, Mrs. Blackburn came a day ahead with their three young children.

Mr. Blackburn received a call from a friend just before he left, and he told her that Mrs. Blackburn was in the Vineyard and that he was about to join her. There was a long pause, he said, and then the caller said:

"Martha's Vineyard in the summer. The Bahamas in the winter and Europe in the fall. Humpf."