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WHAT AM I

DOIN' HERE ?

On Tuesday, 18 January, we will arrive at the Port of Balboa for an overnight stop, before entering the Panama Canal.

This limited time will not allow the ships companies time to make an extensive tour of the Republic of Panama. However the following information might help us appreciate this area a bit more.

#### GEOGRAPHY:

This Central American Republic is bounded by Costa Rica on the N.W., and Columbia on the S.E. It received its independence from the latter state in 1903, after nearly 6 years of continuous fighting. Its population in 1960 was 1,075,541. The area of Panama is 28,753 sq. miles, compared to the 12,408 sq mile area of Vancouver Island. The Atlantic coastline of the Republic is 477 miles long, its Pacific coastline is 767 miles in length. The Republic is bisected by the canal, and its 10 mile wide Canal Zone, a ribbon of territory granted to the U.S. forever.

The Republic has a mountainous backbone. In the Northern half is Mt. Chirigui with an elevation of 11,410 ft. In the Southern half the mountains rarely exceed 5,000 ft. As the result of this high central ridge the country is well drained. It is of interest to note that 150 streams run in to the Caribbean, and 325 into the Pacific.

#### BALBOA:

The only lakes in the Republic are both artificial. Lakes Gatun and Sosa, are both in the Canal Zone, and make up part of the Canal System. These were made by damming the Chagres Lake, which rises near the Pacific side of the Isthmus.

#### CLIMATE:

The average temperature is 80°F - which is low for the tropics. There is little seasonal change with no more than 2.2° variation in monthly temperatures. The annual humidity is 80%, which encourages mildew and rust. On the Caribbean side the rainfall averages 128 inches at Colon, with amounts up to 155 inches farther west. On the Balboa side, the annual rainfall is less than 70 inches. Most of the rain comes in heavy showers. From December to April, the Republic enjoys a dry, cooler season.

#### HISTORY:

Columbus visited the area on his 4th voyage in 1502. His efforts to found a settlement at Belen near Costa Rica boundary failed a few months after the colony arrived. Other efforts to colonize the area around this time also failed.

The explorer Balboa crossed the isthmus in 1513, naming the Pacific, the "SOUTH SEA". He claimed the whole area for the King of Spain.

Five years later, 1519, Panama City was founded. It has the distinction of being the oldest city on the West Coast of America.

BALBOA:

This area became the chief treasure route for Latin America, south of Mexico. Cargos from Manila were trans-shipped here. Even Argentina and Uruguay sent and received their goods by an overland route through Peru, and up the Pacific coast to Panama.

From the early 1700's to 1903 when she finally received her independence from Columbia, the state went through the growing pains of revolution as she was annexed to other states, and then seceded, over and over again.

In 1950, there were between 48-49,000 uncivilized SAN BLAS and DARIEN Indians in the unexplored jungles between the Canal and the Republic of Columbia.

The population of Panama is 12% white, 13% of pure Negro. The remaining 75% is a mixture, including an oriental strain.

Spanish influence predominates, and Spanish is the official language, although English is spoken, and generally understood.

DEFENCE:

While there is no Navy, Army or Air Force, Panama has a well trained and efficient armed National Police Force of approximately 2,500 men, as well as a secret police department of over 300. It is advisable not to interfere with the duties of the police since they are backed by strong and effective laws.

RELIGION:

The state recognizes the Roman Catholic Church as the Church of the Republic, but also guarantees freedom of worship to all other religious groups. In 1952 there were 248 active churches of which 225 were Roman Catholic.

GOVERNMENT:

The assembly is an elected body. The 9 provinces elect 1 representative and 2 deputies for each 15,000 inhabitants. The deputies, with alternatives, are elected for 4 years. The executive, who is president, is elected for 4 years. He has 2 vice-presidents. He also has the power to appoint the 7 cabinet ministers.

The highest single appropriation of funds is for education. As the result, it has one of the lowest illiteracy rates for the Caribbean area - 35%.

COMMUNICATIONS:

There are 1500 miles of highway,  $\frac{1}{2}$  of which are paved. There were 40,000 automotive vehicles in Panama in 1955.

International Airlines make regular flights to Panama. In 1955 they carried 190,000 passengers.

FINANCES:

The monetary unit in the Balboa, equal to the U.S. Dollar, and is freely convertible. U.S. Currency is the Chief circulating medium. Fractional Panama coins are used.

ECONOMICS & COMMERCE:

In 1951, 15,000 Panamanians were employed in the Canal Zone, with earnings estimated at \$16 million - a per capita earning of \$1,000.00

The Republic exports bananas, Cacao and Manila hemp almost wholly to the U.S. Leather and Leather goods, soap, furniture, clothing, clay products and canned goods are also produced.

DAVID - a city of 22,924 is in the large farming area in the Northern part of the Republic.

SANTIAGO - with 8,746, is in the granary province, also in the Northern part.

COLON - population 59,598 is at the Atlantic end of the Canal. CRISTOBAL is its port in the Canal Zone.

PANAMA - the capital, and chief city has a population of 369,280. Balboa, where we will visit is the port of Panama. It is 3 miles from Panama city. In 1950 its population was 4,162.

PORT RODMAN - is the U.S. Naval base in the Canal Zone. There are excellent recreation facilities. The "PX" is considered to be a very good one.

PANAMA CITY:

The city was founded in 1519. In 1671 it was destroyed by fire and rebuilt at its present site two years later, 5 miles West of the original townsite. Surrounded by its granite wall, the old town is still a landmark, and a popular tourist attraction.

In 1760 the old Cathedral was built, and remains a handsome landmark. Other places of interest in Panama City are the government palace on the waterfront, the municipal palace, the episcopal palace, the Church of Santa Ana, the National Theatre, the school of arts and crafts, and the railway station.

PANAMA CANAL:

And now for some information on the Canal itself:

As early as 1523, Emperor Charles V, of the Holy Roman Empire realizing the importance of this narrow strip of land, for the shipment of the riches of the colonies to Europe initiated the first movement to build a canal. It was nearly 400 years later that his dreams were realized, and the canal was open.

In 1825 applications were made by both the U.S.A. and Great Britain, to study, and build a canal. Great Britain eventually backed out of the program and in a treaty signed in 1901, conceded to the U.S.A. the rights to build and control a canal.

In 1846 a treaty between the U.S.A. and the viceroyalty of Neuva Granada (of which the present Republic of Panama was a province) gave the U.S.A. permission to transport across the Isthmus, while the U.S. promised not to interfere with the sovereignty of the viceroyalty. Soon after this, U.S. engineers made the most up to date survey of the area done up to that time. From 1870-1875, with U.S.N. officers in charge, several proposed routes across the isthmus were examined.

In the meantime the French Canal Company was formed and in 1879 work began on a canal. Ten years later, the company went bankrupt, then in 1894 resumed work again. At the turn of the century the French project again stopped and in 1902 sold its interests to the U.S.A. Of the 78 million cu yds of material moved during those 20 years - 30 million cu yds were useful to the U.S. project.

At this same time, private citizens in New York formed a company and worked from 1889 - 1893 on the Nicaragua Plan, before going bankrupt.

All of this activity aroused the interest of the U.S. Congress, and in 1899 the year the French plan stopped, and the Nicaragua Plan started - appointed a commission to look into a proposed Canal.

The Spanish American War (1898) gave impetus and popular interest to the U.S. people. They new the Canal as a symbol of unification for the country, and a strengthening of national interests. The Congress committee finally recommended the Nicaragua Plan. The New Panama Canal Col offered it for \$40 million. The Commission reconsidered its decision, and finally recommended the Panama Plan. The estimated costs were, the French Plan for the one at Panama \$156,378,258. The Nicaragua Plan - \$200,540,000, and 10 years of work.

Panama declared its independence in 1903. In February, 1904 work started again on the Canal, this time by the U.S.A., and 10 years later (7 years of actual work) the Canal was open, on 3 August 1914. It is situated within the Canal Zone, a 10 mile strip of land stretching from coast to coast, and controlled by the U.S. Government.

240 million cu yds of soil were moved to make the present Canal. (remember that 30 million of the 78 million moved by the French were of use to the U.S. project) The cost was \$366,650,000, exclusive of expenditures for naval and military defences. It took \$10 million to repair some 30 slides and breaks during the construction period.

From 1939-1942 the U.S. worked on a project to enlarge the present facilities. Their involvement in W.W.II brought this work to a halt.

In 1947 the governor of the Panama Canal recommended the existing canal be converted to sea level at an estimated cost of \$2,483,000,000 over \$2 billion more than the original canal cost.

In 1955 a pact was concluded, raising the annuity from the U.S., returning certain properties valued at \$24 million to Panama, and equalizing pay and status of Panamanians & U.S. workers, employed in the Zone.

#### THE CANAL:

The Canal does not, as is generally supposed, cross the Isthmus in an East-West direction. It rather runs in a North-West direction from the Pacific, and the terminus near Balboa is  $22\frac{1}{2}$  miles East of its terminus near Colon, on the Atlantic Side.

The length of the canal, from deep water to deep water is 44 miles. Transit time is approximately  $7\frac{1}{2}$  hours, but can take much longer if there is much shipping. Ships have had to anchor in Gatun Lake overnight and pass to the other ocean the next day. The shortest passage time on record is 4 hours 10 minutes. In 1963, 11,317 vessels, an average of 31 a day, passed through the Canal. This number did not include U.S. and Panama government ships, warships of the Republic of Columbia, and repair to Canal ships. Vessels began moving at 0600, and are dispatched at intervals of  $\frac{1}{2}$  to 1 hour. The last ship from the Balboa entrance leaves at 1530.

The locks are 1000 feet long, 110 feet wide and 81 feet high. There are 6 pair of locks. "Electric Mules" working on cog tracks, on either side of the locks, tow the ships through the locks at 2 M.P.H.

Before entering a lock, a fender chain is stretched between the walls of the approaches. If everything is in order the chain is dropped to the bottom of the lock. If on the other-hand the ship is moving too fast, or gets away from the "electric mules", the bow will fetch up against the chain, which is payed out until the ship is stopped. In the event that the fender chain does not stop the forward movement of the ship, and the ship smashes the gate of the lock, another gate is closed 50 feet ahead. This protects the locks from any further damage.

On entering the canal at the Pacific end, ships are lifted by the two locks of the Miraflores locks to a canal, or cut, which leads into a small lake with an elevation of 54 feet. At the end of this lake, which is approximately 8 miles long, is the Pedro Miguel lock. This raises ships to Lake Gatun with an elevation of 85 feet. Gatun Lake is approximately 24 miles long. The three Gatun locks on the Atlantic side, lower the ships to the level of the Atlantic which is 8 inches lower than the Pacific. The Pedro Miguel lock is the directing line between the two Oceans. On leaving the lock, the red and black buoys will be on the opposite sides of the channel.

The approximate cost of moving our ships through the Canal is; for a one way passage:

DDE - \$1700.00

DE - \$1400.00

GRILSE - \$900.00

This includes brow service, shore electricity, extra deck hands, water, and de-ratting certificate.

WARNINGS:

Drinking water - In the Canal Zone, or in Panama, under no circumstances drink water. Stick to carbonated beverages.

V.D. - The rate of V.D. is very high.

Taxis - Taxis wait outside the gate for passengers to Panama. Always settle the fare before engaging a taxi, and know exactly where you want to go. Taxis have distinguishing stickers on the windshields. It will probably be safer to hire one of these, than other cars who also try to pick up passengers.